

# Academy Transfer: Frequently Asked Questions

QUESTION		ANSWER
<b>ACADEMIES</b>		
1.	What is an academy transfer?	<p>An academy transfer is when an academy moves from its current trust to another trust. A transfer can only happen with the agreement of the DfE regional director (RD) acting on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education. There are a range of reasons for academy transfer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer initiated by the outgoing trust – most academies that transfer between trusts do so based on a decision by the outgoing trust. This might be to ensure stronger school-to-school support or economies of scale, for example, a single academy trust (SAT) joining a multi-academy trust (MAT). It might also be for strategic reasons, for example, academies moving to MATs that are closer geographically.</li> <li>• Intervention – a small number of academies transfer each year due to intervention following, for example, an Ofsted Inadequate judgement. In such cases, or where there are financial, governance or safeguarding failures, RDs and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) have the power to terminate funding agreements and transfer the academy into a new trust.</li> <li>• Trust closure – in the rare event that a trust closes, academies in the closing trust must be transferred to a new trust as part of the closure. Academies within a closing trust must be transferred even if they themselves are not otherwise eligible for intervention.</li> </ul>
2.	What is a Multi-Academy Trust?	<p>A multi-academy trust (MAT) is a Charitable Trust established to undertake a strategic collaboration to improve and maintain high educational standards across a number of schools. A group of schools form a single MAT which has overarching responsibility for their governance. The MAT is accountable for the performance of each school in the group, although each can still have their own Governing Body which operates subject to delegation of power from the MAT. A master funding agreement with the MAT, and supplemental funding agreements with each individual school, is signed by the Secretary of State for Education.</p>
3.	Why is BRGS transferring to a MAT?	<p>Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School (BRGS) has been considering options for an appropriate academy sponsor. As a result of ongoing discussions between the school, the BRGS Board of Trustees, and the DfE RD, Star Academies has been selected as the most appropriate MAT to lead the school and bring new capacity to maintain and develop the school's education provision.</p> <p>Being part of a MAT establishes a formal partnership which provides strategic direction, promotes collaboration among schools to drive school improvement and offers opportunities to operate more cost-efficiently as a result of shared resources.</p> <p>Star Academies has been chosen thanks to its track record of sustaining and improving schools and our close alignment to its core values and ambitions and aspirations for young people. You can find out more about Star here: <a href="http://www.staracademies.org/">http://www.staracademies.org/</a>.</p>
4.	Will BRGS continue to be a grammar school?	<p>Yes. Under the proposal, the school will become part of Star Academies and will retain its grammar school status.</p>

5.	What will happen to BRGS Trust once the school has joined Star Academies?	BRGS as a single academy trust will cease to exist once the school has transferred to a multi-academy trust such as Star Academies.
<b>STAR ACADEMIES</b>		
6.	Who are Star Academies?	<p>Star is a mixed Multi-Academy Trust, running a diverse group of schools across the country. There are currently 31 schools within Star working together in five regions across the country known as Star Partnerships – Lancashire, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, the Midlands, and London. Schools within the Star Partnership areas work together to share expertise and maximise opportunities and experiences for Star pupils.</p> <p>Star is a high achieving Multi-Academy Trust. Star schools enjoy some of the best performance results in the DfE school league tables and, year upon year, Star pupils secure the lowest absence rates in England.</p> <p>All Star schools share a commitment to a child-centred vision and focus on educational excellence, character development and service to local communities.</p> <p>Through its partnerships, Star has a key role in many developments across the education sector. Star is a co-founder of the National Institute of Teaching, the new flagship organisation at the forefront of teacher training and development. Star has also formed a ground-breaking partnership with Eton College to galvanise social mobility by enhancing access to top university places for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p>
7.	What are key characteristics of a Star school?	<p>Star Academies makes a ‘Pledge of Excellence’ to every parent or carer who chooses to send their child to a Star school. Star pledges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will ensure an <b>inclusive school culture</b>, which promotes happiness, in which your child can focus on learning, thrive personally, socially and academically and grow into a respectful, confident British citizen.</li> <li>• We will deliver a <b>high-powered, knowledge based academic curriculum</b> with a strong core of literacy, numeracy, and digital education which prepares your child for the next stage in their education and future career.</li> <li>• We will provide your child with <b>excellent teaching</b> from well-qualified, well-trained and motivated staff who continue to benefit from high quality professional development.</li> <li>• We will challenge your child to achieve the <b>best possible standards</b>, supporting them using evidence-based interventions if they fall behind.</li> <li>• We will engage your child in a <b>rich and diverse leadership programme</b> that grows character and inspires charitable and social action.</li> <li>• We will <b>invite, listen and respond to your feedback</b> so that we can work in partnership to ensure your child is happy at school and achieves their best.</li> </ul>

