

23rd May 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian,

You will be aware that a general election has been called and will take place on the 4th July 2024. Your school, as per previous years is designated as a polling station for Wirral local authority. The school will have been used recently at the local elections in May 2023 and 2024. The local authority will work with schools to give as much notice as possible to allow inset days to be used if appropriate when schools close for elections that are planned.

In relation to general elections, unfortunately this is announced with a notice period of 6 weeks. Having contacted your school, they have made the local authority aware they will have to close to allow the school to be used as a polling station for the general election on the 4th July 2024.

The law is quite specific in that Returning Officers (ROs) have the right to select schools as venues for polling stations. If there is an area which can be used, with a separate entrance and isolated from the rest of the school, the school can continue to operate.

If not, the school must close on the day of the poll. Schools which need to close because of being used as polling stations can move to alternative accommodation or make use other means of delivering education, for example online learning. There are currently no plans to change or amend this legislation, which is found in: *The Representation of the People Act, 1983, Chapter 2, Schedule 1, Part III, paragraph 22*

This paragraph effectively renders all mainstream schools liable for use by the RO of the local authority irrespective of how they were procured.

This includes:

- Academies
- City Technology Colleges
- Community schools
- Foundation schools
- LA Nursery schools
- Voluntary Aided schools
- Voluntary Controlled schools

I appreciate this is a disappointment that your school will have to close, I speak for headteachers and governors at all schools impacted by this, we would wish for this to be avoided. A general election is normally an event that occurs on a 5-year cycle and therefore this should only impact on pupils at most twice in their primary school experience.

If you have any issues regarding the school closure, please contact your school in the first instance but please be assured the time period involved means no other option is available.

Yours sincerely,



James Backhouse
Assistant Director – Education- Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council