



# Due Diligence for New Academies joining the Trust

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|                          |                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
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## **Due Diligence process when joining The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust**

### **Due Diligence Process**

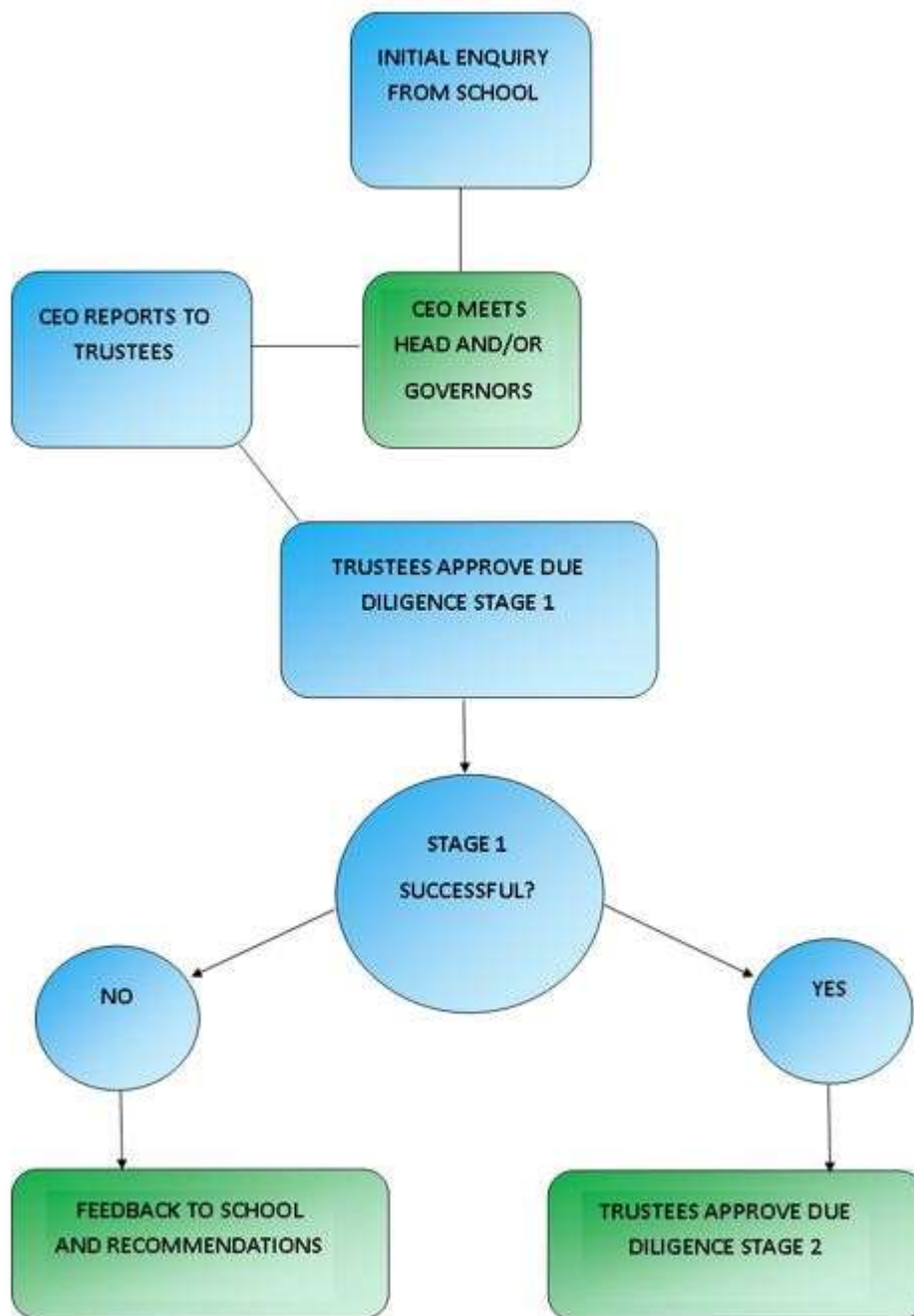
As part of the pre joining process, we conduct a range of Due Diligence across the school. The Due Diligence process is as much about us finding out how we can work effectively with you; as you finding out how you can work effectively with us.

