

The Legal Process Ahead

Here is how the process is expected to unfold from now (the timings indicated are not certainties, but what we envisage based on appropriate advice that has been provided):

- Towards the end of August the School will submit its appeal against the de-registration notice to the First Tier Tribunal. The School can continue its work while an appeal is ongoing, therefore **the Autumn Term will begin as scheduled on September 5th**.
- Following this, the Department for Education (DfE) has a further 28 days in which it may file a re-sponse. A Tribunal hearing will then be scheduled, and it is envisaged that this would take place either in late 2017 or Spring 2018. The School will be open throughout this time.
- In the meantime, the best case scenario is that the School is able to demonstrate its progress to the satisfaction of the DfE, and the DfE withdraws the notice of de-registration. If not, the matter will proceed to Tribunal where the School's counsel will present our case.
- If the Tribunal finds in favour of the School, then the School will stay open and continue to improve and pursue its mission to provide the best Steiner education possible.
- If the Tribunal finds against the School, then there are various procedural possibilities relating to appealing that decision. Given the strength of our belief in the underlying value of the School's offering, the School would seek to appeal this decision to the Upper Tribunal. In that event, the School would petition to suspend any order for closure pending the Upper Tribunal's decision in respect of the appeal.

If, once all legal avenues are exhausted, the de-registration order is still upheld, then the School's barrister will make representations to the Tribunal (or to the Secretary of State) with regards to the timing of closure. Those representations would be based on what is in the best interests of the children, and reference important factors like:

- The safety of the School after a process of continuous improvement
- The difficulty for exam-year students of switching to different schools that may use different exam-boards
- The availability of equivalent school places in the surrounding area
- The need to find other schools in which pupils can complete their year of Steiner / Waldorf age specific curriculum

The School's representations would argue for the best possible timeline for transition in terms of the children's needs. To ensure that we take all possible steps to protect the interests of the children during this time, we will also engage with other Schools to prepare contingency plans so that exam-completion and Steiner alternatives are available.

As you will appreciate, we obviously cannot predict with certainty the outcome of this process, despite the strength of our case. However, there is a long and established legal process ahead that ensures that the School will have a full and fair opportunity to present its case and show its many strengths and improvements.

We are doing our very best to bring as much certainty and clarity to the situation as we can, and we will continue to share further information as soon as we have it. In the meantime, we hope that you continue to share our faith in the School, its action plan and our common mission to provide a wonderful education for your children.