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**Chief Executive Officer:** Mr M Jones

7 June 2021

**FAO: HEADTEACHERS / CHAIRS OF GOVERNORS**

Dear Headteacher / Chair of Governors

**Re: PROSPER Learning Trust-Consultation for the proposal to open a new special free school for children with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and autism in Northumberland – Gilbert Ward Academy**

In May 2020 the Department for Education approved our application to move forward to the pre-opening phase of a new special free school in Northumberland for children aged 11-16 with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and autism. The school will be called Gilbert Ward Academy.

We are now entering the next phase of this exciting journey and we are looking to create a new school which will prepare pupils for new and exciting learning opportunities. The education offer will be varied, have a focus on ensuring children are exposed to a rich and varied curriculum that meets all individual needs. The overarching aim will be to engage all pupils in their learning.

Under section 10 of the Academies Act 2010 the Trust is required to consult with stakeholders on our proposals for the new school and as a result this letter and its supporting literature outline two key areas of our consultation activity:

1. Further detail on where and how you can find out more about our proposed new free school
2. Planned events and activities to encourage feedback on our proposals, particularly with regards to whether you believe the Secretary of State should enter into a funding agreement with the Trust to open the proposed new school

As a key stakeholder in the process we would be keen to hear your views on the proposal and answer any questions you may have. All information you supply will be treated as confidential unless you volunteer your personal details and request a response to a query and/or would like a copy of our final report and findings sending to you on conclusion of the statutory consultation.

**How do I find out more?**

Enclosed with this letter is a consultation leaflet which shares further detail on our vision for the school, our education offer and statement of provision (admissions policy) as well as detail on our proposed site for the new school.



There are a number of events and meetings taking place which you would be most welcome to attend (virtually or in person). To find out more please log on to <https://www.prosperlearningtrust.co.uk/gilbertwardacademy-consultation/> for a copy of the latest schedule.

A meeting has been arranged for schools and their respective Chair of Governors as follows:

**Thursday 1 July 2021 at 4:30pm at Isabella Community Centre, Ogle Drive, Blyth, NE24 5JF**

If you prefer, we can also arrange for a virtual link to be issued for the meeting, please visit our web page on <https://www.prosperlearningtrust.co.uk/gilbertwardacademy-consultation/> and complete our booking form stating if you would like to attend physically or virtually.

You can also go online at <https://www.prosperlearningtrust.co.uk/gilbertwardacademy-consultation/> to find further details on our plans and to respond to our online questionnaire.

If you are unable to attend our meetings but would like a conversation with us, then please email [consultation@prosperlearningtrust.co.uk](mailto:consultation@prosperlearningtrust.co.uk) or call me on 0191 229 6020 option 7 to arrange a suitable time.

**When do I need to feedback by?**

Our consultation runs from 7 June 2021 to 16 July 2021 inclusive and we hope to issue our final report and findings by no later than September 2021.

Ongoing communications about the school will be kept up to date on our website [www.prosperlearningtrust.co.uk](http://www.prosperlearningtrust.co.uk)

We look forward to hearing your views and working with you to support the development of our new school going forward.

Yours sincerely



**Mark Jones**  
CEO, PROSPER Learning Trust