



Memorandum of Understanding

Between the Aldridge Foundation /academy trust and local authority co-sponsor, BHCC/DCC/RBKC

Introduction

Academies are defined as publicly funded independent schools which not subject to local authority and national government control. They are all ability schools established by sponsors from business, charity, faith or voluntary groups working with partners from the local community.

The Foundation is lead sponsor of five academies, of which three have Local Authority co-sponsors. We want to work in genuine, functional partnership with our co-sponsors. The terms of agreement with the lead sponsor/academy trust and the DfE are well defined. However, there are currently no such terms for the relationship between lead sponsor/academy trust and a co-sponsoring partner.

The Aldridge Foundation is committed to non-selective, inclusive, community education provision to improve outcomes for young people, particularly in areas of deprivation – and our local authority co-sponsors are too. Both the Foundation and its Local Authority co-sponsors are committed to providing a teaching and learning environment and curriculum in line with the best in the maintained sector. We also believe our academies have a key part to play in the regeneration of disadvantaged communities, and we understand that our LA co-sponsors share this conviction.

It makes sense to lay out the details of both parties' commitment to supporting the academy trust in delivering these shared aims. This is the purpose of this MOU.

Our MOU should focus on priorities we genuinely share. For example, the LA has responsibility for safe, healthy and prosperous communities. The Aldridge Foundation sees effective community engagement as essential for the sustainability of the its academies, as integral to its educational vision, and as central to the partnership with an LA.

The MOU/agreement

We propose that:

Communications

The Academy and LA will share, in confidence unless otherwise agreed, census and educational performance data, and will work together to ensure effective provision of statutory services where relevant to the priorities and obligations of the academy;

The academy trust will provide to the LA with named contacts in relation to Admissions, SEN and other student welfare issues, community relations, finance and communications;

The LA a will identify a named individual to act as principal liaison between parties and to ensure effective liaison with officers responsible for, for example, admissions, SEN and other student welfare issues;

The LA will commit to ensuring that its Leader, CEO, officers and elected members are informed and engaged in the development and performance of the academy, and to securing the full

support and advocacy of both. To that end, the LA will furnish the Foundation with positive introductions to relevant councillors, and other key stakeholders within the LA, and will actively support the development of mutually beneficial partnerships between such parties;

Whilst the academy and AF would not unreasonably withhold such rights to its co-sponsor, it retains in principle the sole right to issue statements about the Academy, including in relation to academic performance;

Community provision

The LA will commit to active, on-going promotion of community (leisure, learning etc) services delivered at/by the academy to ensure wide awareness and usage of its facilities and opportunities for learning;

The Academy leadership and governors will commit to prioritising high quality community provision and services for the neighbourhood around the academy, and will promote local services provided by the LA that benefit the families we serve;

The academy will identify specific SLT members with responsibility for community relations, and nominate a governor to do the same;

Wherever possible, the academy trust will support the priorities of the LA Children and Young People's Plan (or equivalent) and the broader educational and community aspirations of the LA;

The academy will be given by the LA introductions and access to, for example, the Adult Learning Group and Communities Team, to ensure on-going support for community provision at the academy and in the wider neighbourhood;

The Academy Trust will be given genuine opportunities to contribute to strategic planning within the LA in relation to its specific concerns in education, community, employment and business/economic development.

The LA will advise the Academy trust of any strategic issues that have a direct impact on it – in relation, for example, to admissions, new or existing education provision within the LA, transport plans, community services. This list is not intended to be exhaustive;

Co-sponsor (LA) nominated representatives on the Board of Governors of the Academy will include a representative with experience or skills in the delivery or provision of Community Services.

Management and leadership

The Foundation will direct key elements of the start-up phase, in agreed collaboration with the LA, including design of buildings, recruitment of principal and curriculum design.

The academy trust will manage and deliver all services provided within the academy, except where it has chosen to source another provider to do so. All suppliers and contracts will be chosen on the basis of value for money and quality of service alone. The LA's role as co-sponsor does not preclude it providing such services on this basis.

The trust will ensure the active engagement of the academy in appropriate areas of strategic planning and priorities for the local authority as agreed.

The Memorandum and Articles of the Academy Trust define all other strategic areas of governance for the academy, including the relative representation of lead and co-sponsor on the governing body. Current policy dictates that no Academies should have 'local Authority influenced' status. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 states that a company is 'influenced' if:

- 20% or more of the **members** are associated persons (LA officers or councillors)
- 20% or more of the **directors** are associated persons (LA officers or councillors)

Furthermore, the policy restricts the overall representation of 'associated persons' to a maximum of 2 members or directors.

'Associated Persons' are current members (councillors), current officers, or anyone who has been a member within the past four years.

As lead sponsor, the Aldridge Foundation further takes the view that the most appropriate LA co-sponsor nominees are not elected officers/members/councillors, but trusted and skilled individuals proposed by them, in particular with skills/roles relating to SEN and Community provision as described elsewhere in this MOU.

Education within the LA

The academy trust will adopt the LA admissions policy, with an agreement to review and evaluate this, particularly in the early years of the academy;

Where there is a demonstrable need to change admission numbers or catchment areas for the benefit of students, both parties agree to resolve any local conflicts of interest in relation to either catchments or other admission criteria;

the LA will provide positive introductions between the academy trust and primary, secondary, independent and FE education providers within the LA, and will actively support the development of mutually beneficial relationships between such parties;

The academy will work in partnership with Primary and Secondary Head teachers and FE providers in the LA to support the transition and education of our students, and to promote and deliver a culture of high expectations and standards in educational delivery within the LA;

Co-sponsor (LA) nominated representatives on the Board of Governors of the Academy will include a representative with a specific experience in the delivery of support for students with special or additional educational needs;

The specialisms

The academy trust will foster and support entrepreneurial activities, particularly those which can be driven by young people or members of the immediate community, to help develop a better qualified local workforce. They will do this through the CREATES facility, through curricular and extra-curricular schemes including adult learning, and through the development of effective partnerships with businesses and funders in the area;

The Local authority will support and promote the entrepreneurial activities of the academy, facilitating the development of effective partnerships with businesses and funders in the area, offering access to strategic business and enterprise activities and events orchestrated by the LA.

We propose that this MOU is reviewed after 12 months.

It is intended to remain in place until any agreed subsequent amendment. We acknowledge that the substance of such an MOU may need to alter over time as the academy establishes itself/the education or LA landscape alters significantly.

We would expect our Academy Director or equivalent Foundation representative, the Principal of the academy or their representative and a named officer nominated as main contact between sponsors within the LA, to use this as a reference document throughout the year.

Agreements with Education Partners will be separately agreed between the AF/Academy Trust and any such Education Partners are not subject to the terms of this MOU.