Consultation Reference: PATHFINDERS NR

Norfolk County Council

Consultation on the proposed closure of Northrepps Primary School from September 2027

Consultation period: **Wednesday 18 November 2026 to Monday 21 December 2026 at 12:00**

Published by Norfolk County Council

Quick Summary

Tell Us What You Think

Norfolk County Council are asking for your views on a proposal to close Northrepps Primary School

We want to understand your views before any decisions are taken. More information can be found in this document and the Frequently Asked Questions which can be found at the bottom of the consultation webpage.

Please tell us what you think by Monday 21 December 2026 at 12:00.

You can complete the survey, write to us, or come to a consultation event.

Your feedback will help inform the next steps.

If you need this document in large print, in audio, Braille, in an alternative format or in another language, please contact customer services on 0344 800 8020. Or for Text Relay, call 18001 0344 800 8020 (text phone) and we will do our best to help you.

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About this consultation

Norfolk County Council are asking for views on the future of:

Northrepps Primary School
Church Street, Northrepps, Cromer, Norfolk, NR27 0LG

This consultation forms the first stage of a statutory process that must be completed before any decisions are taken. **We are asking people what they think while the proposal remains under consideration and before any final decisions have been made**. All responses will be carefully reviewed, including any evidence, suggestions, concerns and alternative proposals put forward. Decision-makers will consider the themes emerging from the consultation and whether any changes to the proposal are required before reaching a decision to move to the next stage.

This document explains:

- what is being proposed;
- why the proposal is being considered;
- how other linked schools in the Pathfinders Federation may be affected;
- how you can share your views;
- what happens next.

Frequently Asked Questions which can be found at the bottom of the consultation webpage.



Possible closure of Northrepps Primary School

What is a school closure?

A school closure is when a school permanently stops operating, this is also sometimes referred to as a ‘discontinuance’. If a school closes:

- The school will no longer admit or teach pupils after the closure date.
- Children will need to attend another school.

The proposal

Norfolk County Council is proposing to close (discontinue) Northrepps Primary School (2-11 years) on 31 August 2027. If approved:

- the last day for pupils in all year groups in the school would be the final day of the summer term in July 2027; and
- children attending Northrepps Primary School would be supported to move to another school in the local area.

The Executive Director of Children's Services at Norfolk County Council is the decision maker for this proposal.

As Northrepps Primary School is a rural school, the Council must carefully consider the impact of closure before making a final decision.

Why is the closure being considered?

The possible closure of Northrepps Primary School is being considered because:

- There are more primary school places in the local area than are needed. Several schools are within three miles of Northrepps Primary School. These include Suffield Park Infant and Nursery School, Cromer Junior School, The Belfry Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School in Overstrand and Roughton St Mary’s Church of England Primary School.
- When planning school places, the Council looks at where children live, how many places local schools have and how pupil numbers may change. The aim is to provide enough local places while making good use of school buildings and public money.
- The number of primary aged children living in the area is expected to remain low. Current forecasts do not show enough additional demand to support all existing school places over the coming years.

- Numbers of pupils at Northrepps Primary School have fallen from 37 in 2017/18 to 25 in November 2026. This decline has been sustained over an extended period and projections suggest this decline is likely to continue.

- This school has space for 68 pupils. This means that about 63% of the school's places are currently empty.

- A proportion of families living in the Northrepps Primary School catchment are choosing other local schools and therefore there were a very small number of reception applications in 2026. Parental choice is one factor, but the Council must also consider the number of children living locally and the places available across the wider area.

- Low pupil numbers make it challenging for schools to operate within budget in the future. As schools are funded on a per pupil basis, when there are fewer pupils, this means the school gets less funding, affecting operational matters such as how many teachers the school can afford to employ, maintain the curriculum and meet other running costs.

- With the school's low pupil numbers, pupils are already being taught in mixed-aged classes. It is likely with continued low numbers, further combining of year groups would be required. Teaching all pupils together in one classroom would make it harder to provide learning that meets the different needs of all age groups. It would also reduce opportunities for children to learn alongside peers of a similar age.

- There are enough places at other local schools for all pupils currently attending Northrepps Primary School. The Council will keep this under constant review before any final decision is made. Nearby schools have positive Ofsted inspection outcomes.

- The nursery has not been operating for some time because there have not been enough staff available to operate it safely. Because of these ongoing challenges, it has not been possible to reopen the provision. The long-term future of the nursery will be considered as part of the overall closure consultation for Northrepps Primary School.

Future School Catchment

If the proposal proceeds, Norfolk County Council will consider how the catchment area currently linked to Northrepps should be reallocated. The local authority has a coordinating role and will work with other local admission authorities to consider the best way forward. This will be a separate process.

What alternatives have been considered?

Before reaching this proposal, the Council considered a range of alternative options to determine whether there were other ways to secure the long-term future of Northrepps Primary School. While some of these may help with particular challenges facing the school, they do not address the fact

that there is a significant surplus of school places in the wider area and a declining number of children needing spaces.

