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**HEADTEACHER:  
MR. M. BLENCOWE**

6<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Dear Ms Cameron

Re: Closure of Northfield Hostel

I am writing on behalf of the Governors at Northfield School with regard to the informal consultation being undertaken with regard to the closure of Northfield Hostel.

The proposed closure of Northfield Hostel is a cause of grave concern to the Governors for the following reasons:

1. The school has annually bought into the property maintenance services of Carillion and at no time has the company brought to the attention of the Headteacher or the Governors the need for extensive repairs to ensure that the Hostel met Health and Safety requirements. Indeed the school had spent time and money in replacing furniture and ensuring that the environment was acceptable, only now to be told that the Hostel is not safe for use.
2. The school has been able, in the short term, to make arrangements for pupils to have an extended day at school and as a result to compensate in part for the loss of the Hostel. Although pupils have responded positively to this new initiative, it is not an entirely suitable alternative to the Hostel provision, as it relies on staff being able to supervise pupils off the Northfield site to enable them to access appropriate activities. There is also a need for meals, which have to be provided through retail outlets, which is costly together with the provision of daily taxis to return pupils home. For the extended day provision to continue, it needs to be fully funded with appropriate facilities on the school site to allow pupils to take part in activities and to have a meal before returning home.
3. The Hostel has been operating as a very successful resource for 16 pupils, offering residential and extended day provision. The benefit to pupils of being able to access a secure, nurturing and stimulating environment cannot be underestimated. The Governors would want the Local Authority to be aware that a number of these pupils are very vulnerable for a number of reasons, but are not in the Looked After system; the Hostel has not, therefore, been operating as part of the Local Authority's provision for children Looked After and has been part of the provision provided by Northfield School for its pupils.

The Governors recognise that the current estimate of the cost of repairing the Hostel is not economically viable. The informal consultation states that 'some of the

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receipt from the closure and sale of the hostel would be used to improve the facilities at Northfield School, particularly the sports facilities.' The Governors would be supportive of this proposal, but are concerned that the current very poor state of the school buildings and roof also need to be addressed and would urge the Local Authority to ensure that Governors are fully involved in any decisions with regard to the disposal of the hostel and the provision of new facilities. To date the school has not been fully informed, or consulted, with regard to the disposal of the hostel, the provision of alternative facilities, or how the poor condition of the school buildings and roof are to be addressed.

The Governors look forward to being informed of the results of the informal consultation and the next steps that will be followed in this process.

Yours sincerely

Mary Whitlock  
Chair of Governors  
Northfield School

Dear Mrs Cameron

Re: Closure of Northfield Hostel

I am writing on behalf of the Governors of Northfield School with regard to the closure of Northfield Hostel.

The proposed closure of Northfield Hostel is a cause of grave concern to the Governors for the following reasons:

1. The school has annually brought into the property maintenance services of Gifford and at no time has the company brought to the attention of the Headteacher or the Governors the need for extensive repairs to ensure that the Hostel met Health and Safety requirements. Indeed the school had spent time and money in replacing furniture and ensuring that the environment was acceptable, only now to be told that the Hostel is not safe for use.
2. The school has been able in the interim to make arrangements for pupils to have an extended day at school and as a result to compensate in part for the loss of the Hostel. Although pupils have responded positively to this new initiative, it is not an entirely suitable alternative to the Hostel provision, as it relies on staff being able to supervise pupils off the Northfield site to enable them to access appropriate activities. There is also a need for meals, which have to be provided through retail outlets which is costly together with the provision of daily taxis to return pupils home. For the extended day provision to continue, it needs to be fully funded with appropriate policies on the safety of site to allow pupils to take part in activities that have a meal before returning home.
3. The Hostel has been operating as a very successful resource for its pupils offering educational and recreational day provision. The benefit to pupils of being able to see a variety of things and stimulating environment cannot be underestimated. The Governors would want the Local Authority to be aware that a number of these pupils are away - vulnerable for a number of reasons, but not in the least that the Hostel has not been fully inspected, been up to date as part of the provision provided by Northfield School for its pupils.

The Governors recognise that the current estimate of the cost of repairing the Hostel is not economically viable. The informal consultation states that some of the

