

## **Formation of A New, Local Multi Academy Trust (MAT) – Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the driver of the move to form a multi-academy trust?**

The government has made it clear that it sees a trust-led system as the future of the education system in England. Against this backdrop, we have engaged in thorough and careful discussions with valued local partners to establish a trust that serves the students, families and wider communities of the Fylde and Wyre. All of the partners in this venture are strong and bring a track record of successful education and improvement to the table. As such, we aim to create an organisation that is greater than the sum of its individual parts to make secondary and post-16 education in this area a beacon of excellence.

**We now know that the change in government will not see a reversal of the academies programme (see <https://labour.org.uk/updates/stories/labours-plan-for-schools/>) We also can now see the potential to collaborate will ensure that the best teachers and leaders are retained. Every opportunity will be taken to make use of a ready made, exceptionally high quality group of schools. This will manifest itself in curriculum models, student opportunities, sharing teaching and learning strategies.**

### **What benefits will come for the students, staff and wider community of LSA High School?**

You will see that many of the questions are designed to tackle the most commonly asked questions, often fuelled by negative opinions on the Academy system. However, we are concerned with the future of LSA and ensuring that we can provide the best possible education, the highest standards and the strongest support possible for our children. This MAT will allow that to happen. We will retain our identity, our history and our vision. We will work with similar, highly respected and hugely successful partners to push ourselves. We will ensure that any freedoms offered as a result of becoming an Academy are considered in how they benefit OUR children. It really is an exciting chapter in LSA's development.

**The whole project is about benefits and these have become increasingly apparent as we learn more. As a new MAT, there is the chance to develop these at inception and ensure that all students benefit from our work together. Each school is at least good and enjoys a long tradition of success from a range of specialities. At a time of so much challenge to the school system, the shared strength and working together to support recruitment, retain talent and develop resources is critical.**

### **Will this impact my child's education?**

Yes and No. The actual conversion will not impact anyone in terms of time, curriculum or expectations. Our focus on a daily basis is getting children into school, delivering our excellent curriculum and give children the chance to succeed. However, we would expect that partnering with excellent schools and colleges will **improve** education across our schools through collaboration, accountability and development. Our vision is always that every single child succeeds and we will all ensure this happens across each and every school. **This will be a positive impact.**

### **Will the school name or uniform change?**

No. We are Lytham St Annes High School and will proudly keep our name and the current uniform. In the future the school might at times additionally refer to their membership of the MAT. We also

review uniform regularly, but our identity as LSA and our position within the community is important to us.

### **Will staff contracts change?**

No. All staff will transfer to the academy trust on their existing terms and conditions that are protected under TUPE law. It is not intended to change these once the transfer is complete. **However, the MAT does allow for the potential of newly appointed roles across schools to ensure quality, opportunity and development.**

**The school is undergoing a consultation on TUPE and it has been made clear that this transfer will be “without measures” which ensures all standards, expectations and benefits follow the staff to the new employer. As said before, we will be able to think creatively to ensure that our school retains the brilliant staff that we have.**

### **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, HR, Payroll, broadband and other internet and IT services. **Again, opportunities to ensure best value for money will be sourced continuously and being part of a MAT will allow us to explore these in a timely and sensible manner.**

### **Will LSA still have a relationship with Lancashire Local Authority?**

Yes. We are proud to be part of Lancashire and our relationship with the Local Authority is excellent. We work together in many ways and we would expect this relationship to continue as part of a Multi Academy Trust.

### **Would staff be expected to move from one school/college to another?**

No. Staff are employed under their existing terms and conditions to work in their current school. There may be opportunities for staff to work in another school or across the MAT, however these would be advertised and staff would willingly apply for, and accept, these roles. **Again, the opportunity to develop roles across schools in the future is exciting and ensures children get access to the very best people.**

### **Would our school's budget be used to subsidise 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 MAT 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.

**We now know that each school will retain a bank account, giving autonomy keeping decision making at a local level. LSA is supported by a foundation trust and we now know that any funds**

**that are transferred to LSA, will be a “charitable donation” and will therefore be audited for the purposes of serving the children of LSA.**

### **Will there be any change to the admissions policy?**

We intend to keep with the current arrangements which are determined by the local authority. That means being very inclusive by welcoming children with disabilities and special needs, and giving preferential admission to siblings. This is part of our close work with the Local Authority and their statutory duties.

**The commitment to this process is important as LSA continues to be oversubscribed and immensely popular. We are driven entirely by the needs of our local families and primary schools and this will always be a priority.**

### **How will this impact LSA’s relationship with other schools/colleges?**

It will not impact these relationships. We will continue to form strong relationships with our excellent partner primary schools, whether they are Local Authority or belong to an different Trust. We will continue to ensure that the needs of our children come first. Likewise, the link with the outstanding Blackpool Sixth Form does not change our relationship with other post 16 provider, nor does it change the entry requirements of our children attending BSFC. LSA will continue to work closely with St Bedes and Carr Hill as our two closest Lancashire secondary schools. **However, the exciting element of a MAT is the ability to continuously work in collaboration and harmony with excellent partners, all committed to the same aim.**

### **Will there be more exclusions as an Academy?**

No. Academies have to follow the exact same government guidance and law on excluding pupils. This includes reporting exclusions to the Local Authority.

