

### **What is an Academy?**

An Academy is a state funded 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 and not through the Local Authority. The Trust is given exempt charitable status, which means it must operate much like a charity.

### **What is a Multi-Academy Trust?**

A Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is when 2 or more Academies come together in partnership. Within a multi-academy trust all schools are governed by one academy trust. Each school retains its own governing body, which is represented on the multi-academy trust board. The schools' governing bodies operate subject to the control of the trust which has ultimate responsibility for the running of the individual academies. The trust is accountable and responsible for the performance of each of the academies and may delegate its decision-making powers to the governing bodies of the individual academies. As the multi-academy trust is a single entity, it is envisaged that schools can achieve strong collaboration and drive up standards by providing a cohesive strategy and vision across all of the schools working together.

### **Why Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT)**

As All Saints Stibbard school is a Voluntary Aided School in the Diocese of Norwich the Diocese decide which of its two trusts a church school would join. In our case that is DNEAT, due to geographical considerations and that DNEAT have the capacity to expand.

### **Has the decision to convert to an Academy already been made?**

The governing Body feels joining DNEAT is in the best interests of both schools but a final decision will not be made until the views of our parents, staff, the local community and other stakeholders of our school have been obtained. The Governing Board has to weigh up both the pros and cons of Academy conversion.

### **What are the potential benefits of academy status?**

There are a number of considered advantages through a MAT structure including:

- Sharing best practices – it is easier to share and implement best practice through member academies. For example, one academy may trial an innovate teaching approach and if successful, this can be effectively shared across the Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)
- Central resource base – shared resource pools allow easier forward planning (such as planning for the changes to the assessment criteria) and unexpected short term demands (staff sickness and absence) can be met more easily
- Teaching and staff can be shared – the trust itself is the employer of the staff and therefore resources can be shared far more easily.
- Access to external sponsorship – this will provide financial support and also raise the profile of the MAT
- Enhanced procurement – with a higher number of academies procuring services or goods together this increases the purchasing power of the Trust

### **Would there be any changes to the admissions policy/criteria?**

No, there will be no changes to our admissions policy or criteria.

### **Would the term and holiday dates or the timings of the school day change?**

Academies, free schools and voluntary-aided schools are able to set their own term dates but are asked to set the same or similar dates in the interest of parents who may have children at different schools.

### **What about the staff?**

At present, all staff are employed by the Governing Board of the school rather than the Local Authority. If the School does become an Academy, all staff will automatically transfer to the DNEAT on their current pay and conditions. All new staff would be employed under current national pay and conditions agreements. No members of staff would be required to move against their will and work in a different school within DNEAT.

### **Who will be responsible for running our school?**

The Headteacher, Ms McConnell, would still be responsible for running the schools. Flourish Federation would also retain its own governing board. DNEAT has a scheme of delegation that clearly defines who is responsible for what at trust and school level.

### **What is involved in becoming an Academy?**

The school will meet with parents, pupils, staff and the wider community before the Governors reach their final decision. The Governing Board has voted for this proposal in principle and The Regional Director (DfE) will decide (or not) to approve our application if Governors decide to proceed

### **Would the school have to change its name, logo or uniform?**

There will be no change to school uniform or logo. The school's name would change to reflect the change of status from Voluntary Aided to Academy. School signage will change to follow the DNEAT scheme.

### **How will being an Academy affect staff?**

After conversion all staff at both schools will be employed by DNEAT. 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.

### **How are the children affected?**

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 which will result from greater training opportunities for staff and wider opportunities for children.

### **Will we get more money as an Academy?**

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 DNEAT 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 and seek economies of scale.

**Would our school's budget be used to bail out another school if it was in financial trouble?**

No and no decision will ever be taken that might jeopardise that. All schools within DNEAT have their own budget and financial control.

**Will you be introducing any new charges?**

No. There is no intention to charge in the future for anything that is currently free.

**How will the money raised by the Parents/ fundraising be used?**

Each school will continue to have its own independent mechanism for fundraising, although they will be free to collaborate if they wish. The money raised by each school's fundraising efforts will only be used for that school and will continue to be independent of the school budget.

**What are the risks of becoming an Academy?**

The change to Academy status takes a school out of Local Authority control, but does not exclude the school from Local Authority support. For example, Academies can continue to receive finance, HR, behavioural support and other services from the Local Authority and where these represent 'best value' DNEAT would use these services.

**Can school land be sold?**

No.

**How will admissions to the school be affected?**

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.

**Does becoming an Academy change the relationship with other schools and the community?**

No, we are committed to being at the heart of our community, a local school for local children. We will continue to collaborate and share expertise with other schools outside of the DNEAT and the wider community.

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

No. Academies must 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 to instil in children a lifelong love of learning.

**Will our responsibilities in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and exclusions change?**

No, responsibilities as an Academy in relation to SEND and exclusions will be just the same as they are now.

**How can I find out more?** The best source of information on academies is the Government's own website: <https://www.gov.uk/become-anacademy-information-for-schools> .