

WINDSOR ACADEMY TRUST

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ACADEMIES JOINING THE TRUST

Windsor Academy Trust (WAT) has a clear and effective system of governance that helps to maximise the opportunities available to it, as a multi academy trust, to improve educational outcomes for pupils and make the best use of resources. Governance arrangements are kept under review to ensure that they remain fit for purpose, especially as WAT grows.

The Board of Directors of WAT is clear about its role as governing body for each of the schools in the trust, as well as being the Board of Trustees of a Charity and Board of a company limited by guarantee. The WAT governance arrangements are clearly documented, including a Scheme of Delegation, Code of Conduct and Terms of Reference for the Board and its committees, which can be viewed on the Trust's website.

It is therefore the expectation that the governance of each school joining the Trust will follow the established arrangements for governance for all other schools as quickly as possible and no later than 8 weeks from the date of joining.

WAT is aware, however, that each school will have governance arrangements in place prior to joining the trust and will want to retain and develop more widely successful elements of these arrangements.

The aim will always be for the transition to WAT governance to be smooth and beneficial. This will be helped by having clear transitional arrangements that reflect each school's starting point and the respective governance roles and responsibilities of the school and the Trust.

Clarity about responsibility and accountability

Until the date of conversion, the existing governance responsibilities and accountabilities remain in place. For an LA-maintained school, responsibility for the school rests with its governing body and also with the Local Authority (which is, for example, the employer of staff and is responsible for the school's buildings). As soon as the school joins WAT, the Board of Trustees is responsible and accountable for all aspects of the school.

The Establishment of a Transition Board

From the point at which the school's governing body agrees to join the MAT (by making a resolution to become an academy as part of WAT) and applies to the DfE for an Academy Order, a Transition Board will be established. This will generally comprise the school's current governing body and a representative of the WAT Board of Directors (generally a Director). The Local Authority will be invited to nominate someone who is able to ensure that the LA is involved appropriately in the conversion process. WAT's Executive Team will support the Transition Board with information and advice as necessary.

It will be for the Transition Board to determine the frequency and format of meetings but the arrangements should:

- Be mindful of the educational reasons for joining WAT, ensuring that actions are directed towards the achievement of high and improving educational outcomes above all else.
- Follow a clear conversion plan that sets out the key decisions to be made with deadlines and specific responsibilities for actions. An example is attached.
- Avoid additional time spent on extra meetings by scheduling Transition Board meetings immediately before or after Governing Body meetings or by including Transition items of governing body meetings and inviting WAT and LA representatives to these.

Prompt Establishment of the School's Local Advisory Board

The aim is to have an effective Local Advisory Board in place as soon as possible after the school joins WAT. Information on the role and responsibilities of the LAB and its members is publically available on the Trust's website.

Members of the LAB will be appointed by the Board of Directors as required by the Trust's Articles of Association, and the Board of Directors will be keen to ensure that the LAB has available the range of skills, experience and expertise it needs. Governors of the joining school will always be invited to express an interest in becoming a LAB member. Maintaining close relationships with the community served by the school will be particularly important.

Outline academy conversion plan for LA maintained school joining WAT

Action	Detail	Responsible	Deadline
Transfer of staff employment responsibilities	Provide staff and their representatives with information	LA	
	Consultation with Staff	LA with	
Ensure legal processes completed as required	Secure independent legal advice	GB	
	Consider WAT memorandum and articles of association.	GB	
	Consider funding agreement	GB	
Agree land and premises arrangements with the DfE.	Request and secure land ownership and land registration documentation	GB from LA	
	Completed land questionnaire fully, including site plan for the academy.	GB with WAT and LA	
	Agree main terms of any leases (125 year lease from LA to academy trust), including any sub-leases	WAT with GB and LA	
Any loans must be approved by the DfE and transferred to the academy trust	Confirm details of any loans	GB	
	Secure DfE approval to transfer to WAT	GB	
	Effect transfer	GB and WAT	
Any shared use agreements approved by the DfE and set up with the academy trust	Identify any shared use agreements	GB	
	Secure DfE approval to transfer to WAT	GB	
	Effect transfer	GB and WAT	
Consultation with wider community (sponsored academies only – for other schools this will take place to inform GB's decision to apply for academy order)	Determine scope and arrangements for any consultation	GB	
	Conduct consultation	GB with WAT	
Agree Commercial Transfer Agreement (CTA)	Agree CTA with DfE	GB with WAT	
	Agree CTA with LA	GB with WAT	
Top slice	Confirm top slice, rate and what it covers	GB and WAT	
Central services	Confirm rates for other services provide by MAT	GB and WAT	
WAT policies	Check for any changes need to practice in school	GB	
	Agree process for implementation of each policy	GB and WAT	
WAT financial management and monitoring processes	Align school's financial processes to those of WAT	GB and WAT	
WAT HR and processes	Align school's HR processes to those of WAT	GB and WAT	
School improvement strategy and targets	Agree strategy and support from Trust	GB and WAT	