



ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਜੀ ਸਹਾਇ ॥



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GURDWARA
SRI GURU SINGH SABHA
SLOUGH
ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰਾ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ, ਸਲੋਹ

Dear Beloved Communities,

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh

We are writing to you as the two oldest, most well-established Sikh Temples in Slough (Sri Guru Singh Sabha and Ramgarhia Sikh Gurdwara) with respect to the Sikh school in Stoke Poges. For over fifty years, since many Sikh immigrants first settled locally, we have provided spiritual leadership and guidance at the heart of our community. In that time, we have been active in playing a leading role in helping our communities as their needs have evolved. Both Gurdwaras worked tirelessly for the establishment of the Khalsa Primary School in Wexham and indeed continue to provide support. The two Gurdwaras have played a significant role in supporting the youth of the community, for example the establishment of the Singh Sabha Sports Centre in Stoke Poges Lane and the Ramgarhia Centre in Baylis Road.

The two Gurdwaras work closely together each year to organise the Nagar Kirtan, an event open to all and attracts over 10,000 members of the Sikh and wider Community. The Gurdwaras are keen to ensure that the school benefits from the wider partnership with the Sikh and local community.

We faced many struggles in those early years to integrate in to the local communities but we have through the Sikh spirit become a highly successful example of a community which is established, educated and thriving. The Gurdwaras have endeavoured to help our community and many families would have brought their new born babies to the Gurdwaras for the naming of their precious children according to custom. From a small community consisting of a handful of people we are now the largest Sikh community in the UK numbering 15,000. We are now in a position with the resources we have at our disposal to provide a world class secondary education to our children. This is a far cry from those early days when the first Sikhs settled in Slough, faced discrimination, the early settlers had to give up their Sikhi appearance to obtain employment. There are stories of hardened Sikh men who had lived through the horrors of Partition, crying as their hair was shorn at the barbers, so they could support their loved ones. Many of those individuals have passed on but they would be proud that their dreams will now become reality and their sacrifices and the hardships they suffered were not in vain.

We are your protectors. Your children are our children. Our children's education is precious.

We are acting to protect the education of our children at The Khalsa Secondary Academy in Stoke Poges. Many families have come to us regarding the breakdown of leadership at The Khalsa Secondary Academy. Sadly, we have had no legal involvement and been powerless to intervene to prevent the school declining. This has meant hardship for many families who have had to find new schools or even be forced to pay for private education because they were concerned about the safety of their children. Going forward it is essential to both Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha and Ramgarhia Sikh Gurdwara Slough, that we act swiftly to protect the children and the Sikh faith of the school.

We have looked extremely carefully at the options available since new information came to light. We do not underestimate the enormity of the decision being made by the Regional School's Commissioner. Our key priority is the protection of the Sikh faith and the calibre of **secondary** educational expertise that will lead to the best outcomes for our children. The Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), Dame Kate Dethridge, will make her decision based on the proven track record of the options being considered. The RSC have strict guidance for good governance based on professional skills and capabilities. A range of professional skills must be shown and a skills audit has been undertaken. Both Gurdwaras are appointing members and trustees based on their skillset, not related to positions within the Gurdwaras. These positions as Members and Trustees are protected legally in perpetuity. The school needs new leadership with no links to the outgoing trust. Our Gurdwaras have guaranteed that we will always retain the Sikh faith and ethos of the school. We have done this for you and your children. We are protecting our precious Sikhi.

We will always be the defenders of our faith. Never before have the Gurdwaras been able to approve the leadership of the school. Members and trustees of the school will never be paid for those roles. These are entirely voluntary positions being held by appropriately skilled individuals with the desire to use their professional expertise to protect our community. As they are announced in due course, we expect they will be given the full support of the community to undertake their duties for our children.

There has been misinformation circulated on social media. We are communicating with you now to dispel some of the mistruths that have been suggested. A small minority have questioned the integrity of our Gurdwaras, our place of worship. We are hurt by this.

Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha and Ramgarhia Sikh Gurdwara are leading the creation of a world class Sikh school for the entire community. We will bring the **best educators**, with a proven track record in leading outstanding secondary schools. This includes members of Dame Alice Owen's School, a comprehensive school which achieved consistently outstanding results, including 99.5% at GCSE including maths and English. Subsequently it became the first comprehensive school to be awarded '**The Sunday Times School of the Year**'. We want this calibre of school improvement for our children. In the future, our children will be competing with the brightest and the best from all parts of the world and we want to give them the best education possible. We know the RSC will also be looking for this when deciding the preferred sponsor for the school.

Our Sikhi is powerful and inclusive. We will nurture learning, and support children to flourish, by introducing greater expertise in education and school improvement. We will have exemplar governance and showcase Sikhism for all the community to feel proud of the school. Together we will ensure a world class school founded on Sikh values of life-long learning and spiritual growth. No child will be left behind. Secondary education forms the stepping-stones to college, apprenticeships and University and is the foundation of future achievements in life. Our children are the future leaders of our society. Let us all support them to achieve their full potential and flourish.

Our school will be our legacy for our children. Let us do this together, united with the power of SACHE PATSHAH to deliver a world class education and our precious Sikhi to all our children.

Please see below some frequently asked questions. If you would like to discuss in more detail there will be many opportunities in the coming weeks to do so.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji KI Fateh

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What will be the Sikh faith or ethos of the school?

