



AKSHAR EDUCATIONAL TRUST

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PRESS RELEASE

The Swaminarayan School to Exit the Education Sector by July 2020

Since its opening in 1992, The Swaminarayan School (TSS) – an independent faith school – has served the community faithfully for over 25 years. The community is immensely proud of the School's many successes and achievements during this time, made possible through the efforts of the pupils, staff and parents.

However, increasing regulatory requirements, difficulties in recruitment and retention of teachers, ready availability of free state-funded Hindu schools, and declining pupil numbers have all posed significant challenges, particularly over the last few years. This in turn has hampered our ability to invest in the resources required to sustain the improvements needed in the School, both educationally and in infrastructure.

Therefore, it is with a heavy heart and profound regret that the trustees of the Akshar Educational Trust (AET) have had to take the extremely difficult decision to exit the education sector.

The trustees plan to close the School in two phases. The closure timetable will give a full academic year's notice in order to allow all parents ample time to apply to other schools.

The whole of the Prep School and Senior School will continue as normal from September 2018 until closure in July 2019. This applies to all pupils, except those commencing GCSEs or A-levels in September 2018 (i.e. entering Year 11 or Year 13 in September 2019) who will all be able to complete their GCSEs and A-levels at the School until July 2020. As these plans require a change in our age range, we are in the process of liaising with the Secretary of State for Education to amend our registration details.

With the staff for the academic year 2018/2019 currently in place, parents should feel confident that the School remains committed to maintaining the high standards of education until full closure.

We have had discussions with the Avanti Trust which runs state-funded Hindu faith schools. The Trust has been granted permission and funding from the Department for Education to open an all-through Hindu school in Brent, and is currently actively looking for a suitable site. If the Trust is successful in opening its school by September 2019, parents will be able to apply for places available at that school – subject to meeting the school's admissions criteria.

Jitu Patel, **Chair of AET** said, *'It is indeed very sad, particularly for our pupils, staff and parents. We explored several options before arriving at this difficult decision. We have given all parents one year's notice to find an alternative school as well as a commitment to our staff that their employment is secure for the academic year 2018/19.'*

Nilesh Manani, **Head of the Senior School** since it opened, said, *'The children and staff are some of the very best I have had the privilege of supporting and we will strive to ensure that our education standards are maintained until the very end.'*

Umesh Raja, **Head of the Prep School**, said, *'It is very sad, but the most important thing now is for everyone to work together over the next two years, especially for the pupils remaining at our school.'*

For further information, please contact Tarun Patel on 07930 306 206.