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## **Specialist autism school's grave concerns over waste facility**

THE owners of The Portfield School in Parley, which provides education for up to 100 autistic children and young people has voiced its "grave concerns" over plans to build a waste facility on nearby land.

Eco Sustainable Solutions Ltd wants to build an Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) at its Eco Park site in Parley, which would enable it to process an extra 60,000 tonnes of waste a year – up to a fifth of which would be recycled, with the rest used to generate low-carbon energy.

But Autism Wessex, the charity which owns and operates The Portfield School fears emissions and noise from the ERF could endanger its pupils' health and wellbeing.

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how people perceive the world and interact with others.

Autism Wessex CEO Siún Cranny said: "We provide specialist teaching and care for children aged four to sixteen who hold an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis (ASD).

"Many of our pupils have health issues including asthma and respiratory conditions, as well as special educational needs and heightened sensory reactions to sound or vibration.

"Eco states in its reports that despite its efforts to contain pollutants, dust and noise, there *will* still be certain levels of all of these emitted from the facility.

"This is therefore of huge concern to us."

Siún continued: "The education and care for our young people specifically requires extensive periods of time in outdoor activities.

"Indeed, our Forest Classroom is fully outdoors and other outdoor facilities have been developed with huge success during the last two years.

"The proposed facility would be built 1500 metres from our school grounds.

"The Portfield School is committed to sustainability and employs a host of green initiatives, but we are gravely concerned that our pupils' health and the crucial outdoor element of the school day will be placed at risk, unless *full* containment of emissions is enforced by BCP Council."

More than 600 objections were lodged against the energy recovery facility during its recent public consultation period.

Siún added: "There is immense and genuine concern over these plans. Not just from us, but also from other businesses and property and homeowners across a wide area.

“We hope the Council will fully address these valid concerns and act accordingly when considering Eco’s application.”

Ends

[www.autismwessex.org.uk](http://www.autismwessex.org.uk)

Picture captions:

- Autism Wessex, the charity which owns and operates The Portfield School fears emissions and noise from the ERF could endanger its pupils’ health and wellbeing.
- Autism Wessex CEO Siún Cranny

**Information for Editors:**

The Portfield School is a non-maintained special school which was founded in 1971 by parents of children with autism.

Autism Wessex is the leading regional charity providing specialist education, care and support to children and adults affected by autism.

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