The Sikh scripture speaks of one God who is universal, loving, and gender free, and whose love extends to people of all religions and beliefs. Behind the diversity of the world is a divine unity. In a largely male dominated society Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji emphasized the importance of women and gave equal status to all. All are the children of the same Universal God.

The Religious Education of Sikhism will be led by an appropriately qualified individual to be endorsed by the respective Gurdwaras. The respective Gurdwaras reserve the right to have overall authority to all aspects with respect to the teaching of Sikhism.

Gurmukhi is the script of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the school will make provision for the teaching of Gurmukhi. Punjabi GCSE will be offered to pupils. The food served in the school will be vegetarian and the school will be a vegetarian school in its ethos. GCSE Religious Education will have Sikhism as its main religion in accordance with the syllabus requirements.

To promote harmony and collective cohesion the school will encourage pupils to visit the respective Gurdwaras especially during major festivals and the Gurdwaras will provide visiting speakers and or attendance at Awards Ceremonies. Our Sikh ethos will be bound by the teachings of our ten Gurus and the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

The key objective of the school is to educate young people and equip them with a sense of purpose and duty in order to flourish in a diverse world. We believe by delivering a world class education together with inclusive diversity at the core of our Sikh values, our students can achieve those aspirations.

2. Will the Gurdwaras leadership of the school be protected legally?

Yes. The Gurdwaras are leading this expression of interest to the RSC and legally this can never change. The Trustees nominated by the Gurdwaras will serve a term of four years to ensure stability and will not be subject to changes in the Gurdwara Committee.

3. Can trustees of the school be replaced without the Gurdwaras permission?

No. This is not possible legally.

4. Will trustees of the school be appointed from Gurdwara committees?

Trustees will be appointed according to their professional experience and skills as dictated by the RSC's guidance on good governance. We will have an exemplar model of good governance. The Trustees will bring the necessary experience, skills and qualifications to ensure good leadership and governance. Our founding Trustees have the necessary skills, experience and education and have the interest of the children and

the local community in their hearts. They have offered to give up their time as **volunteers** to help our children and our community.

5. Is this group experienced?

Yes. We have a bespoke team of globally and nationally renowned educators with an exemplary proven track record in leading outstanding secondary schools. We also have the support of World Class Schools and larger MATs. This will lead to the most aspirational and enriching education for our children. The school will also leverage expertise from one of the UK's leading Public Schools.

6. Why did the Gurdwaras change their minds to endorse this expression of interest?

Initially it was thought there was only one expression of interest for The Khalsa Secondary Academy and both Gurdwaras acted quickly to protect the Sikh faith and ethos. As others came to light, the Gurdwaras undertook careful due diligence to provide the best education to our children and protect good governance and the Sikh ethos. **Secondary** education is a very different proposition to **primary** education, we wanted to ensure we had the best team available to deliver an outstanding education to our children.

7. What will the school be called?

The school must have a new name. This will be '**The Stoke Poges Sikh School**'.

8. Was anyone involved within the leadership of the new trust involved with opposition against the school opening?

No. This is untrue and has been falsely circulated on social media. No member of the new school leadership has any connection to original opposition to the opening of the school. There is no photograph of Fiona Kennedy holding a banner outside The Khalsa Secondary Academy in a protest. Fiona or Katie Kennedy has never been involved in any opposition to the school. There is a video of Katie Kennedy on social media taken without permission at the Parish meeting where she was providing an update to the Parish Council. She has been chastised by certain elements for trying to explain the message of the Founder of Sikhism. It saddens us to see a small minority of the community attacking her for trying to learn about Sikhi, this is not in keeping with the teachings of our Gurus.

9. How will this school help community relations?

Sikhs across the world are known for being welcoming and respectful. We are working with all parties in the spirit of equality, tolerance, and inclusion. We stand up to prejudice and respect other's differences. We want the school to be part of the village life in Stoke Poges. The school will not be holding funeral or wedding services.

10. Is it true that this is a non-Sikh takeover of the school?

No. This expression of interest is being led by members of our Sikh community, as appointed and approved by Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha and Ramgarhia Sikh

Gurdwara, Slough in conjunction with the team of leading educators. There is a small amount of harmful rhetoric of a 'non-Sikh takeover' being shared on social media. This is untrue. The Sikh faith and religious authority of the two Gurdwaras are incorporated in the Articles of Association and is a **Sikh Trust**.

11. What is Councillor Dev Singh Dhillon's role at the school?

Councillor Dev Singh Dhillon does not have a role at the school. He is not a trustee. Councillor Dev Dhillon has supported both Gurdwaras whilst remaining impartial with regards to the future leadership of the school. Councillor Dev Dhillon was responsible for removing the graffiti when the Khalsa Academy was first established in Stoke Poges.

12. How will both Gurdwaras protect the children already at the school?

Both Gurdwara's first priority is the continuing stability of the education of current students at the school. We will be working hard to ensure the mental health and well-being of all students affected by recent events are our top priority.

13. How can we support both Gurdwaras?

If you would like to find out more about our school, please visit www.educationforthefuture.co.uk.

e-mails of support can be sent to Dame Kate Dethridge, Regional Schools Commissioner at:

rsc.scnwlon@education.gov.uk.

Please sign and share the petition '[Help us to create a world class Sikh school](#)' on [Change.org](#).

Please support us and all our young people. Our children's future is precious.