

CONVERTING TO ACADEMY STATUS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why are we making the move to Academy status?

Given that an increasing number of schools have converted, or are currently in the process of converting, the governors consider that if we do not initiate this change, it is increasingly likely that the future may be taken out of our hands. This could mean that remaining maintained schools are forced to become academies or are placed as lesser partners in established Multi Academy Trusts. If that happens it would result in a total loss of control over the future of the school and this is not a risk the governors are prepared to take.

Will the school name or uniform change?

No. We are Town Lane Infant School and will proudly keep our name and the current uniform.

Will any staff leave?

There will be no changes to the existing staffing structure as a result of converting to a MAT. In fact, a major drive to form our MAT is to provide better CPD (continuing professional development) and enhanced career opportunities for all our staff.

Will staff levels change?

Moving to Academy status will not dictate the number or make-up of staff. Decisions on staffing depend on need as well as the resources available.

Will the school start to recruit unqualified teachers after conversion, as some academies have done?

We will continue to recruit only qualified staff as class teachers. But, as now, some part time staff will continue to provide expert tuition in areas such as sport and these people, as now, may not have a formal teaching qualification.

Will the Terms and Conditions of staff change?

There is no intention to change Terms and Conditions. Staff would officially be employed by the Multi Academy Trust and their existing employment rights would move across under the TUPE rules and thus be protected. Staff pay will reflect market conditions.

Are we going to be part of a chain?

We will be part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). However, the school will retain its individual ethos and character.

As a partnership of schools will you have increased purchasing power?

Yes, it's probably the case that a group of schools will be able to obtain better value when negotiating contracts for services essential for running a school, such as insurance, accountancy, Human Resources, Payroll, Broadband and other internet and IT services.

Would our school's budget be used to bail out a new MAT member school if it was in financial trouble?

No and no decision will ever be taken that might jeopardise that. All schools within The Concordia MAT will have their own budget and financial control. If another school joined the partnership then they would only do so if their financial position was strong.

Funding for SEND is not currently ring-fenced. How does converting to an Academy affect that?

Converting to Academy status does not mean there will be changes to the arrangements for supporting SEND pupils. Each school will continue to fully support children with SEND as we currently do, whatever form the additional support needs to take. Converting to Academy status may provide benefits in this area through, for example, the sharing of expertise and support.

How will the money raised by our School Association be used?

Each school will continue to have its own autonomous Parent Teacher Association (PTA), although they will be free to collaborate if they wish. The money raised by each school's PTA will only be used for its own school. They will continue to be independent of the school, raising money for agreed resources or projects that have been asked for by the schools leadership.

Will there be any change to the admissions policy?

We intend to keep with the current arrangements which are determined by Statutory Admissions Code and Admission Appeals Code.

Will there be more exclusions as an Academy?

No. Academies have to follow the exact same government guidance and law on excluding pupils.

Will the curriculum change?

We currently teach to the National Curriculum (last amended September 2015) although as an academy we do have more flexibility to this if we wish. Our main consideration is to continue with a broad and balanced curriculum that helps us instil in children a lifelong love of learning. Pupils will still need to take national statutory assessments as they currently do.

Will the term dates change?

All schools have the ability to set their own term dates. We will work with our local schools and our partner junior school (Higher Bebington Junior School) to try and provide term dates that suit both the needs of our children and parents. There is no intention to alter the current arrangements.

Will a parent's right to complain be affected?

No. If Academy conversion takes place there will be, as there is now, a complaints policy which gives an avenue for parents to complain. Every outside agency currently available to parents will remain unchanged.

When will the conversion take place?

The proposed conversion date is 1st September 2017.

Governance structure

The proposed structure of the MAT's governance follows a standard model recommended by the Department for Education. Whilst following this structure we will wish to delegate as much of the decision-making as is sensible and efficient to individual schools governing bodies as and when they might join our MAT in the future. Trustees will oversee the MAT and ensure that Directors are carrying out their duties. They would probably meet formally three times a year. How these people would be selected is yet to be worked out but each school would have an equal say in this process. The next level is a Local Governing Body for each school and it will include parent representation much as it does now. Most decisions will be made at this level.

Glossary of Terms

Member: Members are people who establish the trust and set out the constitution of the school, through signing its memorandum and articles of association. They can appoint and dismiss directors/governors

Director: Directors are the people who set the strategic direction for the MAT and are accountable to the Secretary of State for the performance of the schools within it. They are also governors and trustees but are referred to here as Directors to distinguish them from the members of the Local Governing Body

Local governing bodies: these are the people who oversee different functions of schools within the trust, depending on the responsibility delegated to them by Directors

Local Authority Maintained School: the majority of state schools are maintained schools. This means they are overseen, or 'maintained', by the Local Authority. These schools must follow the national curriculum and national teacher pay and conditions. There are four main types of maintained schools

DfE: The Department for Education is responsible for children's services and education, including higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England. The department is also home to the Government Equalities Office. They work to provide children's services and education that ensure opportunity is equal for all, no matter what their background or family circumstances

Multi-academy Trust: a multi-academy trust is a single trust responsible for a number of academies. The MAT consists of the members and the trustees. The members are akin to the shareholders of a company

Converter Academy: Converter academies are successful schools that have chosen to convert to academies in order to benefit from the increased autonomy academy status brings. They were introduced in 2010 as part of the Coalition government's plan to broaden the academy programme and eventually enable all schools to become academies

Sponsored Academy: A former maintained school that has been transformed to academy status as part of a government intervention strategy. They are consequently run by a Government-approved sponsor. They are sometimes referred to as traditional academies.

“Flat” MAT: A “Flat” Multi Academy Trust is where each school has representation at board level and is led not by a CEO or hierarchical structure but by a collaboration of school leaders from each school.

Education MAT - A multi-academy trust formed by schools with a similar vision, ethos and ambition for continuous improvement with the focus on managing resources in order to maintain highest standards of education for pupils without generating income or increasing resources in line with a business model.

Business MAT - A multi-academy trust formed to raise standards in education whilst also generating income and increasing resources in line with a business model

Stakeholders: a person with an interest or concern in something, especially a business. In this set of circumstances anyone with an interest or concern linked to the school