The purpose of both parties carrying out due diligence is to ensure that you fully understand all of the opportunities, benefits, risks, assets, liabilities and relevant information to make a fully informed decision about whether entering into our Multi Academy Trust, or changing your Multi Academy Trust is the right decision for your own organisation.

### **What to expect during the Due Diligence Process**

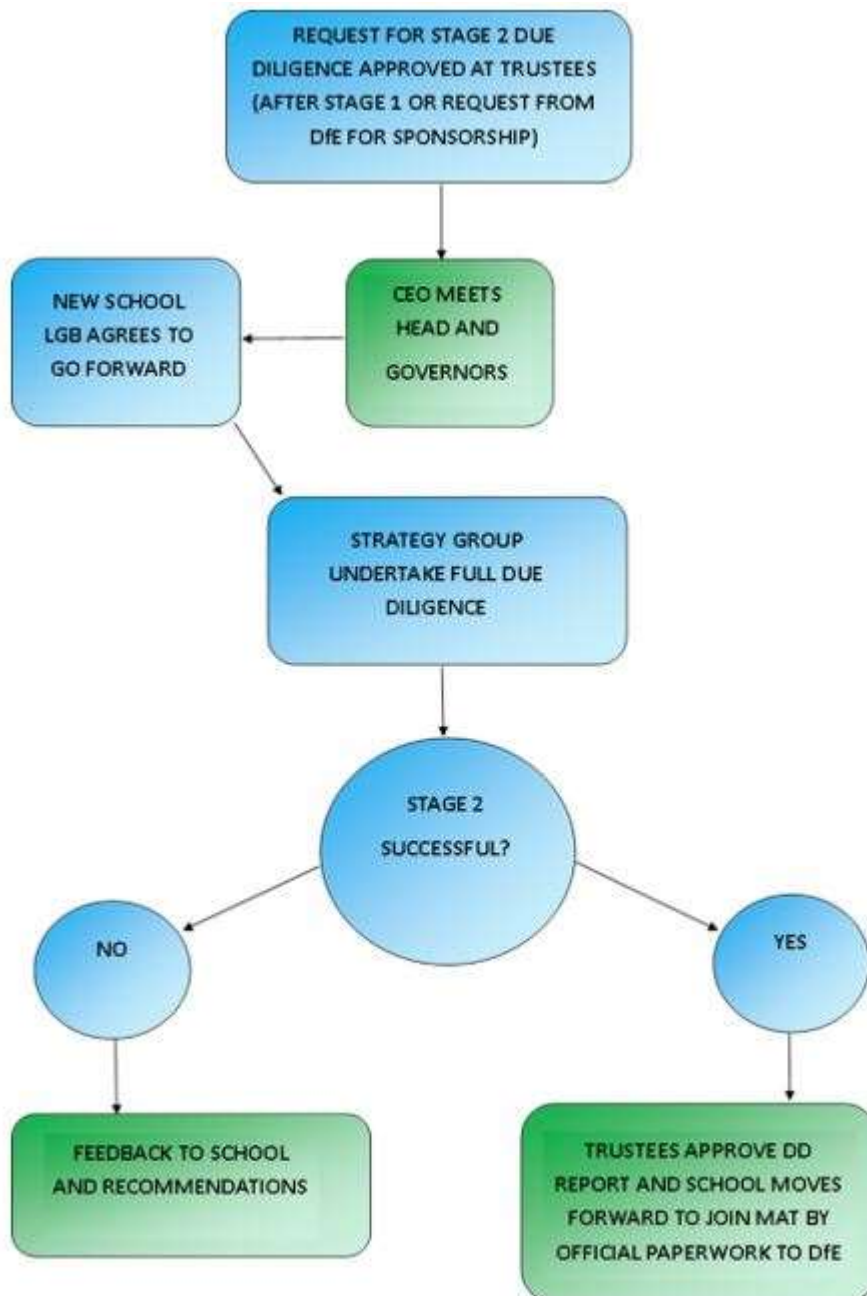
#### **Due Diligence 1**

This is a brief documentation process for all schools who wish to 'register their interest' in joining The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust. This process allows our Directors to make an informed judgement on whether to go forward with the next stage of Due Diligence.



