



21<sup>st</sup> February 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

### Multi Academy Trust Proposal

As you may know, The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College and The Billericay School have successfully collaborated on a number of educational projects for several years. Discussions have been ongoing for some time between the Headteachers and governing body representatives of the two schools with regard to the possible formation of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT).

These discussions have resulted in a recent decision by both governing bodies to pursue an initial MAT application to the Regional Commissioner (Department for Education). We believe this will be for the long term benefit of both schools and their students. The governing bodies are therefore now minded to proceed to full consultation with stakeholders on this issue.

It is a recommendation that governing bodies undertake full consultation before a final decision is made and this process will now take place in accordance with the procedure overleaf. Also attached is an outline of the proposal and information about MAT's which I hope you find helpful.

Governors are happy to receive correspondence from you on this matter. E-mails should be addressed to [Consultation@bromfords.essex.sch.uk](mailto:Consultation@bromfords.essex.sch.uk) and letters should be addressed to Tracey Jowers, Business Manager c/o The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College. All correspondence will be acknowledged (unless it is anonymous). In addition, a consultation meeting will be held at the school on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2017 at 6.30pm, if you would like to find out more about the proposal.

The consultation period begins on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2017 and will last until 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2017. The Governing Body will reconvene on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017 to make a final decision on whether or not to enter into the MAT. If the decision is taken to proceed and is ratified by the Department for Education, The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College anticipates becoming part of the MAT on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017.

Yours faithfully

Don Morris

Chairman of the Governing Body



## THE BILLERICAY SCHOOL AND THE BROMFORDS SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

**Consultation Information for parents and community partners of The Billericay School and The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College, regarding a proposal to form a Multi Academy Trust wef 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017**

### **1. What is a Multi – Academy Trust?**

A **multi-academy trust** (MAT) is a single legal entity established to undertake a strategic collaboration to improve and maintain high educational standards across a number of schools. A group of schools can form a single MAT which has overarching responsibility for governance of all its schools.

At present our two schools – Bromfords and Billericay - are each a legal entity (a charitable company) in their own right. Forming a MAT will mean that, though they remain as two separate schools the academies will form a single company.

The MAT board is accountable for the performance of each school in the group, although each academy still retains its own character and has its own governing body, which operates subject to delegation of authority from the MAT

There are currently over 1000 MATs in the country, which vary in size from 2 to 50+ schools, and it is anticipated that by 2020 most schools will be academies and most academies will be part of a MAT group.

### **2. What will be the benefits of a MAT?**

The two schools have collaborated for some years and the Heads already work closely together with regard to the Behaviour and Attendance partnership, the Teaching School Alliance and the Initial Teacher Training provision (which is led by Billericay and based at Bromfords.)

Although schools often co-operate and collaborate without being in a MAT, this gives a clearer focus and it places a greater requirement on us to work together to pursue a common vision, values, and an ethos to ensure high standards are met, for the benefit of all the students in our schools. We believe that this collaborative partnership will have a positive impact and enable us to drive school improvement, and help us to build capacity, develop our staff and support greater student attainment and opportunity.

We hope and expect that the benefits will include:

- Greater sharing of best practice
- Opportunities for innovation – trying new ideas
- Economic benefits, such as centralised services and joint procurement
- Enhanced curriculum opportunities and 6<sup>th</sup> form collaboration



- The ability to focus funds where they are most needed
- Flexible staffing resources
- Increased staff development and collaborative opportunities
- The opportunity to establish succession planning programmes and, in doing so, retain good staff who might otherwise move elsewhere for promotion
- A stronger focus at school level on teaching and learning
- Improved learning provision across the community

Over the coming months the two Heads will work together to develop plans whereby aspects of educational provision may be shared more widely, in order to spread best practice across both schools and, where possible, share costs and provision.

### **3. How will the Multi Academy Trust be formed?**

MATs are sometimes formed by a group of like-minded and successful schools, as in this case, and sometimes MATS are formed at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to take on responsibility for schools which require support. MATs vary in size but the DfE's current preferred policy is for schools to have 6-15 schools in their group, which may be all secondary, all primary or a combination of the two.

The proposal is for The Billericay School and The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College to come together to form a MAT, which is likely to be called "The Windmill Trust." This is the working title, but we are open to further suggestions of a suitable name for our Trust. It is expected that over time our Trust will grow as additional schools join.

As is the case now with our two existing, separate academy trusts, the MAT will be a charitable company. The new MAT company will be the owner of the schools' assets and its board will be ultimately responsible for the performance of all its schools. Local governing bodies will continue to support individual schools.

