

OWLCOTES MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

New School Induction



May 2018
Reviewed: March 2024

About Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust (OMAT)

OMAT is committed to the development of inclusive schools, sharing a common purpose to provide excellent education and improved outcomes for pupils.

OMAT strives to provide high-quality education for all children within our local communities by inspiring innovation, creativity and aspiration through an enriched curriculum.

OMAT is committed to the principles of co-operation, collaboration and sharing best practice with a strong focus on staff development.

OMAT is also committed to the preservation of the unique identity of all schools within the trust: each school will have a Local Governing Board (LGB) which is involved in decision making at school level, with autonomy to make decisions for its own school in line with the scheme of delegation.

All trustees and any schools joining must agree to share and uphold all of these principles now and in the future.

Policy for Induction of New Schools

1. Introduction

As Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust grows, it is essential that it does so in such a way that does not jeopardise its future success and sustainability and is always with regard to the risks and benefits in doing so.

This document outlines the considerations and processes of the Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust Board of Trustees which will ensure that any new schools joining OMAT understand their role and position in doing so, how processes of due diligence and information sharing will be carried out.

2. Key People

- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is Lesley West. Mrs West is also the accounting officer for OMAT;
- The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is Harry Whitaker;
- The Chief Information Officer (CIO) is Joe Wilson;
- The Chair of the Board of Trustees is Judith Norfolk.

3. Induction of a New School

When a recommendation or application is made for a school to join OMAT, the Board of Trustees will always consider the impact of a new school joining the Trust. After the Board of Trustees has approved in principle the membership of a new school, a process of due diligence will be carried out.

4. Due Diligence

Before a school is considered to convert and join OMAT, scrutiny will be undertaken in the following areas:

- Historic, current, and forecasted financial position;
- Historic attainment and trends;
- Current assessment performance;
- Leadership capacity;

- Governance capacity;
- Estates condition, including the IT equipment environment;
- Statutory compliance capacity, including statutory policies and data protection and retention.

A formal report will then be provided back to the OMAT Board sharing the outcomes of the due diligence.

5. Proceeding to Conversion

Upon a successful recommendation for progression to conversion and the awarding of an Academy order from the DfE, the relevant processes to support the conversion will begin.

A memorandum of understanding, agreed with the Local Authority, incoming school, and the OMAT Board will set out the principles and ethos of the working relationship. This should include clarity on roles and responsibilities, data sharing, collaborative practices and any fees or charges for the period prior to conversion.

It is the expectation that any school joining OMAT will utilise the expertise and consultancy provided by the solicitors, accountants etc. recommended by the OMAT Board and/or the DfE.

The CEO, CFO and CIO will provide the incoming school with support with the process of conversion during this period, communicating progress within this back to the Board as appropriate.

Headteachers and Chairs of Governors will meet with the CEO, CFO and CIO to support this process at school level.

The CEO will meet with governors and all staff to share the vision, values and practical information about Owlcotes MAT.

The CIO will circulate detailed written information to parents and the local community and provide opportunity for parents and members of the community to meet the CEO, Chair of Trustees and other Trustees and members of the Owlcotes Executive Leadership Team through a scheduled 'drop in' event.

During the conversion process, there will be an early engagement plan in place as appropriate. If the school converting is a sponsored academy, the CEO, will work alongside the school leadership team to provide additional leadership capacity within the school. The DfE will be kept informed of the impact of this early work through the Sponsor intelligence Form.