8.	What are the benefits of joining Star?	<p>Star makes a pledge to every school that chooses to become a Star academy. Star pledges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will embrace you within our universal vision of <b>nurturing today's young people and inspiring tomorrow's leaders</b>.</li> <li>• We will provide <b>high quality governance</b> and support to secure rapid school improvement.</li> <li>• We will provide <b>excellent business services</b> that enable you to focus on improving experiences and outcomes for young people.</li> <li>• We will engage you in a <b>collaborative approach to policy and systems development</b>, welcoming your views to strengthen the Star family.</li> <li>• We will invest in the <b>wellbeing and continuous development of your staff and governors</b>.</li> <li>• We will help you to make a <b>valuable civic impact</b> on the community you serve.</li> </ul>
9.	Will joining Star bring any additional resource to the school?	The school will be supported by a skilled central team that will work alongside BRGS to secure the long-term health of the school by providing direct access to specialist experts on all aspects of school development – including Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Data, Pastoral, Safeguarding, Finance, HR, IT, Estates, Admissions, Governance, Communications and Legal.
10.	What is Star's track record?	<p>Star Academies is one of the country's highest-performing multi-academy trusts.</p> <p>Star schools enjoy some of the best performance results in the DfE school league tables. In 2022, Star Academies' schools secured 3rd, 4th, 15th and 17th places nationally for the Government's headline Progress 8 measure. Year on year, Star pupils also secure the highest attendance rates in England.</p> <p>Fourteen of the Trust's schools have secured an outstanding judgement from Ofsted. The academies that we sponsor have improved on the inspection grades of their predecessor schools. Star was also announced as the MAT of the Year at the Schools and Academies Show 2019.</p>
11.	How could BRGS contribute to Star Academies?	BRGS will become part of the Lancashire Star partnership of schools. Star Partnerships are thriving communities that understand the power of collaboration and the value of sharing expertise. The supportive family of Star schools work together to maximise opportunities and experiences for pupils, with the ultimate aim of transforming the lives of young people.
<b>THE TRANSFER PROCESS</b>		
12.	How long will the transfer process take?	The target date for transfer is 1 September 2023.
13.	Will I be able to have a say?	Yes. We are keen to engage with parents, staff and the local community. There will be an informal consultation process in which parents, carers, staff, governors and other stakeholders will be able to state their views on the proposal for the school to join Star Academies. The consultation period will run from <b>11 January to 15 February 2023</b> , and there will be a variety of ways in which stakeholders can contribute. For more details, see the school website.

GOVERNANCE		
14.	How is Star governed?	<p>Star places great emphasis on robust governance. Star's governance structure ensures there are clear reporting lines and explicit requirements to ensure probity, good governance and outstanding performance.</p> <p>Star Members are responsible for determining the governance of the Trust. They approve the Articles of Association which set out the details for the Trust internal management, decision making and running of the Trust. The Members also appoint Trustees in accordance with the Articles.</p> <p>Star Trustees develop the overall strategy and vision for the Trust and ensure it is consistently delivered within our schools and operations.</p> <p>Schools that join the Trust constitute a Local Accountability Board who continue to be responsible for monitoring the day-to-day operation of the school and are accountable to the Board of Trustees for the performance of their school.</p> <p>A Star Governance Handbook and Accountability Framework defines the distribution of rights and responsibilities amongst these different stakeholders and a Scheme of Delegation determines the functions undertaken by the Board of Trustees, identifying those which have been delegated to its Committees, the Central Office Executive, Local Accountability Boards and Principals.</p>
15.	Will the current Trustees /Governors have the opportunity to work with the school?	<p>Yes. Star is keen to work in partnership with those who have dedicated so much to the school already.</p> <p>The Academy will need to constitute a Local Accountability Board.</p> <p>The Trust will encourage Trustees to become Governors of the new academy, subject to due diligence checks. All existing Trustees wishing to continue their role post transfer (or prospective new Governors) will be asked to put forward an application to become a Trust appointed Governor.</p> <p>Parent and Staff Governor elections will take place post transfer.</p>
FUNDING		
16.	How will the school be funded?	<p>Academies (whether part of a single academy trust or a MAT) are funded on the same basis as maintained schools and receive annual funding allocations from the Department for Education via the Education &amp; Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Academies receive the same level of per-pupil funding as maintained schools receive from the LA, but they also receive an additional amount called the Education Services Grant, allocated to academies based on the number of pupils they are responsible for, to buy services no longer automatically provided by the Local Authority.</p> <p>When a school from a single academy trust transfers to a MAT, the single academy trust, MAT, and the Secretary of State enter into a deed of novation and variation, which will transfer the responsibility for complying with the existing funding agreement to the MAT and vary the existing single funding agreement to a MAT supplemental funding agreement.</p> <p>All Star schools have their own individual budgets and are supported to manage these to ensure financial stability.</p>

