PROSPERE LEARNING TRUST

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Dear Sir / Madam,

As Executive Headteacher of CHS South, I am writing to explain the educational and wellbeing rationale for the proposed freestanding outdoor dining canopy and food kiosk.

The school has deliberately chosen a detached canopy approach because it best supports pupils' daily experience while promoting health, wellbeing, and positive engagement with the outdoor environment.

Firstly, the proposed canopy provides a sheltered, supervised outdoor dining space that enables pupils to eat comfortably outside throughout the year. While the climate in the North West of England can be cool and wet at times, this is entirely manageable with appropriate clothing and sensible supervision. The canopy protects pupils from direct rainfall while still allowing them to benefit from fresh air and an open setting. This strikes an appropriate balance between comfort and outdoor exposure. It is important to note that our pupils already make extensive use of our existing outdoor dining facilities, which were built into the original school designs. We have around 10 picnic tables already in position which many pupils use on a daily basis. The development of the external canopy significantly enhances what is already currently in operation.

Encouraging pupils to spend time outdoors forms an important part of the school's wellbeing strategy. Access to fresh air and natural light is widely recognised as beneficial to physical health, mood regulation, concentration, and social development. Providing an attractive and usable outdoor dining area supports more relaxed and enjoyable break times, helping pupils return to lessons settled and ready to learn.

Importantly, the canopy also introduces a distinct and positive alternative to the internal dining environment. Rather than simply expanding capacity, it creates a different mode of dining experience — more informal, open, and café-like in character. Pupils benefit from having choice in how and where they spend their break times: some will prefer the internal dining hall, while many others will be drawn to an outdoor setting that feels calmer and more sociable. This variety supports independence, personal preference, and a sense of normality in the school day, reflecting the diverse needs and personalities of our pupils.

The availability of a separate covered outdoor space also brings important behavioural benefits. Lunchtimes are one of the busiest and most socially intense periods of the school day. Providing an additional dining setting a short distance from the main hall helps disperse pupil groups, reduce crowding, and ease pressure on internal spaces. This separation supports calmer social interaction, reduces noise and overstimulation, and helps minimise the potential for lunchtime stress or conflict. In our experience, offering varied environments contributes to a more settled atmosphere and better overall pupil behaviour.

From an educational perspective, maintaining a strong relationship with the outdoor environment is important. Contemporary approaches increasingly recognise the value of connecting young people with natural light, fresh air, and outdoor settings as part of everyday school life rather than treating external space as occasional or secondary. The canopy supports this approach by making outdoor space practical and welcoming in all seasons.

The proposal also aligns with the increased emphasis on well-ventilated environments following the Covid-19 pandemic. Access to outdoor, naturally ventilated spaces provides additional reassurance to pupils and staff and supports a healthy school environment.

The freestanding nature of the structure is integral to these benefits. A detached canopy creates a distinct outdoor destination, encouraging pupils to move through the site, engage with their surroundings, and experience a meaningful transition between indoor and outdoor environments. This supports independence, social interaction, healthy movement, and a calmer lunchtime experience.

The school is confident that this approach will not compromise pupil health or welfare. On the contrary, it provides a safe, supervised, and sheltered environment that promotes wellbeing, reduces overcrowding, supports positive behaviour, and improves the quality of the school day.

For these reasons, this detached canopy and food kiosk arrangement forms an important part of the school's brief and operational strategy for improving lunchtime provision.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

[redacted],
Executive Headteacher CHS South
& CEO Prospere Learning Trust.