

CONVERTING TO ACADEMY STATUS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is an academy?

Academies are state schools, free from local authority control, directly funded by the Department of Education. Academies have greater freedoms to determine how the school's funding is utilized to optimize the educational outcomes for its students and are able to direct their own operational procedures such as the taught curriculum and the hours of the school day.

Who runs an academy?

The academy is run by an 'Academy Trust' who oversees a governing body. The Academy Trust is a legal body which operates a charitable organization and a company limited by guarantee. The Trust has a formal agreement with the Department of Education to provide educational services to its students.

How is an academy funded?

Academies are funded directly by the Education Funding Agency (part of the Department of Education). This means that academies receive 100% of their grant (rather than a proportion of these funds being diverted to the local authority) and are free to choose how to spend it, as long as it is spent on improving the education of its students.

Why is President Kennedy School considering becoming an academy?

In a time of uncertainty, the school's governing body wish to sustain the excellent progress made in recent years and enable the school to continue to work with other local schools to improve the educational outcomes for all local students in our area.

How will President Kennedy School change if it becomes an academy?

To our students and their families and our staff, President Kennedy School will seem unchanged after conversion. The school will continue to focus on learning, placing our students' needs first and removing barriers to their success.

The majority of secondary schools in Coventry have converted to academy status and are free to direct their budget in the best interests of their students, their staff and their community. As an academy, President Kennedy School would also have this freedom, including engaging the services of the local authority where this is deemed in the best interests of our students, our staff and our community.

If President Kennedy School becomes an academy could it either become selective or change its admission criteria?

If President Kennedy School converts to academy status, the school controls its own admissions. However, our admissions criteria would remain unchanged and we would not become a selective school.

Will President Kennedy School continue to admit students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)?

Yes. President Kennedy School has a strong inclusion ethos, a very successful Student Support facility and an excellent track record ensuring its SEN students achieve their potential. The local authority retains the responsibility for students with statements of special educational needs and monitoring arrangements for SEN students in academies.

What will the relationship be with the Local Authority?

President Kennedy School has an excellent long standing working relationship with the local authority. The governors expect this relationship to continue. It is likely the school will continue to purchase services offered by the local authority in the future.

What would President Kennedy School do differently if it were an academy?

The governors believe that our students, parents and our community have benefitted greatly from the sustained improvement in the school's performance in recent years. Any changes introduced would build upon progress made and be focused upon higher quality teaching and learning and overall improving educational outcomes for our students.

Can we afford the set up costs of becoming an academy?

Yes. The governors have carefully assessed the costs associated with conversion together with the grant issued by the Department of Education to converting academies. The governors have concluded that the cost of transfer can be met without using funding allocated within its budget for running the school.

How will becoming an academy affect the relationship between President Kennedy School and its feeder primaries?

President Kennedy School has a strong collaborative working relationship with its local feeder primary schools. We believe that we offer some of the best transition arrangements in the country. The governors express wish is that these working relationships are strengthened further in order to improve the educational outcomes of all students in our area.

How will the pay and conditions of President Kennedy's current staff be affected?

If the school becomes an academy, our staff will cease to be employed by the local authority and will instead be employed directly by the school. However, the terms and conditions of their employment, including their pay and conditions, will remain unchanged.

How will becoming an academy affect term dates and the working day?

There are no plans to deviate from currently agreed term dates or the hours of the working day. Any changes to term dates or the working day would be subject to a separate consultation process.

Will pension arrangements change for teachers and support staff?

The teachers' pension scheme and support staff (Local Government) pension scheme are run by bodies external to the school. These arrangements would be unchanged if President Kennedy School were to become an academy. On conversion, the liability for the support staff Local Government Pension Scheme transfers to the school and the school would maintain the scheme by making employer contributions in the normal way.

There would be no 'break in service' for staff within either scheme, if the school were to become an academy.

Will staff have to apply for their jobs? Will there be redundancies?

No. Staff who are currently employed by the local authority and who work for President Kennedy School, transfer automatically to the school's employment the moment the school becomes an academy. These are known as TUPE arrangements and are conducted by the local authority.

Who deals with complaints about schools that have converted to academy status?

Parents or carers who have a complaint about their son or daughter's academy school would need to contact the school directly. President Kennedy School has a well established complaints procedure and we would expect this procedure to continue if the school becomes an academy.

How can you find out more about academies?

The Department of Education website is a very good source of information relating to academies. www.education.gov.uk/academies