17.	How are schools and Star held to account on matters of finance?	Academies (whether part of a single academy trust or a MAT) must operate systems which conform to the requirements of propriety and good financial management. These systems must meet the regulatory requirements of: Charities Act SORP; Companies Act; DfE; ESFA; and the Star Academies Board of Trustees. An academy must comply with the principles of financial control as outlined in the DfE Academies Trust Handbook and apply the principles of best value to all financial and academy dealings. Requirements include producing annual accounts, annual internal audit arrangements and appointing a statutory (external) auditor to certify whether the accounts are true and fair. Academies continue to be inspected by Ofsted.
<b>EDUCATION</b>		
18.	Will Star bring in additional capacity to maintain and develop the school's education provision?	BRGS will benefit from access to outstanding leaders and practitioners, all able to support the school on its journey to educational excellence. Our awareness of cutting-edge educational research and practice means we are equipped to provide personalised educational support to meet the individual needs of all of our schools.
19.	Will the curriculum change?	Star will work with the school to build on the existing curriculum to ensure it continues to equip our young people with the skills needed to go onto the next phase in their education and beyond. We will support the school to ensure the curriculum is set up for success and maximises our performance in the Key Stage 4 and 5 measures.
20.	What is your main priority for the school?	The Trust will adopt a collaborative approach, with the school, the parents and carers and the pupils and work together to continue to address Ofsted areas for improvement. The goal will be to strengthen the school's offer and continue the school's efforts to make the school engaging and enjoyable so that all young people want to come to school and are ready to learn.
21.	What will be done to support safeguarding at the school?	<p>Star Academies is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment and we work closely with Local Authority Safeguarding Partners and actively support the Government's Prevent Agenda to counter radicalism and extremism.</p> <p>Star has a safeguarding team which includes Safeguarding and Child Protection Leads within each region. They work in close contact with our schools and outside agencies including social services, the local Safeguarding Partner and relevant health care organisations. The Trust's safeguarding planning framework and management system ensures that safeguarding systems and processes are working and that we are responsive to risks as soon as they occur. Safeguarding reports are produced each half term as part of a safeguarding dashboard to ensure pupil safety and welfare remain at the heart of our core business.</p>
22.	Will you focus on pupils' individual talents?	Yes. We have very high expectations of all our pupils, staff and parents. We set ambitious progress and attainment targets for all our pupils based on their ability and prior attainment. Through the Star Talent Programme, we ensure that Gifted and Talented pupils are challenged and supported to excel, with stretching personalised targets in the classroom and tailored enrichment activities for all years that provide a comprehensive leadership offer, including sport, creativity, performing arts, enterprise and careers, charity and social action.

23.	Will provision still be in place for SEN?	<p>Provision for young people with special educational needs will be the same as it is now, or even better. Top up funding for pupils with a high level of need will still be channelled through the Local Authority, who will continue to monitor how this funding is spent to meet the needs of SEND pupils.</p> <p>Star has considerable experience in working with pupils with SEN and achieving outstanding success. We will draw on this experience and existing staff and Governors within the Star network, which includes a Head of Inclusion and a national Lead for SEND.</p>
<b>STAFFING</b>		
24.	Will the terms of employment change for staff?	<p>Where a school joins Star, there will be a legal change of employer and all employees assigned to the educational establishment of the school will transfer automatically to Star with effect from the transfer date.</p> <p>The employer will change to Star Academies.</p> <p>TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)) preserves an employees' terms and conditions when a business or undertaking, or part of one, is transferred to a new employer. All employees assigned to the educational establishment of the school at the time of transfer have the right to transfer to the Academy and to have their terms and conditions protected.</p> <p>Star Academies is committed to offering national terms and conditions in line with the school Teacher's Pay and Conditions document ("STPCD") and the Burgundy Book (for Teachers) or the NJC Green Book (for Support Staff). This commitment is protected via a Recognition and Collective Agreement between Star Academies and the national Trade Unions and Professional Associations.</p> <p>Star Academies is also an accredited Living Wage Employer.</p>
25.	Will there be a period of consultation? Will the Unions be involved?	<p>There will be a TUPE consultation process.</p> <p>Under TUPE, the current employer (and the Academy Trust where it is already incorporated and employs staff) must inform any recognised trade unions or elected employee representatives of the fact that the transfer is to take place, when it is to take place and the reasons for it.</p> <p>Staff will have the opportunity to meet collectively and individually with Star and Union representatives. This is expected to begin in April 2023. Star will seek to involve Trade Unions representatives throughout the TUPE consultation process.</p>
26.	What will happen to staff pensions?	<p>Teachers will continue to be part of the Teachers' Pension Scheme, with Star assuming the employer responsibilities of the predecessor school. Star also provides access for non-teaching staff to retain their membership to the Local Government Pension Scheme.</p>

