



# HOWDEN SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Mr G Cannon

21 December 2017

Dear Parents/Carers,

## Notification of the Governing Body's decision to move to Academy status and join The Consortium Academy Trust (TCAT)

The Governing Body's priority is to enable our school to continue to provide an excellent education for our children while protecting the school's role at the heart of our community and retaining its unique qualities and strengths. We recognise that the role of Local Authorities in supporting schools is diminishing and that it is Government policy to encourage effective schools to become Academies.

As a 'good' school we are in a position to choose if and when to convert to an Academy on our own terms. Schools are increasingly going to be pushed along the Academy road. We want to make an informed choice before we are put under external pressure to convert.

The Governing Body believes the best way of maintaining standards in the future is for our school to join a Multi Academy Trust (MAT).

This letter is a follow up to the letter sent to you in September 2017 to notify you as a stakeholder in our school of the Governing Body's intention to join a MAT and our preferred option is **The Consortium Academy Trust**.

As part of this process the Governing Body is to enter into a consultation process about converting to an Academy and joining The Consortium Academy Trust. We would therefore like to invite you to take part in the consultation by joining us for one of the following sessions:

- Presentation with Q&A session at Howden School – 6-7pm Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018
- Drop-in discussion at Howden School – 3-7pm Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2018
- Community Drop-in discussion at The Shire Hall in Howden – 5-6.30pm Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Attached to this letter are the answers to what we expect will be some of the most common questions you may have.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. The Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team of the school are committed to ensuring that Howden School continues to be a good school serving all members of the community. It is therefore our duty to explore every opportunity to maintain and improve our already high standards. Your feedback and views do count and through the consultation process we can listen to your views and those of our community partners and keep you fully informed.

Thank you for your continued support and we look forward to seeing you at one of the consultation events

Yours faithfully

Mrs A Martinson  
Chair of Governing Body

Mr G Cannon  
Headteacher

Report Bullying Concerns at [beatbullying@howdenschool.net](mailto:beatbullying@howdenschool.net)



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Who are The Consortium Academy Trust (TCAT)?**

TCAT was founded in September 2017 by Cottingham Academy Trust, The Hessle Academy Community Trust and Wolfreton School and Sixth Form College who have a shared history of over 25 years of working together through the Consortium Sixth Form partnership. The Trust has been developed in order to provide a platform to deliver high quality educational experiences for the children and young people within the local community, to enhance and improve their life chances and enable them to make substantial and sustained contributions to society.

### **Why join The Consortium Academy Trust?**

The principle reason why the Governors at Howden School chose The Consortium Academy Trust as our preferred Academy partner is that they share the same values and ethos as ourselves. Being a local academy trust means they understand the context in which we are working and as local schools they are passionate about improving education for young people in the East Riding. Joining The Consortium Academy Trust allows us to build upon existing positive relationships constructed around school improvement. It means we retain control of our own destiny as a school and the ability to make our own decisions and shape our own future. We can continue to improve standards in the school without support from the Local Authority for a School Improvement Service through accessing high quality staff development and support. Working with TCAT will allow us to provide services in the school that the Local Authority used to provide but which they can no longer maintain at the quality required. At Howden School we have a very talented teaching and support staff. Working with The Consortium Academy Trust means we can retain those staff at times in their careers when they may look to seek promotion elsewhere.

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

The school will complete a consultation with parents, pupils, staff and the wider community that the Governors will consider when reaching their final decision on whether to move to Academy status. The Governing Body has voted for this proposal in principle and The Secretary of State for Education will decide (or not) to approve our application if Governors decide to proceed. Each school is given £25,000 towards the costs of the conversion process including legal fees etc.

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

No, under the proposed MAT plans, the Governors have no plans to change the name, logo, uniform or individual identity of our school. We are proud of our identity as Howden School. Letter headings may change slightly to reflect our participation in a MAT, but little else will change.

### **How will the children be affected?**

In many ways 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, resulting from the greater training opportunities given to teaching staff to innovate and improve pupil learning. They may also start to notice the increased opportunities for cooperation with other schools within the MAT.

### **Will each school in the MAT have its own budget?**

Yes – each school will have its own budget. Schools currently have budgets ‘top sliced’ by the Local Authority for central services such as HR and Finance. As a MAT there should be savings to be made through economies of scale for these services.

**How many schools will join the MAT?**

The Trust has no intention of becoming a national body, they believe that to engage in effective school to school improvement, it is important to work with schools within the local area. The average size of a MAT is currently 3-5 schools, and the preferred number is 10 schools. Moving forward, the MAT would listen to any requests from partner primary schools of each of the secondary schools and other like-minded schools.

**Although we understand potential cost-saving of a MAT, hasn't the government cut funding for Academies?**

Although the sum of money earmarked by the government for academy conversion has been withdrawn, there is still financial encouragement for schools to become part of a MAT. MATs can apply for grants for school improvement that LA schools cannot access.

**How will the conversion to an Academy influence the admissions process?**

This will not change our philosophy in that we want Howden School to be the school of choice for our locality, and our admissions criteria will remain unchanged.

**Will we still work with the Local Authority?**

Yes.

**Will we still be subject to OFSTED?**

Yes.

**In a MAT, if one school is deemed to be struggling does money get diverted to that school at the expense of the others?**

No, as the money for each school is driven by student numbers. We are lucky in some ways that we can learn from the experience of previous early academisation processes and we need to be focussed on transparency, oversight and scrutiny.

**Who are the Members and the Board of Trustees accountable to?**

Ultimately, the Department for Education (DfE) and OFSTED.

The best source of information on academies is the Government's own website:

<https://www.gov.uk/become-an-academy-information-for-schools>