

Hopefully these Frequently Asked Questions relating to Academy Conversion will help you understand the process

Who can become an academy? Primary and secondary schools that are performing well can submit their individual applications to convert. Schools can apply in partnership.

We are hoping to work in partnership with Bodmin College. Our reasons for working with them being that they are an Outstanding School who are already an Academy and can support us with the transition. We will be able to buy into their resources and expertise, just as we did 18 months ago when we had their science teacher Mr Morris come in and work with the staff and children. This is not a feeder school and they will have no authority over the running of our school. It is purely a way of us being able to buy stock, expertise and resources at a better price, enabling us to save more money!

How long will it take? Most schools will be able to convert in around three to four months (it may take longer if there are complicated issues). **We are looking to convert in October 2011.**

Do schools need to consult before converting?

Yes. All schools are required to carry out a consultation but it is up to them to decide whom and how to consult. There is no specified length of time for the consultation and schools have flexibility in how it is conducted.

Do schools have to cover the full cost to convert to an academy?

No. Total costs will vary from schools to school but the Department for Education (DfE) will pay a flat-rate grant of £25,000 to the school's bank account. This payment will pay for the cost of transferring.

Can the school withdraw from the conversion process?

Schools are able to withdraw right up until the point that they sign the funding agreement. Once this is signed there is a legally binding agreement between the Secretary of State and the academy, and the termination would require a long notice period (seven years).

Does my school have to hold a consultation with staff?

The current employer of school staff (either the local authority or governing body depending on the type of school) will need to conduct a TUPE consultation with all staff (teaching and non teaching) and the unions as part of the staff transfer process.

Does my school need agreement from the local authority?

The Academies Act 2010 has removed the need for the LA to approve your plans.

Will an academy be under constraints or new expectations that the local authority would previously have exercised?

Academies have freedom from local authority control, which means that they have autonomy over the decisions they make and the education they deliver to their pupils. They also have the freedom to set their own pay and conditions for staff, and freedoms around the delivery of the curriculum. **We do not intend to change the school name, staff pay or conditions, you should not notice any change.**

What will the responsibilities of the governing body be?

The governing body will be responsible for establishing the academy trust. The academy trust (a charitable company limited by guarantee) will then enter into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State for the running of the academy. The academy trust (made up of members) has a strategic role in running the academy and will be responsible for appointing the governors (also known as directors or trustees) to the governing body of the academy. It is the governing body that manages the academy on behalf of the members of the academy trust. **Just as they do now.** The key responsibilities are **still the same** to

- ensure the quality of educational provision
- challenge and monitor the performance of the academy
- manage the academy trust's finances and property
- employ staff

Will the schools responsibilities in relation to Special Education Needs (SEN) and exclusions change?

Your responsibilities as an academy in relation to SEN and exclusions will be just the same as they are now as a maintained school.

Does becoming an academy change the way in which exclusions are dealt with?

Academies are required by their funding agreement to follow the law and guidance on exclusions as if they were maintained schools. This includes reporting exclusions to the LA. However, academies do not have to consult the LA before deciding to exclude a pupil and they can arrange their own independent appeals panel.

How will becoming an academy affect the schools admissions arrangements?

In the same way as maintained schools, all academies are required to adopt clear and fair admission arrangements in line with the admissions law and the School Admissions Code. **We will adhere to the County Admissions policy, enabling everyone fair access to our school.**

Does becoming an academy change the relationship with local schools and the community?

No, academy funding agreements state that they must ensure that the school will be at the heart of its community, collaborating and sharing facilities and expertise with other schools and the wider community. **We will also continue to work closely with all feeder schools.**