6. Throughout the Conversion Process and Beyond

As part of the induction process and ongoing schedule of evaluation and improvement, the Board of Trustees will be involved in the following activities which will form part of the OMAT Board's cycle for continual improvement:

- Agreeing and formulating the plans for medium and long-term development of the Trust and how they build capacity within the Trust and its schools (Owlcotes Strategic Plan);
- Consistently evaluating the needs and development challenges for all the schools within the Trust, irrespective of current performance levels (CEO Report to the Board of Trustees);
- Determining how the Trust will contribute to wider system improvement and develop and retain good links with other MATs, teaching schools and a wide range of stakeholders (CEO Report to the Board of Trustees);
- Ensuring there is sufficient financial expertise to oversee the Trust's financial operations;
- Carrying out financial planning which is integrated in to the Trust's overall strategy for its schools (Orovia Budget Planning Software, Premises Development Plans);

- Ensuring the Trust’s vision remains deliverable and resilient to operational changes in income, such as changes in pupil numbers or characteristics or the implications of the introduction of a national funding formula (Risk assessments and risk register updated termly);
- Making sure that there are robust contingency plans in place, with clear triggers for enacting these plans (Leadership development/succession planning; risk assessments and budget planning).

7. Risk Management

The OMAT Board of Trustees will ensure that OMAT and any new schools have effective procedures in place to identify, monitor and mitigate risk at both school and trust level. This will be achieved in the following ways:

- The Scheme of Delegation clarifies which decisions are delegated and which remain the responsibility of the OMAT Board of Trustees.
- The Trust has access to appropriate due diligence expertise, including that from outside specialists, in order for the Board of Trustees to have assurance that a thorough due diligence process has been carried out and the Board has a full understanding (both in terms of benefits and risks) of the current and historic condition of any school that is seeking to join OMAT.
- The Trust has capacity to manage the estate for which they are responsible.
- The OMAT Risk Management Policy details the Board of Trustees’ ‘risk appetite’.

8. Appointments to the OMAT Board

The OMAT Board is structured as per the Articles of Association. Any new schools joining OMAT should understand that representation on the Board of Trustees may not be available to them. In any case, any new Trustees joining OMAT must possess the requisite skills, in particular any skills gaps identified. Trustees must also demonstrate the ability to meet the expectations of the Code of Conduct.

9. Training and Professional Development

All new Trustees and Members will access training which will support them in fulfilling their public duties, as determined by the needs of the Board and individual members. It is a requirement that OMAT Trustees complete safeguarding training annually. In addition, the following documents are provided for all Trustees:

- Articles of Association;
- Code of Conduct for Trustees;
- Academy Trust Handbook;
- Master Funding Agreement;
- Supplemental Funding Agreement;
- The essential Trustee: What you need to know, what you need to do;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education.

10. Post Conversion

1.1. Policies

Post conversion, the new joining school will be asked to adhere to the agreed OMAT policies. These will be provided by the CIO and discussed with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors as part of the Induction package.

1.2. Systems

New schools joining will be offered the support of the CFO, CIO, Estates Manager and other key staff to support in the implementation and management of new processes, such as finance management packages, purchasing frameworks, budget setting software, compliance systems, governance frameworks, and other systems and information management processes. Training will be provided as necessary and will be organised by the relevant member of the Owlcotes central team, in conjunction with the individual Headteacher.

1.3. Support for Staff

OMAT Trustees acknowledge that times of change can be challenging for staff.

The CEO, CFO and CIO will support the TUPE process for staff during the school conversion process, including a member of the central team attending TUPE and HR meetings.

Peer to peer support for office staff, premises staff and individual school Headteachers will be essential in the early stages post conversion.

OMAT is committed to putting this level of support in place for all schools that join.

**This Induction for New Schools Policy was adopted by Owlcotes Multi Academy Trust
on 25/04/2018**

Chair of Trustees: Mrs Judith Norfolk		
Signature:		Judith Norfolk:
Frequency of review:	3 years	
To be reviewed by:	FRAC	
To be approved by:	OMAT Full Board	
Date of next review:	March 2027	

REVIEW RECORD

Date of review	Reason for review	Date of next review
23/03/2021	Agreed review schedule	March 2024

Name:		Signature:	
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on behalf of OMAT Full Board

Date of review	Reason for review	Date of next review
21/03/2024	Additions to sections 2, 4, 6, 7 and 10.	March 2027

Name:		Signature:	
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on behalf of OMAT Full Board

Date of review	Reason for review	Date of next review

Name:		Signature:	
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on behalf of OMAT Full Board