

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is an academy?

An academy is a state school that is run by an academy trust. The academy trust enters into an agreement with the Secretary of State for Education that sets out its responsibilities and accountabilities for the effective running of the academy. The academy is funded directly by the Government not through the Local Authority. The trust is given charitable exemption, which means it must operate much like a charity.

2. What is a multi-academy trust (MAT)?

A multi-academy trust (MAT) is when two or more academies come together in partnership. The governing body of both Goldington Academy (GA) and The Hills Academy (THA) believe that the best option is to form a multi-academy trust from local schools. Each member school will keep its own name. In the future, it will be possible for other academies to join the trust.

3. How would forming a multi-academy trust benefit our schools?

We believe becoming a MAT will enable us to deliver:

- Higher standards of teaching and learning in all classrooms
- New opportunities for children to work across schools and access learning opportunities.
- Enhanced confidence and morale in staff
- Greater opportunities for career development
- Greater visibility of the strengths and weaknesses of each school
- Stronger governance across the schools
- Increased efficiency and effectiveness of school administration and business management.

These changes are about enhancing teaching and learning for all children. They would allow us to maintain control of our schools for our community, share skills and operate more effectively.

4. Who will be responsible for running our school?

The newly formed multi-academy trust will have a board of trustees that will include individuals from the local governing bodies of member schools. The trust board will delegate powers to the local governing bodies, which will be similar to the role that they currently have. A leadership structure is yet to be finalised, but it is intended that:

- Each school will remain focussed on delivering excellent teaching and learning within its local community.

- Each school will continue to have its local headteacher with less administration and more time to focus on the teaching and learning within the school.
- Each school would continue to have its own local governing body.
- All schools will work together on projects to improve education and learning in all schools.
- All schools will share administration and support in order to reduce costs and improve effectiveness.
- A joint board will exist to provide oversight of the performance of each school and ensure effective investment in improvements across all schools.

5. What is involved in becoming a multi-academy trust?

GA and THA will complete a consultation with parents, pupils, staff and the wider community which the governors will take into account in reaching its decision. The governing bodies of both schools have voted for this proposal in principle and if, following consultation, governors decide to proceed, it will be the Secretary of State for Education who decides whether or not to approve our application.

6. Would the schools have to change their names, logos or uniforms?

No, the governors have no plans to change the names, logos, uniforms or individual identity of each school as a result of this proposal.

7. How will being a multi-academy trust affect staff?

Currently, the staff are employed by the academy trust of the school at which they work. After formation of a multi-academy trust all staff at all the member schools will be employed by the MAT. 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.

8. How are the children affected?

In many ways the children will not notice any immediate difference; they will be in the same uniform, in the same classrooms with the same teaching staff. We will continue to strive for an outstanding education for all our children. However, in time the children may notice changes and improvements in the way that they learn, resulting from the greater training opportunities given to teaching staff to innovate and improve the pupils' learning.

9. Will we get more money as a member of a multi-academy trust?

Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school. All funding comes direct from Government to the multi-academy trust which controls the overall budget. Each school does not necessarily have more money, but as a group the schools are better able to control their part of the budget.

10. What are the risks of becoming a multi-academy trust?

The MAT schools would remain out of Local Authority control, but this does not exclude the school from Local Authority support. For example, academies can continue to receive finance, HR, health and safety support and other services from the Local Authority and where these represent 'best value' the MAT would use these services. Where the MAT feels that others can provide better services or better value it will have the freedom to make these changes. There are risks associated with not forming a MAT. At some stage in the future, any school might be influenced to become part of a larger academy chain. We believe that the ability to create a local MAT, under local direction, offers the best opportunity to sustain vibrant, successful local schools

11. How will admissions to the school be affected?

The MAT will become the admissions authority for all the member schools, but will be required to adopt clear and fair admission arrangements in line with the admissions law and the School Admissions Code. The Local Authority will continue to have responsibility for making sure there are sufficient places locally and will coordinate the admissions process for all schools. This means parents will still only have to complete one application per child. Applications will still be via the coordinated process.

12. Does becoming a multi-academy trust change the relationship with other schools and the community?

We hope formation of the MAT will enhance the relationships we have with other local schools. We will continue to be at the heart of the community, collaborating and sharing facilities and expertise with other schools and the wider community.