



Inspiring children through excellence

4th November 2019

Proposed Dawnay academisation - Frequently Asked Questions

Academies in general

1. What is an academy?

An academy is a publicly-funded school which operates outside Local Authority (LA) control. The school receives its funding directly from central government, rather than through the LA. The government describes academies as independent, state-funded schools.

2. What is a Multi Academy Trust?

A Multi Academy Trust (MAT) is when 2 or more academies come together in formal partnership.

3. What could be the benefits of converting joining a Multi Academy Trust?

The Academies Act sets out particular 'benefits' to becoming an academy and joining a MAT. These can be summarised as:

- By becoming one legal entity with one board, a MAT ensures there is a strong and clear collaborative link between the schools involved.
- The MAT model offers the flexibility to delegate where it would be appropriate to do so to meet the needs of each academy.
- The freedoms created will allow for continued improved achievement for every child.
- Greater choice on how funding is spent.
- Freedom of choice to purchase services from competitive high quality providers.
- MATs can provide greater economies of scale through centralised services, such as catering or IT support, through a single supplier at a reduced rate.
- The collaboration in MATs should lead to more flexible staffing resources and a greater ability to focus funds in areas where they are most needed.
- More freedom on the delivery of the curriculum, whilst maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum to include English, Maths and Science.
- Governors may be moved around schools within the chain, thus tackling questions of capacity and developing the experience of the governors concerned.
- MATs provide a clear and consistent strategy across all of their academies. The link to governance and accountability helps drive forward school improvement, as does challenge and support between academies and from the MAT.

4. What does the Trust do?

Legally, MATs are led by a Trust Board which is accountable to the Secretary of State. The key responsibilities of the Trust are to:

- Establish the strategic vision for the Multi Academy Trust
- Ensure the quality of educational provision
- Challenge and monitor the performance of the Multi Academy Trust

**Griffin Way,
Great Bookham,
Surrey KT23 4JJ**

**Tel: 01372 456774 email: info@dawnay.surrey.sch.uk
www.dawnay.surrey.sch.uk**

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- Manage the Multi Academy Trust's finances and property
- Employ staff

5. Who can attend an academy?

There would be no change to the admissions policy.

6. Do you have to pay for your children to go to an academy?

No. The schools would remain free to parents as they are now.

Academisation and The Dawnay

7. Would there be a different uniform?

No.

8. Would the school still retain its own name?

Yes.

9. Would there be different school terms and school hours?

No.

10. What if my child doesn't get a place at the Dawnay? Who do I appeal to?

The academy would be responsible for establishing its own appeals panel. There would no longer be the option to appeal to the LA.

11. How will being an Academy affect staff?

After conversion all staff will be employed by the Trust. Staff are legally protected to transfer under the same employment terms and conditions, including pensions. Their continuity of service is protected, and all staff will be consulted in accordance with the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations.

12. Will the decision not to join the Howard Partnership trust affect the children moving up to the Howard School?

No, there are legal boundaries in place to ensure that admissions codes are not affected by MAT membership.

The academisation process

13. Do we need to consult parents / carers and staff before converting?

Not only do we have a duty to consult – we very much want to consult with you and hear your views. We want to hear views from all our stakeholders including parents, teachers, the Local Authority (LA) and Polesden Lacey School as our main feeder infant school

14. Can you highlight any risks with joining a MAT?

The governors have undertaken an extensive and rigorous due diligence process to ensure as much as possible that the ethos and value of the chosen MAT is aligned with that of the school and will bring many benefits in supporting training and central services. It is the firm belief of the governors and the Leadership Team at the school that the risk of not moving to a MAT is likely to be far more damaging due to the uncertainty in future provision of LA support available for school improvement and development.

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15. As part of the process of joining a MAT will ownership of the assets of the school transfer to the MAT?

The ownership of the school assets will remain the property of Surrey County Council. The proposed process will likely see a leasehold agreement for a set term, usually around 125 years.

16. If the MAT relationship is unsuccessful what are the exit options?

A MAT agreement is a long-term arrangement and once a school academises and joins a MAT, this is not a relationship that can be exited easily. However, there have been a number of cases when schools have changed MATs where relationships have been unsuccessful.

It is because of the long-term nature of the relationship that we have carried significant due diligence and research to increase the opportunity for success

17. Is it an option for the Dawnay to become an Academy in its own right?

Although some of the schools that initially converted to an academy did so as a single school, it is now no longer possible for a school to set itself up in this way.

In any case, we believe that the principle benefits of academising are so that the school can benefit from being part of a MAT (see answer 3 above)

18. How will funding for the school differ if we join a MAT?

Currently the school funding comes through the LA and the school receives the central government funding minus a top slice paid to the LAA for services. Any services the school requires which are insufficiently provided by the LA must be paid for out of the school budget.

Funding in a MAT comes direct from Central Government; the school then pay an agreed top slice to the MAT for central support services.

The Governing body have set up a dedicated e-mail account (DawnayFuture@dawnay.surrey.sch.uk) for any additional questions relating to the future changes of the school. Questions will be reviewed by the Governing body and where appropriate answers posted on the Dawnay website. Where we have several similar questions, we will provide a grouped response.

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