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Stakeholder - Staff Frequently Asked Questions Document

Please note this document is a cumulative compilation of questions submitted as part of our stakeholder consultation on Academy Conversion. It will be updated regularly and available as a shared document to staff across both school sites:

1. Is becoming an academy actually a change?

Yes. An academy is by definition:

An academy school in England is a state-funded school which is directly funded by the Department for Education and independent of local authority control. The terms of the arrangements are set out in individual Academy Funding Agreements. The day-to-day running of the school is with the head teacher or principal, but they are overseen by individual charitable bodies called academy trusts and may be part of an academy chain. These trusts and chains provide advice, support, expertise and a strategic overview. Trusts perform an important role in advancing education in the public benefit. An academy is a separate legal entity, a company which is an exempt charity. However, for all intents and purposes it is a school by another name.

2. Will I be expected to teach at another school within the multi academy trust?

No. For existing staff under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) or TUPE, current terms and conditions, including the site deployment will be protected. However, there will be opportunity as part of our collaboration for people to work together and share ideas and expertise across the new Trust. For new employees they will be employed by the single legal entity the 'trust' and will be deployed to their home school.

3. On conversion will we be changing uniforms?

No. Our uniform is a key feature of our drive for equality amongst our young people, it establishes the school's identity and provides a sense of belonging and family for our young people. Though there are times when we will need to review the uniform and indeed current Government Guidance has recently been issued on this specific issue, we will always do this in consultation with our young people, parents and staff. A change of uniform is not a consequence of academy conversion.

4. Will the change of status impact my pay and other terms and conditions for example, my pension?

No. It is true that one of the Government identified freedoms of becoming an academy is that you are able to change terms and conditions of staff, however a very small proportion of academy trusts actually do this. For existing staff there is also the added protection of the TUPE regulation. Teachers Pay and Conditions and the National Joint Council (NJC) negotiated pay points for support staff are a fundamental commitment of the current Governing Bodies of each school and this commitment will be carried into the new structure as a principle. The Trust will be awarded admitted body status for the Teachers and Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and will provide exactly the same pension benefits as staff receive now. What conversion does allow us to do is to use our financial position to extend responsibility allowances for example where there is an identified need or where there is a fundamental requirement or change to the success of the trust and schools



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within it. In addition, it provides the opportunity for new pay scales reflecting opportunity and professional development for staff to work across more than one school.

5. Will there be shared Continuing Professional Development and Learning opportunity?

Yes. This is a key benefit of a multi-academy trust in that it provides a formal opportunity for staff to work together to identify and share best practice and to reduce workload. For example, both schools will currently be writing and reviewing curriculum documents which reflect the National Curriculum expectation at Key Stage 3. As we share a contextual location this is a development opportunity which staff can share. It will also mean that we can access, because of financial economies of scale, more professional learning opportunities for our staff.

6. Will curriculum changes be made?

Yes. Ultimately, the white paper 'Opportunity for all - strong schools with a great teacher for every child' was published in March 2022 and provides a strong direction of travel from the government which identifies that strong families of schools working together to develop exceptional practice benefits the children within a community. The work to bring further alignment to the curriculum will not take place on day one of us becoming an academy but will be a long term goal to deliver further collaborative opportunities and benefits to staff and young people. However, this will be in full consultation with our highly valued curriculum experts and teaching staff and will take time!

7. Will the schools operate entirely together with all the same policies for example?

No. It is very important to school leaders and Governors that each school retains its own identity and this will be protected as the academisation process continues. However, there will be some alignment of policy and practice to ensure that all staff are treated equally under a single employer and that there is equity for all, including students and staff - for example with access to facilities, extra-curricular activities, pay rises, reward incentives and schemes to promote well-being. However, this will take time.

8. Will there be redundancy as a result of the academy process?

No. There will be no 'measures' identified by either school as part of the academisation process. This means that no redundancies will take place as a direct result of an academy conversion process. Any changes which do take place will be in full consultation with all staff in line with the TUPE regulations.

9. Will there be a lot of money spent on a Trust leadership structure as is often reported in the news?

No. Obviously any new 'business' must have a leadership structure to function and provide strategic direction, with a MAT this must also include capacity for 'back office' functions to service the requirements of the MAT in terms of Human Resources, Financial Management and Estates as a few areas of example. Any structures will be determined by the Interim Shadow Board, made of Governors from



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both existing school boards, the Headteachers of both Schools and an Independent Advisor to offer advice, support and guidance throughout the process. Any structure will ensure that a transparent recruitment process is organised to ensure the Trust gets the right post holder to drive school improvement and improve the life chances of our learners. Any salary allocations will be benchmarked and market led.

10. On any academy conversion would each school align their partnerships for SCITT and ITT Training or would they be able to remain with their current providers?

No. Initially, each school would continue with their existing partnerships to ensure continuity for staff and avoid undue workload created by change. The purpose of a range of providers is to ensure that recruitment potential is maximised and our ethical commitment to training the teaching professionals of the future can be met - this would not change. However, in the longer term Academy Trust leaders may look to align strategic partnerships but this would be done with the views of staff considered and also to ensure a continuous supply of high quality future teachers to the wider system.

11. What would be the implications for ECT Induction Provider, would both schools need to be the same?

No. There is no stipulation that each school within a Trust must have the same provider, but it is common place that they do. However, as with ITT and SCITT providers, any change would be made with the views of current staff engaged in the programme and with a consideration to workload of any change. In addition, there would need to be a 'legacy' commitment made to current participants to ensure they receive the best support and experience as they begin their career.