

FAQ - Parents and Carers

How can parents make their views known about the school becoming an academy – how will parents' views be represented?

For schools who are considering converting with The Parallel Learning Trust, the existing Governors in the school will want to hear the views of any interested person or group. In particular, Governors will want to understand the reasons for those views to help ensure that they have considered all relevant issues before they make their final decision.

The school will distribute the consultation document to parents and staff, and will engage with students. The schools will also need to distribute their consultation documents among other local stakeholders like local councilors, the local authority, business and other schools.

Will the Governors' listen to the views from the consultation?

How important will the consultation responses be in the final decision?

It is best practice for governors to look at every response to ensure that they consider all relevant issues. The Trust would very much hope that consultation responses are seen as important, and that any arrangement / agreement to come on board with the Trust, is a well-considered one, that is acceptable to as many groups as possible. How any governing body responds to views put forward from the consultation is a matter for them to lead on.

When is the last point at which the school can change its mind about conversion?

If your school is choosing to convert, you can change your mind right up to the point where documents are sent to the Secretary of State for signature, which is usually two or three weeks before the planned conversion date.

Can academy status be 'undone'?

The PLT or the Secretary of State can terminate the contract (the Funding Agreement) to run the academy, but there is a seven-year termination clause (which could potentially be varied if both sides agreed that was in students' best interests). Converting to academy status is therefore a long-term decision. In the event that the Funding Agreement is terminated (and there is no other funding agreement in place) the lease and, where relevant, the supplemental agreement, will be terminated.

If the school decides not to convert to academy status, could the Secretary of State force the school to become an academy in the future?

The current intention is that the Secretary of State can force existing 'low performing' schools to convert to academy status and they can choose an academy chain to sponsor the school.

Low performing is defined as any school that is judged to be 'eligible for an intervention'. You can be eligible for an intervention in two ways:

1. Your school is judged to be inadequate by OFSTED
2. Your performance data indicates that you are coasting or are below floor standard. This means different things for primary, secondary and specials schools. You can find more information on what this means by looking at the links.
<http://schoolsweek.co.uk/coasting-school-definition-the-short-nerdy-details-guide-outline/>
<http://www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/key-topics/inspections-and-accountability/how-a-primary-school-may-be-defined-as-coasting-in-2016/>

If your school is not low performing, then the Government has stated that academy status is optional. You can choose to convert to being an academy.

Once the school becomes an academy what can parents do if they are not happy with any decisions made

PLTs approach to decision making is one of 'it must be in the best interests of children, their learning, progress and their well-being at school'. Parents may find that they have many questions regarding the Parallel Learning Trust and what we are about. During any conversion process, parents will have a chance to meet with us and ask us questions. Any changes that are made will be communicated with parents through the website, letters and further information events.

For those parents / carers that have more individual issues, Trust staff, together with school staff, will be available for meetings.

If parents wish to make a complaint about something then, as with any other school, we have a complaints policy that can be followed. This policy is available on our website or in the school office.

What will your relationship with neighbouring schools be?

It goes without saying that we will work in partnership with our neighbouring schools. There is strength in sharing intelligence and practice. We are collaborative organisation that is community minded and wants the best for all the children within that community as a whole.