Consultation about a proposal for Desborough College to become co-educational and admit girls into Year 7 from September 2028

Desborough College, part of Pioneer Educational Trust, is consulting about a proposal for Desborough College to become a co-educational school for boys and girls. The proposal is that girls would be admitted into Year 7 from September 2028, and so Year 7 to Year 11 would be fully co-educational in 2032/33. The sixth form is already co-educational and this would continue.

The consultation runs until **Friday 13th November 2026** – please have your say.

This document summarises the proposal. Further information is provided in a Question and Answer document that is available from the College website by clicking here.

The opportunity for change – rationale for the proposal

Desborough becoming co-educational is being proposed because:

- It provides more co-educational places within Maidenhead to reflect the wishes of most boys and their families;
- It provides greater ability for Desborough to fill its Year 7 places in future years, so increasing the resources of the school and the opportunity for pupils;
- It enables parents to choose Desborough for their sons and daughters and so have a relationship with one secondary school;
- Co-educational schooling prepares students effectively for their life as adults; and
- The proposal provides co-educational places at their most local school for families who move into the Elizabeth Quarter development.

What would happen if Desborough became co-educational?

If Desborough became co-educational:

- The Year 7 students who join in September 2028 would include girls and boys. These children are currently in Year 5, and girls and boys would be able to apply for Desborough when they make their applications in October 2027
- The Year 7 cohort would continue to be up to 180 pupils each year;
- The new Year 7 each year from September 2028 onwards would be co-educational. This means that the 2032/33 academic year would be the first year that the school would be fully co-educational;
- The existing year groups at Desborough, and the Year 7 cohort who join in September 2027, would continue to be only for boys until they complete Year 11. Girls would not join these year groups; and
- The sixth form is already co-educational, and this would continue.

How would Desborough meet the needs of girls?

The following changes would be made if Desborough became co-educational:

- Facilities: There would be conversion and refurbishment of some facilities to ensure equality of facilities for girls and boys, for instance toilets and changing facilities;
- Curriculum: This would be reviewed to ensure its suitability for a co-educational school. This would include, for instance, the PE curriculum and the curriculum regarding Relationships and Sex Education as well as the trips that the school runs for different year groups;
- Pastoral care: We would review our pastoral systems and staffing to ensure that it would meet the needs of a cohort that includes boys and girls;
- Extra-curricular activities: These would be reviewed to ensure that they reflect the interests of a co-educational cohort;
- Uniform: The uniform policy would be updated to make it suitable for girls. There is no intention to change the uniform for boys as a result of this change; and
- Admissions: The admissions arrangements for the school would need to change to reflect the co-educational status. No changes to the Published Admission Number (PAN) or the over-subscription criteria are proposed. The proposed admissions arrangements for 2028/29 is being consulted on alongside this consultation – the proposed arrangements are available here.

Leadership staff at Desborough, including Dr Bhatt, have taught and led in co-educational schools, as have colleagues from Pioneer Educational Trust. Many teachers at Desborough have taught in co-educational schools. The school and trust are committed to making the transition successful for the first girls who would join in September 2028.

What would remain the same if Desborough becomes co-educational?

- The school would continue to be called 'Desborough College'; and
- The school would continue to have the highest expectations of and for its students.

How can I have my say?

You can have your say by:

- Completing the online questionnaire that is available here
- Emailing your views to: consultation@desborough-college.net
- Writing to the Headteacher at the school address (Shoppenhangers Road, Maidenhead, SL6 2QB).

Consultation meetings have been arranged for staff, parents and carers, and the wider community. Consultation with students has also been planned.

The consultation closes on Friday 13th November 2026. Please share your views before then.

What happens next?

Pioneer Educational Trust will consider all responses to the consultation before they make a decision about whether to apply to the Department for Education (DfE) for their approval to the proposal. If the trust does apply, the DfE's decision would be anticipated in spring 2027. If the trust decides not to apply to the DfE then Desborough would remain a boys' school for Y7 to Y11 with a co-educational sixth form.