

Consultation advice

Multi-academy trusts

Becoming and joining a MAT

Appendix 1

Precedent wording for website - conversion to MAT

As you are aware, [current academy] is an academy. It is supported by the [•] academy trust. It is proposed that the academy trust will convert to a multi-academy trust (MAT), meaning that it can support more than one academy school. [We also propose that [•] school[s] will convert to academy][ies] and join the MAT.]

What will becoming a MAT mean for [current academy]?

Currently the [current academy] is supported by its own academy trust, the [•] academy trust. If the [•] academy trust becomes a MAT, the governance arrangements for the [current academy] will change.

[Set out new governance arrangements for current academy.]

[Set out how the schools proposed to join the MAT will operate in terms of governance arrangements].

What are the benefits of being a MAT?

In the school's opinion the benefits are numerous:

[Set out bullet point list of benefits i.e. we can support our feeder primary schools, we will have economies of scale when it comes to purchasing goods and services etc]

Are there any disadvantages to becoming a MAT?

As a MAT, the central board of directors will be accountable for any other academies that join the MAT, not just [insert name of current academy]. This means increased responsibility. However, as part of the conversion process, the governing body will ensure that careful decisions are taken to ensure that the right governance structure and systems are in place to successfully operate more than one academy.

What else will change?

[We do not intend to change anything else about the day to day operation of the [current academy] as a result of converting to MAT].

How can I find out more?

There is more information about MAT academies on the DfE website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>

If you can't find the answer to your question here, or on the DfE website, please email [insert contact details] who will try to assist.

How can I make representations?

The closing date for representations to be made is [•].

Representations can be made in writing to:

[address]

Or by email to:

[email address]

[We encourage representations to be made in writing but where this is not possible, please dial
[insert number] between the

hours of [•]]

Appendix 2

Precedent wording for website - joining a MAT

As you may already be aware, the governing body of the [current school] has applied to become an academy under the Academies Act 2010 and is proposing to join [name of MAT]. The governing body is now consulting on whether the school's conversion to academy status should take place. Further information about what becoming an academy means, and how to comment on the proposals, is set out below.

Will [•] definitely become an academy?

The governing body has submitted an application to convert to academy status and is working towards a conversion in [month/year]. However, the school is not obligated to become an academy until the contract between the multi academy trust and the Department for Education (known as the Funding Agreement) is signed.

The academy trust will not sign the Funding Agreement until parents and carers of pupils at the school [and in years 5 and 6 of our feeder primary schools,] staff at the school, and pupils themselves have had the opportunity to comment on the proposals. We have written to all parents and carers and have also invited them to a meeting on [•] at [•], to learn more about the proposals to become an academy, or to comment on the proposals. We have also held meetings with staff, and will be keeping pupils informed throughout the process.

Any comments or representations which are made about the proposals will be considered by the governing body before it takes the final decision to convert to academy status. Details of how to provide comments and representations are set out below.

The governing body will not vote to proceed with academy conversion unless they are content that conversion would be in the best interests of the school, taking account of all of the legal and practical ramifications.

What is an academy?

An academy is essentially an independent school which is funded by the state. It is independent of the local authority and receives its funding direct from central government.

[We are proposing to become an academy as part of the [name of MAT]. This means that we will be part of an academy group comprising [name of academies already part of MAT, and any proposed new schools].

What are the benefits of being an academy?

In the school's opinion the benefits are numerous:

- **academies are independent of local authority control** - this means that academies have more freedom about how they conduct themselves
- **academies receive their funding direct from central government** - this means that academies receive more funding because none is retained by the local authority for the provision of central services

- **academies have more freedom over the curriculum taught** - this means that academies do not need to teach parts of the National Curriculum which they do not consider appropriate for their pupils
- **academies can set their own pay and conditions of service for their staff** - academies have the freedom to alter the pay and conditions of their staff (subject to normal employment law protections for staff) and so can provide staff with better pay and conditions than previously
- **academies have more freedom to undertake innovative projects** - academies are companies and so have more freedom to undertake innovative projects, such as setting up and utilising trading subsidiaries.

Are there any disadvantages to becoming an academy?

The [name of MAT] will be directly liable for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities, pensions, health and safety, and, property maintenance. However, as mentioned above, academies receive more funding from central government to help them meet these additional costs, and in any event, the [name of MAT] already deals with these matters for [name of other academies it supports].

Once the school has converted, there is currently no route to revert back to being a maintained school under local authority control - academy conversion is a permanent change to the school's status.

If the school was a school causing concern in the future, the Secretary of State may have the power to force the school to transfer to a different academy trust. However, in those circumstances, it is likely that the Secretary of State would have the power to intervene even if the school remained a local authority maintained school.

Will the admissions arrangements change?

[As a [foundation/trust/voluntary aided] school [current school] already deals with its own admission arrangements. As an academy, the [insert name of MAT] will deal with admission arrangements and would also still be bound by the national School Admissions Code, and School Admission Appeals Code.]

[As a [community/voluntary controlled] school [current school]'s admissions arrangements are set by the local authority, and the local authority also decides which pupils should be offered places at the school. As an academy, the [insert name of MAT] will put in place admission arrangements, and decide which pupils should be offered places in accordance with those arrangements. The academy will still be bound by the national School Admissions Code, and School Admission Appeals Code.]

The current admission arrangements will remain in place for the time being. If the academy wanted to change its admission arrangements consultation would be required.

Will staff leave?

If the school converts to an academy, all staff currently employed by the [school/local authority] will automatically transfer to the new academy on their current pay and conditions. Although the academy will have more freedom to amend those pay and conditions in the future, the governing body does not intend to take such a step in the foreseeable future and in any event, any change to pay and conditions would need to be consulted upon with staff representatives.

Will [current school] change?

We do not intend to change [current school] except in ways which we think will improve the school even more. For students, it is unlikely that they will see much, if any, change in their day to day school lives.

Academies do have the power to vary their curriculums and vary the length of the school day, however, it is not intended to take any such steps at this stage and would engage with parents/carers, staff and students if we did ever intend to make such changes in the future.

How can I find out more?

A meeting will be held at the school on [] at []. We would encourage you to attend if you have any questions, or simply want to learn more.

There is also more information about academies on the DfE website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>

If you can't find the answer to your question here, or on the DfE website, and cannot attend the meeting on [•], please email [insert contact details] who will try to assist.

How can I make representations?

To respond to this consultation on whether the conversion of the school to academy status should take place:

Representations can be made in writing to:

[address]

Or by email to:

[email address]

The closing date for representations to be made is [•].

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