

## SAIL school celebrates provisional opening date



Project leaders behind the Salisbury Academy for Inspirational Learning (SAIL) are pleased to announce an important step towards the opening of the new school. The Department for Education confirmed a provisional opening date of September 2023. This announcement means that consultations for Children and Young People for places at the new school can now get underway.

Initially, the new school will open on a temporary basis in part of Pembroke Park Primary School in Salisbury and the current site of Springfields in the South at Sarum Academy. The decision represents an important milestone in the journey towards successfully opening the new school. SAIL will then move to its permanent accommodation on land and buildings at the former South Wiltshire University Technical College in the city.

Planning permission for the school's permanent site, based at the former UTC Salisbury site, was also successfully granted over the summer; with the formal signing of the refurbishment contract with Tilbury Douglas as the next key stage towards the school opening at the permanent site in autumn 2023.

The SEND free school project will offer 150 places for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school will accommodate pupils with a diagnosis or primary need of autism (ASD) or social, emotional or mental health needs (SEMH). This will be a major contribution in ensuring that young people in south Wiltshire receive the specialised support they need.

The SAIL school will be part of the Reach South Academy Trust, which is working in partnership with the Department for Education and Wiltshire Council to ensure the new school is ready to open by September 2023.

At present, the building work needed for the school to open in its permanent site is forecast to be completed in the autumn of 2023. The refurbishment of the permanent site encountered some unexpected delays following surveys of the site. These revealed that further additional refurbishment works would be required, which ultimately delayed the planned opening by a few months.

To ensure sufficient spaces are available in the interim, the SAIL project team worked together to provide an alternative site at Pembroke Park. SAIL will deliver the new school from Pembroke Park and Sarum until the permanent site is ready to open.

**Dean Ashton, Chief Executive at Reach South Academy Trust, said:**

*"We are delighted that the provisional opening date has been agreed. This is a major step for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Wiltshire. We are looking forward to consulting with parents and young people in the area about the school that will meet their needs. We will, with our partners, establish a governing body for the school and start the process of appointing a headteacher and team and ensure that everyone is fully prepared for the new school to open in September 2023"*

**Cllr Jane Davies, Cabinet Member for SEND said:**

*"This SEND free school project is an exciting development to ensure our young people with SEND in the south of Wiltshire have first class facilities and the right learning environment to do well and enjoy school.*

*I am delighted we have the green light from the DfE to now go ahead and start preparing for next September and creating these additional places. SAIL will open to pupils initially on the Pembroke Park site and then move to the permanent home. We will work alongside DfE and Reach South to ensure a smooth transition to the new site once it's ready."*