## Due Diligence 2

When Directors have decided to move forward with full Due Diligence, a team of staff and/or external consultants working on behalf of The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust will visit your school. This is a more rigorous process that allows the MAT to gain an understanding not just on what you can offer us but on what we can offer you.



### Due Diligence 3

Upon successful completion of Due Diligence 2 if a school wishes to move forward and join our MAT, the Trust's MAT Team will work closely with them on the final stage of official paperwork, run through non-negotiables, and work out a full transition timetable for induction.

### 2. Non-Negotiables

All schools within The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust commit to the same principles of working. These principles are covered in our 'Non-Negotiables'.

These shared and agreed set of non-negotiables have been developed over time and will remain under regular review as The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust grows. It is important that all prospective members of the Trust are clear about these 'non-negotiables' that underpin the work we do and sign up to them when joining The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust.

### **Non-Negotiables for New Schools Joining the MAT**

The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust vision is based on '**Excellence through Partnership**'. All stakeholders are to be clear about, and be able to articulate the Trust's values and vision. All schools share understanding of what it means to be part of The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust with the following:

- To display, support and embrace the shared vision and values of the MAT.
- Have regard to and action the provisions of the Articles of Association.
- Have regard to and action the provisions of the Governance Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation.
- To agree a full governance post conversion induction process.
- To take on board all MAT systems of integration to ensure a cohesive approach for all schools (Finance, HR, Banking, IT) where applicable
- Share joint responsibility to the improvement of all schools in the MAT.
- A willingness to be open and share 'outstanding' practice.
- All staff meetings to be co-ordinated on the same day of the week across the Trust (to allow for extensive CPD opportunities)
- To share and support joint Training & Development days across the MAT.
- To fully support the work of the Board of Directors; including attendance at meetings, actions and deadlines.
- To ensure complete transparency on school documentation including SEF, SDP, Performance Management and Finance accountabilities.
- To engage joint assessment practice across the schools with all staff working together on moderation.
- To commit to a financial percentage for implementation of central services, with percentage dependent on the needs of the school. Currently the commitment is 5% of the AWPU for all good schools.

- To maintain robust systems of financial control including three year budget forecasting, to ascertain the sustainability of current levels of expenditure.
- Implementation of all MAT policies/HR policies and procedures/and The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust contracts.
- To share a willingness to participate in all The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust events.

### **Non-Negotiables and Induction for Governance**

As part of the pre-joining process, we conduct a Due Diligence on school governance. This allows the Trust to agree a way forward that best meets the needs of the school.

### **We will work with schools to achieve the following:**

- Work closely to identify the correct skills-base for the Local Governing Body (identifying new members, reviewing skills audit of current members, collating knowledge of governors' strengths of relationships within the school)
- Meet governors to discuss the transition and implementation process (including all governors reapplying for placement on the Local Governing Body and potentially the Board of Directors under The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust)
- Identifying past training and professional development opportunities for governors, Chair and clerk.
- Arrange full induction programme for all current and new governors going forward.

### 3. Areas covered under the Due Diligence Process

The table below is not an exhaustive list but to high light areas that will be covered under the due diligence processes through stages 1-3.

