

## Consultation on Proposal to add an Autistic Spectrum Disorder Specialist Resource Base at Acle Academy, Acle, Norfolk, from 1 April 2025

### Our Proposal

Wensum Trust would like to hear your views on our proposal for Acle Academy, South Walsham Road, Acle, Norwich, NR13 3ER, **to add a 25 place Autistic Spectrum Disorder Specialist Resource Base (ASD SRB) from 1 April 2025.**

We appreciate that young people with autism spectrum disorder, can struggle to engage with learning and cope in a classroom without additional strategies and interventions. A Resource Base can support young people to overcome their barriers to learning, be better able to cope and to be re-integrated into a mainstream setting, in which they can achieve their potential.

We are very keen to provide this support at Acle Academy. Our Specialist Resource Base will be located near the Acle Academy main building, within the school site. It will be new purpose built building, creating an enabling environment for SRB learners in a bespoke accommodation base. The Base will be managed by the headteacher and governing body of Acle Academy.

The Base will have a recurrent funding agreement to support an agreed staffing structure for the Specialist Resource Base, including resources, equipment and running costs associated with the Base.

Places at the Specialist Resource Base will be agreed through the County Councils' Autism Base Admissions processes and the school will be part of the decision-making process. It will grow to full capacity through this admissions process and may therefore not be full on 1 April 2025.

Specialist Resource Bases are a key part of Norfolk's Local Offer for children with special educational needs and their families and have been identified in Norfolk's SEND Strategy as a priority for development.

Please note: Our proposal is subject to significant change determination, a full building programme including tender process, planning determination and construction periods as well as staff recruitment and training in line with our Trust and whole school policies and procedures.

### What is a Specialist Resource Base (SRB)?

Autism bases form part of the Specialist Resource Base programme in Norfolk and are a key component of Norfolk's SEND Local Offer, and of mainstream inclusion support to young people, families and the school system.

Autism Bases are areas within a mainstream school with a dedicated lead teacher and high levels of support staff. They are an integral part of the school and provide additional support from trained staff for young people with social communication difficulties or a diagnosis of autism.

Autism Bases provide a learning area which is calm and adapted to meet these needs. Young people can be taught in the Base or within mainstream classes as required. Pupils are supported to access mainstream classes alongside their peers as much as they are able to. The balance of time spent between the Base and mainstream classes can vary and depends on each student's individual needs.

Placements at the Autism Base are permanent, and pupils will be on the roll of Acle Academy. These places do not form part of the school published admission number (PAN) and are registered in addition to that number.

### **What are the benefits of this proposal?**

The main driver for Wensum Trust and the senior leaders of Acle Academy is to meet the increased demand for specialist educational provision within our area and the needs of our most vulnerable learners. We feel our proposal would benefit young people because it will:

- support more students with special education needs and disabilities to be educated and thrive in their local school and community;
- enhance students' progress by effectively meeting their individual social communication and interaction needs;
- help facilitate better access to the curriculum and support students to achieve their potential;
- ensure that needs can be met locally avoiding the need for students to spend unnecessary time travelling to an appropriate school further away. This is better for young people and saves the taxpayer money in transport costs;
- increase the availability of places to meet the needs of students with SEND;
- address identified geographical, and age and phase gaps in SRB provision as identified in Norfolk's SEND Strategy;
- support the sharing of expertise and good autism practice as part our school and Trust.

### **Capital costs**

All capital costs for the new purpose built accommodation will be funded from Norfolk County Council's SEND and Alternative Provision Transformation Programme to ensure there is the appropriate accommodation.

### **How can you have your say?**

The school will be holding a drop in event at Acle Academy on Tuesday 27 September between 5pm and 6pm where you can come and find out more about this proposal.

If you unable to attend this event but would like to comment on our proposal, you can have your say by:

- Accessing our online survey; <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/aclesrb>
- Returning the completed form to the school office at Acle Academy.

**We need all responses by 12 noon Monday 10 October 2022.**

### **What happens next?**

Wensum Trust will consider all the responses received during this consultation and decide whether to complete a business case and send it to the Regional Department of Education (DfE) Director for a decision.

Date: 12/09/2022

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**Let us know what you think of our proposal.**

**How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal to establish a permanent 25 place Specialist Resource Base for Autistic Spectrum Disorder at Acle Academy?**

**Please tick a box.**

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know

**Why do you say this? Please write in the box below.**

**Are there any other comments or suggestions you would like to make to help us with this decision and in planning for the future provision for children? Please write in the box below.**

We would like to hear from many different people as your views help us to decide whether we make these changes. We will also use any personal information to understand how different groups of people feel about our proposal to establish the Specialist Resource Base at Acle Academy.

We will process any personal information we receive from you in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Academy Trust's data protection policy and guidelines. This means that Wensum Trust will hold your personal data and only use it for the purpose for which it was collected, being this consultation.

We won't identify individuals when reporting back our findings and, under our record management policy, we will keep this information for five years. We will also, under normal circumstances, not pass your personal data on to anyone else. However, we may be asked under access to information laws to publish or disclose some, or all, of the information you provide in response to this consultation, including any personal information. We will only do this where such disclosure will comply with such relevant information laws which include the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Please tell us who you are (tick all that apply):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pupil                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> School governor       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent / Carer                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Local resident        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member of the Parent Teacher Association | <input type="checkbox"/> Local business        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member of staff                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Local sports group    |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Local community group |

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

At which school? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your postcode? \_\_\_\_\_

Your views will help us decide if this proposal goes ahead. You can tell us your views by returning this completed form to:

- The school office at Acle Academy.
- Accessing our online survey; <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/aclesrb>

**This consultation ends at 12 noon on 10 October 2022**