

Petition:	Petition for girls to be given separate toilets to use at St Mary Magdalene School or an option other than the unisex toilets.
Number of signatures:	127
The petition read as follows:	We, the undersigned, are concerned students who urge our school leaders to act now to introduce separate toilet facilities for Girls and Boys. This petition is for girls to be given separate toilets to use at St Mary Magdalene School or an option other than the unisex toilets. This petition was started after the school refused to acknowledge Teenage Girls need respect, privacy and safety; they are forced to use the same toilets as Teenage Boys.

Submitted to Council on:	12 December 2018
Presented by:	Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald

Directorate:	Children's Services
Ward(s):	Peninsula
Cabinet Member:	Children's Services and Schools

I. Petition Response

- I.1 The petitioners have expressed the desire for the school leaders at St Mary Magdalene CE School to introduce separate toilet facilities for girls and boys or provide an option other than unisex toilets. We very much welcome this democratic initiative by the petitioners at St Mary Magdalene CE and thank them for their efforts.
- I.2 The Royal Borough of Greenwich has a statutory responsibility to ensure there are sufficient school places to meet the level and pattern of demand from residents. The Council's ambition that every Royal Greenwich child can attend a good school has been supported by an approach to school place planning which capitalises on the strong leadership and effective practice in our good and outstanding schools.
- I.3 In December 2014 Cabinet agreed the allocation of funding for the permanent expansion of St Mary Magdalene CE, as an all-through school, on the Greenwich Peninsula. In March 2016 Cabinet approved a scheme and estimate report for the permanent scheme.

- 1.4 St Mary Magdalene CE's senior leaders, the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE) and Children's Services approved the design of the school building on the basis that it meets the requirements of Central Government's area guidelines (BBI03) for a functioning school. Following consultation, the design plans for the school were approved by Royal Greenwich's Planning Board in February 2016. No concerns were raised at any time during the consultation, planning and building process.
- 1.5 Construction commenced in March 2017 and St Mary Magdalene CE moved into its new school buildings on the Peninsula in November 2018.
- 1.6 It is common practice for new builds to have open plan facilities as part of their design. The benefits include a reduced likelihood of inappropriate behavior in school toilets, less vandalism, increased levels of privacy and promoting safer spaces for children and young people to use.
- 1.7 St Mary Magdalene CE's toilets have been made specifically to the school's requirements. Each toilet is a separate cubicle, with floor-to-ceiling doors providing complete privacy, whilst the hand washing and drying facilities are shared. The school felt it more appropriate that the facilities should be available to all students as opposed to separating them by gender.
- 1.8 These toilet arrangements are not unusual in that other Royal Greenwich schools have them i.e. The John Roan and Stationers' Crown Woods Academy. Unisex toilets are also in place in The Woolwich Centre.

2. Current actions being taken in relation to matter raised in petition

- 2.1 St Mary Magdalene CE's leadership team and governing body have considered the issues raised and are taking the following action:
- From January 2019, the ground floor will have designated male and female toilet blocks for a trial period during the spring term. All other toilet blocks in the school will remain unisex;
 - The school will survey students during or shortly after this term to obtain feedback on this arrangement;
 - The toilet arrangements will be reviewed in light of the results of the survey and a final decision made as to whether to continue with this or implement alternative arrangements.
- 2.2 Any member of the school community that does not agree with the final decision will be able to raise their concerns in line with the St Mary Magdalene's CE's complaints procedure.