



## PONTELAND HIGH SCHOOL

*Aiming for our students to be happy, feel safe and secure, and achieve exceptionally well*

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Dear Parents

In recent weeks my attention has been drawn to a spate of online comments in respect of partnership schools and the High School in particular; this relates to an online group acting in support of Ponteland Community Middle School (PCMS). In addition, there has been a vocal Parent Campaign group acting in good faith to save PCMS as a middle school and secure safe transfer from Y8 to Y9 in Ponteland High School; you may have seen press articles in the Journal and Chronicle. On Friday last week I was passed a flier that is currently being shared in support of PCMS, which identifies a number of supposed myths and truths. Whilst I accept the right to support any school within the partnership it is disappointing that this has at times taken the form of denigrating other local schools.

It has also been frustrating to note the tone and content of some of the comments suggesting that the High School has 'threatened' parents or is refusing to accept applications from children at PCMS. At all times since the original schools' consultation in 2016, and more recently during our recent Open Mornings and Open Evenings, we have sought to be clear, unambiguous and honest about the current situation and particularly about the school admission process. At no time has anybody been threatened nor have we tried to sow fear amongst parents; to suggest otherwise is ridiculous. The reality is that in September 2019 entry at Y7-9 is open to all catchment children, however, it is illegal to 'hold' places until Y9 in subsequent years as this would be in breach of the Schools Admissions Code. In light of this, we have made clear many times that we cannot guarantee places will still be available by the end of Y8 from September 2020 onwards.

In the absence of PCMS Trustees and senior leaders addressing some of the factual inaccuracies being shared in recent weeks Pele Trust Directors took the decision to make available the correspondence between themselves and PCMS Trustees over the period October-December 2018; this sequence of correspondence followed a written request by PCMS Trustees to join Pele Trust as a primary school. The decision to share this correspondence was taken to provide a degree of openness and transparency for parents. The statement from Northumberland County Council within the correspondence also clarifies the situation very clearly with regard to holding places until Y9. The correspondence can be viewed on our website at <https://bit.ly/2EAnA2W>

Yours faithfully

Kieran McGrane  
Headteacher