#### Due Diligence areas:

**School overview** - OfSTED category, School Development Plan and progress, Self-Evaluation Form (SEF), performance of teaching & learning staff and other key educational outcomes and analysis

**Strategic overview** - Governance, Policies, Risk Registers, KPI' s and legal

**Financial** - Financial statements, Audit reports, Financial systems, Income & Expenditure, Cash flow, Balance sheet & Tax liabilities, VAT position & practice

**Human Resources overview** - Organisation establishment, Pay & Performance, qualifications, skills audit, consultants engaged, complaints

**Capital Overview** - Condition and Suitability surveys, CIF Bids, Fixed Asset Register, future or on-going commitments, Potential contingent liabilities, Inventories, Fire Risk

**Health & Safety overview** - H&S Register, Risk Assessments & Practice, complaints, claims, Insurance review

**Legal overview** - Records, Data Protection, claims history, HMRC liability, Contractual liabilities, lease management & liability

**Other overview** – as per agreement with both parties and/or deemed necessary

#### 4. Induction & Transition Overview

| Governance transition to The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust   | Responsibility  |
|--|---|
| All Governors to re-apply for their role on the Local Governing Body and agree to the Scheme of Delegation and Governance Terms of Reference | In collaboration with The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust |
| All Governors to sign up to our Governors and Directors Code of Conduct  | Provided by the Trust                                       |
| All Governors to complete the Register of Interests form annually  | Provided by the Trust                                       |
| All Governors attend the Trust's Induction Programme (including receiving a full induction pack)   | Delivered by the Trust                                      |
| All Chairs and Vice-Chairs to attend Chair Training and Support sessions throughout the year   | Delivered by the Trust                                      |
| TSSMAT email accounts distributed plus training and any other Governance software  | Delivered by the Trust                                      |
| Clerks to attend briefing sessions (where appropriate)   | Delivered by the Trust                                      |
| Governors to receive Safeguarding and Prevent Training within the first term of their appointment  | Delivered by the Trust Safeguarding Lead                    |
| At least one Governor per LGB to undertake training in Exclusions (if not already completed)   | Provided by the Trust                                       |
| One Governor to be nominated as lead finance governor, agreeing to meet Trust Director of Business Operations termly                         | Delivered by Trust Chief Finance & Operations Director      |
| The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust to provide all governors with membership to the LA Governor Development                                | Delivered by the Trust                                      |
| Copy of Corporate Calendar of Events   | Delivered by the Trust                                      |



## Induction and transition for School Staff

It is important that once a school joins the MAT training is given in the first few months. This timetable allows staff the ability to understand their roles in the Trust and gain a better understanding of how all the schools function as a whole.

| <b>Staff transition to The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust</b>   | <b>Responsibility</b>                                      |
|--|--|
| Head joins the MAT Leadership Team (SLT) during the conversion/induction process   | CEO  |
| Staff Induction Presentation from MAT  | CEO  |
| Staff Induction handbook (relay new policies) and organisational chart   | Head & CEO   |
| Safeguarding confirm completeness of single central record (ensure any actions from DD2 are taken into account plus training for office staff) | MAT Central Services/SBM' s and Office Staff of new school |
| Curriculum Lead Meetings: ensure that curriculum leads in English, Maths, EYFS and SEND are available for Trust Curriculum Leads Meetings      | Curriculum Leads / SLT                                     |
| Transfer SLAs to trust providers: confirm which agreements have been transferred, contact details etc.   | Business Operations Director                               |
| Induction pack for office: including scheme of delegation, academies handbook, financial regulations, and all other MAT policies.              | Business Operations Director                               |

| Staff transition to The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust   | Responsibility                       |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Copy of Corporate Calendar of Events (including moderation and assessment meetings)                   | SLT                                  |
| Induction pack for the Head: MAT Strategic Plan, Template for Headteacher's Report and SDP            | CEO                                  |
| Confirmation that Values/Visions for The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust are embedded in the school | Head (after 6 weeks) with SLT        |
| New Academy transitions onto Trust's IT platform  | New Academy (4 months) & MAT IT Lead |
| Site visits and observations  | As and when required                 |
| Family walk for Head around all schools   | 6 weeks SLT                          |
| The Academy confirms completion of each action listed in the new academies welcome pack               | New Academy (various dates) and SLT  |