### **Will the curriculum change?**

We currently teach to the National Curriculum and we already have the power to change 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’. A lot of work has gone into creating a curriculum that allows children to learn, develop a sense of enquiry and ultimately succeed. LSA will control what it teaches and how.

### **Will the term dates change?**

The current arrangements for the setting of term dates will continue and these will always be advertised and shared with parents at the earliest possible opportunity.

### **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. **This ensures that Local Governing Bodies at each school remain critical to the success and accountability framework.** Trustees will oversee the MAT and ensure that Leaders are carrying out their duties. They would probably meet formally three times a year. The trustees have been selected to give each school/college 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 and it ensures that the Local Board can really focus on the standards for LSA children.

**A major piece of work will take place to ensure that LSA remains strongly represented at a local level. As we are part of forming a MAT and not joining a ready-made model, this is an area that will develop in different ways at different schools. The ability to retain people committed to the community of our school and beyond is critical.**

#### **Will the schools have a sponsor, and will there be a change of name?**

No. We will not be sponsored by any outside agency and all schools in the trust will keep their own identity. We won't be changing the uniform (where applicable) or the name of the schools. One of the main reasons for converting is to retain all that is good about the schools, not to make change just for the sake of it.

#### **What things would not change under the MAT?**

In the first instance, we would expect little to change, but the strength of being in a MAT is being able to respond quickly and robustly when we may need to. As the MAT matures, decisions will be made to ensure that LSA remains a genuine leader amongst the schools in the North West.

**It was clear through the consultation process that the schools were concerned about reassuring stakeholders about how little would change, which detracted from the benefits! However, as stated previously, there will be administrative and governance adjustments but the experience for staff, students and families will not change, but we know the MAT will allow positive improvements to happen quickly.**

**There will be very little that will change in the day to day running of the school.** The leadership team will continue to lead and drive forward the improvements at the school. Ultimately, children will be part of their own successful, local school. The beauty of being part of a new Multi Academy Trust is that we are shaping the direction and ensuring that the **local needs are always met first.**

**There will be no immediate or significant changes in our curriculum delivery.** As you are aware, any changes we do make are driven in response to the needs of pupils. The act of becoming an academy will not require us to make any changes.

**There will still be governors for the school.** Trustees will delegate governance functions down to the local level of the Academy and therefore operate Local Governing Bodies. There will also still be elected parents on the local governing body. We intend to ensure a high level of continuity in our governance during the conversion period. **Therefore, Local Governing Bodies and Headteachers remain key people in ensuring the very best standards at their school.**

Academies have a range of explicit freedoms not available to local authority schools including setting the pay and conditions of staff and setting their own term dates. **However, the governors of the school and the Trust are committed to adhering to national agreements on pay and conditions and have no plans to alter term dates once the school has become an academy.**

The employment rights of all current members of staff will be protected by TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) Regulations. This means that the staff will transfer to the UST under the same terms and conditions of employment they enjoy now. Pension rights and continuity of service record will be preserved. The MAT will adopt the same pay scales and terms and conditions as those negotiated nationally and locally for teaching and support staff. The school will be subject to the same Ofsted inspection framework as now.

### **What more do we now know about the Trust?**

**Name:** Coastal Collaborative Trust has been agreed

**Trustees:** The MAT trustees have been appointed and details can be found here <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/07604183>

**Vision:** This is still to be finalised by the board of trustees, but work has taken place to bring together the key elements of

**National Picture:** At the time of writing the new Labour government has been voted in. here is a link to their education manifesto, which makes no reference to pulling back on Academisation. However, there is reference to ensuring greater accountability at trust level, which is a positive. <https://labour.org.uk/updates/stories/labours-plan-for-schools/>

**MAT Central Team:** The “central team”, replacing the work of the LA, will initially be the Trust Lead (TL) Iain Siddal, CFO Lindsay Gates, Deputy Trust Lead, Ray Baker. There is also a fixed contract role to support the establishment of the trust as COO. This is Jill Gray. The commitment is to keep central costs to a minimum.

**Finance:** We now know that each school within the trust would retain a bank account. This is important for supporting genuine autonomy and localised decision making. The challenge of combining 3 separate financial years for a new trust means that all central costs are estimated. Significant work has taken place to model a central contribution of c.3-4% in the first year, of **only** the per pupil income.

**Building Surveys:** All buildings of all schools have been surveyed and each school has a copy of their own risks/developments. LSA is excellent at maintaining the site and the external survey matched internal work. The details of these will then be taken to the MAT trustees as it will be them assuming any future risk.

**LSA and the Foundation Trust (Lytham St Annes Learning Trust):** LSA converted to a foundation school 15 years ago. The trust was established and in keeping with the law, is linked directly to LSA. We have now had it confirmed that if the school converts, any funds in the Foundation will transfer directly to LSA as a charitable donation and audited accordingly. This will ensure the funds are spent directly on LSA children.