The options considered included:

- **Taking no action** and allowing current arrangements to continue. However, this would not address the underlying challenges facing the school and could result in those difficulties continuing or worsening over time.
- **Changes to federation or governance arrangements**, whilst governance arrangements can sometimes provide support, the schools already have shared leadership, so any changes to this would be unlikely to make a difference to the sustainability of the school.
- **Changes to catchment arrangements** to encourage more pupils to attend the school. No schools in the area surrounding Northrepps are oversubscribed currently, and catchment changes do not create additional pupils and would be unlikely to significantly increase numbers in the short term.
- **Promoting the school more widely** to increase pupil numbers. Whilst raising awareness of the school may influence parental choice for some families, it would not address the wider decline in demand for school places within the area. And, if successful, could create sustainability concerns in neighbouring schools
- **Joining an academy trust** or changing the school's governance model. Academy trusts can bring expertise and support, but any trust would also need to be satisfied that the school could remain viable in the longer term.
- **Amalgamation** with another school in the federation has been considered. However, the other schools are around 9 miles away and are facing their own viability challenges. The journey would take around 20 minutes by car. This would involve longer journeys than attending schools closer to Northrepps and would not resolve the viability concerns described.

What impacts could arise as a result of changes?

We have not brought this proposal forward lightly. We recognise that, while there may be long-term benefits to having a reduced surplus in school places in the wider area, there may also be difficult consequences for some pupils, families, staff and members of the community.

The issues outlined below are some of the key impacts we have identified. However, consultation is an important part of the process because those affected by the proposal may identify additional impacts, concerns or local factors.

Feedback received through the consultation, together with the Equality Impact Assessment, will help ensure that these views are properly considered before any decision is made.

- **Impact on children and families:** If the proposal proceeds, current pupils would need to adjust to a new school, staff and routines, which may be unsettling. Current and

future local children would need to travel to school outside the village, affecting family routines.

- **Impact on staff and volunteers:** Proposals of this nature can create uncertainty for staff. School staff invest significant time, care and commitment into their schools and communities, and we understand that changes may have a personal and professional impact on those involved.

- **Travel and access considerations:** If the proposal proceed, some families may experience changes to travel arrangements, including longer journeys or different routes to school. This could affect travel times, daily routines and access to activities before or after the school day.

- **Loss of a local school and its role in the community:** Schools often play an important role within their communities and may be valued for reasons that extend beyond education. The closure of a school may be felt as a significant loss by pupils, families, former pupils, local residents and community groups, particularly where the school has been part of community life for many years.

- **Equality and inclusion considerations:** We recognise that changes may affect people in different ways. Some groups may experience particular challenges or require additional support during a period of change.

How would these changes be managed?

- If the proposal goes ahead, support would be provided to help children, families and staff through the transition.
- The aim would be to make any changes as smooth as possible and to minimise disruption to children's education.
- Children would have opportunities to visit, become familiar with staff and surroundings, and build confidence before any changes take place.
- Where possible, transition planning would also recognise the relationships, memories and sense of belonging connected with the school.
- Parents, carers and staff would be kept informed throughout the process and given opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback.

Linked proposals: Other schools in the Federation

When considering closure, it is important to recognise the interdependencies that exist within a federation. Decisions affecting one school can have implications for the other schools within the federation, particularly where leadership, staffing, finances, resources and organisational arrangements are shared.

Therefore, this proposal is part of a wider set of changes being considered across Pathfinders Federation.

Alongside this proposal, there is an amalgamation proposal for Erpingham VC Primary School and St. Michael's Church of England VA Primary School & Nursery. This means that all proposals are linked and are being consulted on at the same time so that families and stakeholders can see the full picture.

Although the proposals are linked, each proposal must follow its own process and will be considered on its own merits before any decisions are made. You can find out more about the proposal at Erpingham VC Primary School and St. Michael's Church of England VA Primary School & Nursery by following this link: https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/pathfinderserp-smps

What we know and what we don't know yet

What we know: A proposal has been made and we are now asking for people's views. No final decision has been made.

What we don't know yet: We cannot answer every question at this stage. Some things, such as individual school places, transport arrangements, staffing and detailed transition plans, will depend on the outcome of the consultation and later decisions.

What happens next: We will share further information when it is available and will be clear about what has been decided and what is still being considered.

Stages and key dates

When schools are proposed for closure, there are a number of stages that must be followed before any final decision can be made.

The timeline below provides an estimate of when each stage of the process may take place, these dates may be subject to change.