27.	What staff development opportunities do Star offer?	<p>Star Institute offers a range of development opportunities for both teaching and non-teaching staff. The Institute provides school-centred initial teacher training courses, along with training and support programmes for early career teachers, which are designed to help them build confidence and strengthen their teaching practice. The Institute also has programmes for more experienced teachers who want to hone their pedagogy skills and keep themselves at the leading edge of teaching practice. We offer nationally-recognised qualifications and coaching programmes for those looking for pathways into leadership. Star Institute NPQ programmes are accredited by the DfE, and there are also courses available for those who are aspiring to become Executive Headteachers.</p> <p>Star Institute has established partnership arrangements that provide access to CPD programmes for support staff, including courses and qualifications specifically designed for Teaching Assistants, and business qualifications for aspiring and existing School Business Managers.</p> <p>Star is also a founding trust of the National Institute of Teaching established in England to provide teachers and school leaders with prestigious training and development throughout their career. The North West campus shares its site with Star Academies Head Office.</p> <p>All staff will continue to have a personalised professional development plan that is reviewed on an annual basis.</p> <p>Find out more about Star Institute at: <a href="https://www.starinstitute.org.uk/">https://www.starinstitute.org.uk/</a></p> <p>Find out more about the National Institute of Teaching at: <a href="https://www.niot.org.uk/">Home – The National Institute of Teaching (niot.org.uk)</a></p>
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#### ORGANISATION OF THE SCHOOL

28.	Will the term times change?	No. The school will continue to coordinate term times with other local schools for the convenience of parents and staff.
29.	Will there be any changes to the admissions policy?	<p>No. The school will remain subject to the Admissions Code and SEN Code of Practice. Star will become the Admissions Authority and could, subject to consultation, change the admission policy. However, we have no plans to do so and do not wish to disrupt current arrangements.</p> <p>The school will remain a grammar school and admission will be based on performance in an entrance exam.</p> <p>The Local Authority will continue to co-ordinate the admissions. Parents will apply through the Local Authority for a place at the school in the usual way. Entrance exams will continue to be coordinated by the school.</p>
30.	Will the name of the school change?	No. The Trust is keen to retain the tradition and heritage of the school and the community it serves.
31.	Will the school uniform change?	There are no plans to change the uniform in the secondary school. We will introduce a dress code into the 6 <sup>th</sup> form.

SCHOOL ESTATE		
32.	What investment will be available to address the school estate?	As part of the wider Star school capital programme, we will work with the school to review the school estate and agree a cycle of improvement works.
PARTNERSHIPS		
33.	How will you involve parents?	<p>We encourage parents, carers and the community at large to play an active role in the school's development, to ensure that all stakeholders feel that their views are being acknowledged and addressed.</p> <p>Star is committed to engaging in ongoing dialogue with parents and aims to ensure that all parents take an active role in their child's education. Star will engage with and build on existing support to ensure parents' opinions are regularly considered and factor into future decisions about the school. Post-transfer, Star will also seek to elect Parent Governors to the newly-established Local Accountability Board.</p> <p>It is important to continue to improve the reputation of the school and encourage pupils and parents to view the school as the preferred choice in the community.</p> <p>We will build on the work already done by the school and continue with regular updates to parents by way of newsletters and the school's website, and parents will be provided with regular report cards documenting their child's progress. Performance Review Meetings for pupils falling below national expected levels will ensure parents play a key role in supporting their child's progress.</p>
34.	Will BRGS continue working with other schools in Lancashire?	The school and Trust remain committed to current local partnership arrangements. We would expect these to continue post transfer.