



21st September 2026

Dear Consultee,

Statutory Consultation on the proposal to open a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) unit at Ralph Sadleir School, East Herts during the academic year 2027/28.

What is the proposal?

Ralph Sadleir School Trust is consulting on the proposal to open a SEND unit at Ralph Sadleir School, Station Road, Puckeridge, Hertfordshire, SG11 1TF. The unit will provide up to 16 places for students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and who have Cognition and Learning and co-existing needs. These students require additional specialist support within a smaller, structured environment while still benefitting from access to a mainstream school.

This proposal is considered a prescribed alteration in line with the Department for Education's (DfE's) 'Making significant changes to an academy' statutory guidance¹ and as such, requires a statutory process including a consultation.

Why is this being proposed?

Ralph Sadleir School successfully meets the needs of students with SEND and is keen to meet the needs of local children and families. In line with Hertfordshire County Council's draft SEND strategy², the County Council is working to develop a more consistent and inclusive pattern of specialist provision across the county. There are a growing number of middle school aged students with Cognition and Learning and co-existing needs who require additional specialist support but can still benefit from being part of a mainstream school.

To meet this increasing need, the County Council is proposing the development of several new SEND units, located within mainstream schools. These SEND units would offer a smaller, structured environment with specialist staff, while enabling students to maintain access to wider mainstream learning and social opportunities. This model supports earlier intervention, improves local access to provision and reduces the need to place children in more distant specialist settings.

Creating a SEND unit at Ralph Sadleir School will help ensure that provision is available locally to meet the needs of children in Rib Valley and the surrounding area.

Background to the development of SEND units

Hertfordshire's draft SEND Strategy identifies a growing number of primary aged students who require additional specialist support to succeed in mainstream schools. These students would benefit from learning in a smaller, nurturing environment but do not require a place in a special school. An increasing number of students have been identified with Cognition and Learning and co-existing needs who would benefit from this type of specialist provision within a mainstream school.

¹ [Making significant changes to an academy](#)

² [Hertfordshire SEND Strategy 2026-2029](#)



SEND units within mainstream schools allow students to receive targeted, specialist intervention while still maintaining access to the wider curriculum, peers and opportunities available in a mainstream setting. This model supports inclusion, provides earlier intervention and allows children to remain within their local community.

Developing a network of SEND units across Hertfordshire ensures a more consistent offer of specialist support, increases local capacity, and reduces reliance on out of area specialist placements. Establishing a SEND unit at Ralph Sadleir forms part of this wider programme to meet Cognition and Learning and co-existing needs across the county, with expert specialist staff to share knowledge and deliver to meet the needs of these children.

What will the SEND unit do?

The SEND unit will provide a small, structured and supportive environment where students with Cognition and Learning and co-existing needs can develop confidence, emotional wellbeing and build on the skills needed to engage positively in learning. Through targeted and timely intervention, students will be supported to make progress both academically and socially, with the aim of helping them reach their full potential.

It is proposed that the SEND unit will offer 16 places. The students will be on the roll of the school and will form part of any statutory returns required from maintained schools, including key stage results. The provision will form part of any Ofsted inspection.

The SEND unit will:

- be an important part of Hertfordshire County Council's graduated approach to meeting needs locally³;
- meet the needs of students within the provision, providing personalised support to enable them to make good progress in all areas of their development;
- build capacity across the school, ensuring that all staff have the skills and expertise to meet the needs of the students when they are accessing the wider school curriculum; and
- work with other schools across the area, to support the needs of students with Cognition & Learning and other associated needs.

What does this mean for students?

Children will be placed in the unit by the Local Authority. To be admitted, a child must have an EHCP and have identified Cognition & Learning and other associated needs. Students would have needs greater than, or additional to, the needs that can normally be met through full time attendance at a mainstream school. The school would be named by the County Council in the child's EHCP. Admission to the unit would be distinct from the school's general admissions process.

Students would have access to mainstream lessons in line with their needs. They may initially need support from specialist staff, but as they progress, where possible, they would be able to attend lessons independently.

³ [Hertfordshire County Council - The Graduated Response](#)



Students who are not admitted to the SEND unit but who attend the school and have SEND needs would continue to be supported by mainstream school staff and existing resources. Although access to the specialist provision within the unit would be through the County Council's SEND admissions process, the whole school could benefit from shared staff knowledge and specialist expertise.

In order to deliver the SEND unit, internal and external modifications will be required at Ralph Sadleir School. If approved, the County Council would work closely with the school to ensure that the accommodation supports students' needs whilst also ensuring that good value for money is achieved. The works would be managed by the County Council using contractors who will ensure a safe environment for students and staff, to minimise the impact of any building works whilst the school is in operation. The capital cost of delivering the SEND unit accommodation would be fully met by the County Council.

What would be the impact on staff?

The Headteacher would keep a strategic overview of the SEND unit, including recruitment, training and retention of the SEND unit's staff. It is expected that the Headteacher or other senior leader will be the line manager for the leader of the SEND unit.

The County Council has developed a continuing professional development programme for staff designed to ensure a consistent and high quality of offer across all SEND units. The offer covers a range of Cognition and Learning training opportunities.

If approved, the school would receive additional revenue funding to support a flexible staffing model that supports students' needs. This would enable the school to appoint specialist staff and ensure appropriate support is in place as the provision develops.

Have your say

Your response must be received by **19th October 2026**. Please email your comments to:
head@ralphsadleir.academy

If you do not have access to the internet, you can visit your local library where free access is available to all Hertfordshire residents. Staff at libraries can print off and supply documents if requested.

Should you need help understanding this information, please email:
headteacher@ralphsadleir.academy

Ralph Sadleir School will not be able to acknowledge or respond individually to your comments, but they will be considered in the decision-making process, as explained below.

Ralph Sadleir School



'Students of Today, Citizens of Tomorrow'

How the decision will be taken

The 4 week statutory notice period invites stakeholders to comment on the above proposal. No decision has been made yet. All responses received will be made available to the Ralph Sadleir trustees to consider in making the final decision. If agreed the trustees will proceed to the next step: seeking approval from the Secretary of State.

The following timetable outlines the decision making process.

Process	Date
Consultation (4 weeks)	21st September - 19th October
Trustees Board Meeting	w/b 4th November 2026
Implementation	Academic Year 2027/2028

Yours faithfully,

KAScripps

Kerry Scripps
CEO Ralph Sadleir Trust