

12<sup>th</sup> July 2016

## **New Secondary School for Elmbridge gets Go Ahead**

The Department for Education has given the go ahead for the ElmWey Learning Trust, which operates Heathside School in Weybridge, to open a brand new Secondary School in the Walton-on-Thames/Molesey area of Elmbridge. The school is planned to open in September 2019 and will be a state funded Free School, non-selective and non-faith based. It will grow year-on-year and when fully operational will have 900 students in the age range 11-16.

ElmWey submitted their bid in March this year in response to a growing shortage of secondary school places in the area. It is predicted that there will be a need for at least 200 more secondary places by 2022, a demand that existing schools cannot meet.

The new school will be named 'Heathside, Walton-on-Thames', demonstrating ElmWey's desire to replicate at the new school, the high standards already achieved by Heathside Weybridge. The two schools will work together so that the new school benefits from expert support as it grows to full capacity.

Heathside Walton-on-Thames is one of 31 new Free Schools announced by the David Cameron on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July during a visit to the Reach Academy, a Free School in Feltham.

ElmWey's bid received widespread support from the local authority, local councillors and Members of Parliament including Dominic Raab and Philip Hammond. Most importantly over 120 local residents have signed up to ElmWey's Free School website, with the overwhelming majority indicating that their children may attend the new school.

Mrs Anne Cullum, ElmWey's Executive Principal who leads Heathside School, expressed her delight at the announcement from the Department for Education "This is good news for Elmbridge and in particular for residents of Molesey and Walton-on-Thames. Our vision is to create an outstanding school to serve the local community, a school where academic outcomes are excellent for all our students. We are pleased that our bid has been granted after rigorous scrutiny and we now look forward to turning our plans into reality."

Francis Nicholas, Chair of the board of ElmWey Learning Trust added "This is an exciting development for families in the area; every parent wants an excellent education for their child and we are proud to have been set the challenge of creating a new school to meet this need."

The [ElmWey website](#) has more information, and parents can register their interest as well as sign up for news and updates.

# Notes for Editors/FAQs

## ***What will the school be like?***

Non-selective, non-faith based mixed Secondary School for children aged 11-16, opening in 2019.

## ***Where will the school be?***

Hopefully between Walton-on-Thames and Molesey, ElmWey will now work with the Department for Education to identify a site.

## ***What is a Free School?***

Free Schools are State funded schools. The first opened in 2011 and there are now over 300 including over 120 secondary Free Schools. They are not under the control of the Local Authority and are funded directly by the Department for Education.

## ***Who made the bid/What is the ElmWey Learning Trust***

The bid has been made by the ElmWey Learning Trust which operates Heathside School in Weybridge.

## ***Why was the bid made?***

To provide an excellent standard of education for the growing number of secondary school students in the borough, a need that cannot be met by existing schools.

## ***Contacts/more information:***

[www.elmbridgefreeschool.co.uk](http://www.elmbridgefreeschool.co.uk)

[www.heathside.surrey.sch.uk](http://www.heathside.surrey.sch.uk)

[www.elmwey.org.uk](http://www.elmwey.org.uk)