Stage	Date	What this means
Consultation opens	Wednesday 18 November 2026	This is when people can start sharing their views.
Public meeting	**Monday 23 November 4:15pm to 5:15pm** Northrepps Village Hall Northrepps Norfolk NR27 0LB	This is an opportunity to ask questions, find out more about the proposal, and share your views with representatives from the Governing Body of the Pathfinders Federation and Norfolk County Council.
Consultation closes	Monday 21 December 2026 at 12:00	This is the final day for comments and feedback to be received. After this date further responses unfortunately cannot be considered.
Responses reviewed	In late December and early in the new year	All of the feedback received during the consultation is read and carefully considered.
Decision on whether to publish a statutory notice	In late December and early in the new year	The Executive Director of Children's Services at Norfolk County Council will decide whether to move to the next stage. This is not the final decision on the proposal. It is a decision about whether the proposal should continue through the formal process.
Statutory notice published, if agreed	Early in the Spring Term	A formal notice is published to explain the proposal and invite further comments. This is a required step for school closures.
Formal representation period	Early in the Spring Term	This starts when the Public Notice is issued. During this period, anyone can make

		comments. All comments received must be considered before a final decision is made.
Final decision	In the Spring Term	The Executive Director of Children's Services at Norfolk County Council is the decision-maker and will consider all the information, including consultation feedback and representations, before deciding whether the proposal should go ahead or not.
Proposed closure date, if approved	31 August 2027	If the proposal is approved, this is the date Northrepps Primary School would formally close. Children would begin at their new schools from September 2027 onwards.
Catchment change process, if needed	Once a final decision has been made in the Spring Term	If Northrepps Primary School closes, changes to local catchment areas may be needed in the future through a separate process.

More information can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions which can be found at the bottom of the consultation webpage.

How to have your say

We want to hear from you about this proposal.

You can respond to this consultation in the following ways.

Online:
https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/pathfindersnr

Email:
Please ensure that your email is marked with reference: **PATHFINDERS NR**

schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk

Post:
FREEPOST IH 2076, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DL.

Please mark your letter with reference: **PATHFINDERS NR** *You do not need a stamp.*

Public meeting:

Monday 23 November 2026, 4:15pm to 5:15pm
Northrepps Village Hall
Northrepps
Norfolk
NR27 0LB

If you need any arrangements made in order for this event to be accessible to you, please contact schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk or let the school office know.

Paper form: Completing the paper form attached and returning it to the school office

Please send your response by:

Monday 21 December 2026 at 12:00

Responses received after the consultation closure cannot unfortunately be considered. Please submit your response by the deadline so it can be included in this consultation. If a statutory notice is subsequently published, there will be a separate opportunity to make formal representations.

Privacy statement

Norfolk County Council is the data controller for the personal information collected through this consultation. We would like to hear your views on the proposals. We will use the information you provide to:

- understand how the proposals may affect different people and communities;
- analyse the feedback received;
- understand the views of different stakeholder groups;
- prepare consultation summaries and reports; and
- inform the consultation and decision-making process.

The form collects your consultation response, comments, stakeholder category and school connection. It does not ask for your name, postcode, contact details or other information that directly identifies you.

Please only include information that is necessary and relevant to your response. Avoid including names, contact details or other information that could identify you or someone else, as well as sensitive personal information such as details about health, ethnicity or religion.

Our lawful basis for using your information is **public task under Article 6(1)(e) of the UK GDPR**, as the processing is necessary for Norfolk County Council to carry out its public functions relating to school organisation, education provision and consultation.

These functions are supported by the:

- **Education and Inspections Act 2006**;
- **Education Act 1996**;
- **School Admissions Code 2021;**
- **School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2013**; and
- **School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013**.

Your response may be accessed by authorised Norfolk County Council officers, elected members and relevant governance or decision-making bodies where this is necessary for the consultation. Approved organisations providing IT or administrative support may process information on behalf of Norfolk County Council.

Consultation responses may be summarised in reports or discussed at relevant school meetings to help inform consideration of the proposals. We will take steps to remove or redact identifying information before responses are shared, discussed or published, so that individual respondents are not identified. However, information may be disclosed where Norfolk County Council is required or permitted to do so by law.

We will keep consultation responses and associated records for **five years**, after which they will be securely deleted or anonymised.

Returning your response

You can respond to the consultation online through Citizen Space, by returning a completed paper form through your school office, or by emailing your comments directly to us.

If you return a completed paper form through your school office, the school will scan the form and email it to Norfolk County Council's School Organisation Team. This enables us to receive and consider your response.

If you prefer, you can email your comments directly to us. Your email may include your name, email address and other personal information contained in your message, signature or attachments. Once we have recorded and processed your consultation response, we will securely delete the email and any personal information that is not needed for the consultation record.

- Paper forms and comments sent directly by email do not result in Citizen Space collecting technical information about you, such as your IP address or information about your browser or device.

For more information about how Norfolk County Council uses your information and your information rights, please read the Norfolk County Council general privacy notice.

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Consultation Response Form

These pages can be detached and handed into your school office:

Consultation on the proposed closure of Northrepps Primary School from September 2027

Consultation period: **Wednesday 18 November 2026 to Monday 21 December 2026 at 12:00**

Let us know what you think of the proposal.

How far do you agree or disagree with the proposal to close Northrepps Primary School?

Please tick a box.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Don't know

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

**Please do not include personal information*

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.

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

- ☐ Pupil
- ☐ Parent / Carer
- ☐ Member of the Parent Teacher Association
- ☐ Member of staff
- ☐ School governor
- ☐ Local resident
- ☐ Local business
- ☐ Local sports group
- ☐ Local community group

Other (please specify):

At which school?

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

- The school office at Northrepps Primary School
- Accessing our online survey;https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/pathfindersnr

This consultation ends on Monday 21 December 2026 at 12:00