### **4. What will change?**

From the perspective of students and parents there will be no immediate change – though in time we hope, of course, to widen opportunity and the student experience. Each school will retain its own identity and admissions policy and parents will continue to apply for a place at the school of choice via the framework administered by Essex County Council. Students will continue to be admitted, registered and taught at their named school.

Likewise, for the majority of staff there will be no immediate change other than the employer name change. For Bromfords staff the legal employer will change from the individual school governing body to the MAT.



## 5. How will the MAT be governed and managed?

The DfE sets out the requirements for MAT governance in the Articles of Association

This requires that there will be 4 or 5 “Members” appointed to oversee the MAT. Their duties are akin to shareholders e.g. to appoint directors and consider any amendments to the Articles of Association

The MAT will be governed by between 7 and 10 Trustees who are also Directors of the charitable company. It is proposed that some of the existing Billericay and Bromfords governors will be appointed as trustee/directors. Others will be new appointments, as the intention will be to have as wide a range of expertise and experience as possible at the MAT’s disposal. In the longer term, when other schools join the Trust, it is likely that additional trustees may be appointed e.g. to ensure that the board has experience and expertise across all sectors of education.

Members and Trustees have to be approved by the DfE. It is proposed that Ahson Mohammed, Headteacher of The Billericay School will be the Chief Executive Officer of the MAT. Daniel Gee will continue to be the Headteacher of The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College and Colin Breathwick will be the chairman of the MAT board. In the summer term information will be circulated to all staff and parents regarding the individual Member and Trustee appointments.

A scheme of delegation will be put into place to set out which decisions will be made by the MAT and those to be determined at school level. Each school will have its own governing body which will oversee those delegated aspects of governance and monitor how the school is performing.

Parent governors and staff governors will continue to operate at individual school governing body level.

## 6. What will the MAT board do?

A number of core functions will be overseen by the MAT – e.g. setting of statutory policies, term dates, appointment of Headteachers, allocation of funding to each school. The MAT board will operate at the strategic level and will be responsible for setting out a framework to ensure that its schools individually flourish.

In terms of policy, the intention will be to harmonise across all school in the MAT as far as possible, for example, MAT-wide staffing and pay policies and a student assessment policy but there will still be some policies and solutions which will continue to be operated and developed locally e.g. uniform policy.

The MAT board will monitor outcomes in all the schools, plan for improvement and provide support where it is required.



## **7. How will the finances be managed?**

At present each individual academy is allocated its own budget by the Education Funding Agency. In a MAT the funding due to all the schools is allocated to the MAT. The Trustee board first determines how much money needs to be retained to pay for the “central services” it provides for its schools. These may include payroll, audit, HR services, accountancy services, etc, and other items which will no longer need to be commissioned at the school level. It may also retain money for improvement services or, for example, some staff development provision across all schools. Sometimes this is done as a percentage “top slice” and sometimes just by proportionately sharing the costs involved. The intention will be to achieve benefits of scale and proportionately reduce the central costs as the MAT grows, whilst ensuring that all schools have access to good services. There is therefore potential to secure greater economy in provision of these central services, leaving a greater proportion of funds to be spent to support teaching and learning.

The MAT will delegate the remaining funds to each of its schools and it is for the Headteacher and governing body of the individual school to determine how that money should be spent, in accordance with the principles and policies set by the MAT. So, though policies will be set by the MAT and all schools will work to the same financial regulations, the Head and governing body may purchase and deploy their school’s resources flexibly, as they feel best suits that school’s needs.

As all the schools in a MAT are part of the same legal entity (the company) the MAT needs only to produce and publish one set of accounts each year covering all its schools.

## **8. What happens next?**

- Following this consultation with staff, parents and community, the governing bodies of both schools will consider comments and representations and decide whether to proceed to the next stage of MAT development.
- If they both do so, a formal application will be submitted to the DfE to form the MAT.
- Once approval has been given by the DfE, members and directors will be appointed and work will be undertaken to confirm a scheme of delegation and MAT policies.
- A formal TUPE consultation will be undertaken with the staff of The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College and their union representatives.
- The governing body of The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College will consider and respond to comments and any TUPE representations. Both governing bodies will then consider and confirm their intention to proceed to the legal formation of the MAT.
- Legal advisers will be appointed to undertake the transfer of all school assets into the Windmill Trust
- Work will be undertaken to ensure a smooth transition to the new combined financial and HR systems which will need to be in place by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017.