



Hampshire
County Council

Pre-Planning Consultation – Pennington CE Primary School - New Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Special Educational Needs Unit

Hampshire County Council wishes to consult with you ahead of submitting a planning application to create a new Special Educational Needs (SEN) Unit for up to 50 primary pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs at Pennington CE Primary School. This SEN Unit would utilise the site and accommodation at the former Pennington Infant School, which was vacated in January 2026 when the infant and junior schools amalgamated. If approved, the SEN Unit would open in phases from September 2027.

This pre-planning consultation will run for five weeks from Friday 15 May to Friday 19 June 2026.

Please note that this consultation relates specifically the proposed planning and building works. There is an additional concurrent and parallel statutory consultation relating to opening the SEN Unit, which can be found on our website, www.hants.gov.uk/publicnotices.

Why do you need to expand Pennington CE Primary School to include a Special Educational Needs Unit?

Hampshire County Council has a duty to make sure there are enough school places within the county for those children and young people who have complex special educational needs that cannot be met within a mainstream school setting.

The County Council is committed to expanding successful provision wherever possible to meet demand. There is an increased and growing need to provide specialist support for pupils with SEMH needs in the New Forest. This proposal will provide much needed specialist educational accommodation to meet current and future demand.

Children with SEMH needs may face challenges in understanding and managing their emotions, building relationships, and coping with everyday situations. They often benefit from consistent routines, nurturing relationships with trusted adults, and access to therapeutic support. With the right interventions, these children can develop resilience, emotional awareness, and positive coping strategies that support both their wellbeing and educational progress.

The County Council and senior leadership at Pennington CE Primary School are consulting on using the Infant School accommodation and site to provide a new Unit for pupils with SEMH needs. These pupils would be on Pennington CE Primary school roll and be educated on the former infant school site. If approved, the unit would open in phases from September 2027, gradually increasing to 50 places over three years.

Pennington CE Primary School is already successfully meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and the surplus accommodation at the former infant school site gives an opportunity to expand this specialist provision. Pennington CE Primary already has an SEMH Resourced Provision based at the Primary site, which will be unaffected by the establishment of the unit.

The new SEN Unit will bring additional specialist staff, training, and resources to Pennington CE Primary School, enhancing inclusion and wellbeing for all pupils. It will improve facilities, provide opportunities for shared expertise, and strengthen the school's capacity to support a wide range of needs, creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

What building works will be taking place?

The proposal includes reconfiguring the former infant school building to create specialist classrooms, therapy spaces, and outdoor areas. The proposed building works will ensure appropriate levels of safeguarding and accessibility for the students that attend. IT, furniture, and specialist resources will also be provided as part of the proposal. Additional on-site parking and a pick up/drop off area will be created within the grounds of the former infant school. It is also proposed that a new artificial grass play area is to be created and located on the primary school's site for the use of the mainstream and RP pupils. Proposed drawings have been published on the consultation website for you to view. These drawings include the draft layout of the external areas, including parking and pick up/drop off arrangements, and an indicative view of the internal layout of the SEN Unit.

When will the building works start?

Building works are expected to start in Spring 2027, subject to planning consent. The health and safety of children, staff and visitors is paramount. The County Council works with construction partners who have significant experience of working on school sites. A detailed health and safety plan will be developed.

What treatments are you proposing for the site boundary?

It is important to ensure appropriate steps are taken to safeguard pupils attending the SEN Unit, who will have significant additional needs. In order to ensure the safety of pupils attending the SEN Unit a 2.4 metre fence (approximately eight foot) has been proposed in the plans. This fence would be erected around the site perimeter and would ensure the safeguarding of pupils throughout the school day, and privacy for residents of homes adjoining the site.

How will construction traffic be managed?

A Construction Traffic Management Plan will be developed to ensure safe and considerate movement of vehicles around the site during the construction period. Typically, this would be prepared and submitted to the planning authority for

approval as a pre-commencement planning condition. It will be publicly available to view once submitted and validated by the council, before construction works begin.

What about the impact on traffic due to the new provision?

The County Council appreciates that local residents may be concerned about potential traffic implications due to the repurposing of the former Pennington Infant School. By planning to create school places on an accessible site, as close as possible to where children live, we create the best chance for those children to travel to school in an active, sustainable way, using means of travel other than the car.

This is supported through the production of a Framework School Travel Plan, to be submitted as part of the planning application. The Framework School Travel Plan will set out a range of measures to encourage staff, families, pupils and visitors to make informed decisions about how they travel to and from school. The Travel Planning Team at Hampshire County Council will work with Pennington CE Primary School before and after opening the SEN Unit to put these measures in place and help minimise any impact on the environment and local community that the school run may cause.

Once the SEN Unit is open and operating, a working group will be established to expand Pennington CE Primary School's current Full School Travel Plan.

The Full School Travel Plan is a document that provides a long-term plan to look at how children, parents, staff and visitors travel to and from school, and sets out measures to;

1. Encourage and enable pupils, parents/guardians, staff and visitors to walk/wheel, scoot and cycle to school where possible. Where this is not possible, to consider public transport, car sharing or the use of any "Park and Stride" facilities.
2. Encourage and provide educational programmes relating to active, sustainable travel and how this links to the environment, road safety and both physical and mental health.

The development and ongoing review of the school travel plan by the steering/working group will involve;

- Surveying pupils, parents and staff to find out how they travel, if they encounter any barriers preventing them from choosing active modes of travel and suggestions as to improvements.
- Consulting with the local community and other key partners to identify any issues relating to school travel that are felt by the wider community.
- Working with the various key stakeholders to develop an action plan which addresses these barriers and issues and seeks ways to increase sustainable, safe travel to school.

Alongside the expansion of Pennington CE Primary School's Full School Travel Plan, the school will be invited and supported to maintain their current Modeshift STARS accreditation – a nationally recognised award for schools that demonstrate excellence in promoting active and sustainable travel. Pennington CE Primary

School currently holds a “Good” level accreditation, which they are seeking to renew in the current term. They will be encouraged to achieve the same level for the proposed SEN Unit too.

The proposed SEN Unit will cater for pupils with EHC Plans, who may be eligible for council funded home-to-school transport, subject to meeting the relevant criteria. It is proposed for the design to include a dedicated car park and drop-off facility to enable vehicles to access the site safely for pupil drop-off and collection. The size of the car park also recognises the additional numbers of staff required for a SEN Unit, and cycle parking is also provided for staff to encourage sustainable travel where possible.

How are the capital works to create the new SEN Unit being funded?

The new unit is being funded through the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA).

Will I have the opportunity to discuss the plans and ask questions?

A drop-in event where you will be able to discuss the proposal with County Council Officers will take place on **Tuesday 9 June, Pennington CE Primary School, Priestlands Road, Pennington, Lymington, SO41 8HX between 3:30pm and 6:00pm.**

If you wish to make a comment on the building works related to the new SEN Unit proposal, please write to Owain Hale-Heighway, Strategic Development Officer, Children’s Services Department, Elizabeth II Court, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 8UG or by email to: strategicplanningunit@hants.gov.uk by **19 June 2026**.

What happens after this consultation?

This consultation will run between Friday 15 May and Friday 19 June 2026

Officers will then take into consideration all the consultation responses, prior to the submission of the planning application. You will have a further opportunity to comment on the school proposals should they proceed to the statutory planning stage.