

22nd February 2016

Dear Parent

In 2011, Fred Longworth High School became the first “converter” academy in Wigan. The Department of Education is now keen for all schools to become academies and recent statements have indicated that schools should work more formally together in “multi academy trusts”. It is important that the school is proactive in responding to this agenda and I write to consult you about our plans.

It is proposed that we apply for Multi Academy Trust (MAT) status. By doing so at this stage, we can create a Trust that fully reflects our values and that has benefits for our students; we will also be free to choose our partner schools. If we do nothing, we may be instructed to form partnerships; we want to avoid this and to continue to be in control of our own future.

Should we be successful in our application for Multi Academy Trust status, our own Governing Body would remain in place but an over-arching Multi Academy Trust (MAT) would hold the school (and any other schools that are part of the Trust) to account. The Governing Body would continue to make the decisions about how the school is run meaning that Fred Longworth High School would retain its unique culture, ethos, high standards and working practices.

As part of our consideration of whether to become a Multi Academy Trust, we have held discussions with the Governors and senior leaders of Bedford High School with a view to working together within a collaborative Multi Academy Trust. There are many advantages in such an arrangement, including opportunities to share best practice in teaching and learning with a school very close at hand. We should also be able to buy in a range of services at a cheaper rate due to the increased buying power of a larger organisation.

I must stress that the two schools would remain separate, each with its own distinctive character so that choice for parents in choosing the right secondary school for their children will still exist. This is not an amalgamation but a vehicle for collaboration, leading to even higher achievement for young people across our side of the borough.

As we are an Academy, we are already independent of the Local Authority and are funded directly by the Department for Education. We took the decision in 2011 to take responsibility for our own destiny and we believe that the change to Multi Academy Trust status is a natural “next step” from that decision, enabling us to share our excellent practice with other schools.

As part of our consultation, we are keen to hear your views. If you wish to respond or to ask any questions, please email us at parentconsultation@flhs.wigan.sch.uk , or send a written response addressed to Mrs D Marland, Secretary to the Governing Body, at the school. Parent Governors are particularly keen to be part of the consultation process and I have attached a list of their names; if you wish to contact a Governor directly, please contact the school in the first instance. The period of consultation will close at 3.30pm on Monday, April 4th. Governors will meet on Wednesday, April 20th to decide whether or not to pursue Multi Academy Trust status.

Further information about what Multi Academy Trust status would mean for Fred Longworth High School is available on our website. We have also organised a Parents' Information Evening at 6.30pm on Monday 14th March. The evening will include a presentation on our reasons for exploring Multi Academy Trust status and there will be an opportunity to ask questions. We hope that our Parent Governors will be able to attend so that you have the chance to speak to them. If you would like to attend the meeting, please complete the attached reply slip and return it to school via your child. This will give us an indication of numbers likely to attend.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

MRS J H GARRETTS
Headteacher

Alderman B WILSON
Chair of Governors

Multi Academy Trust Status Consultation 2016

I would like to attend the Parents' Consultation Meeting on Monday, 14th March.

Name of Student: _____ Form: _____

Signed: _____ Parent/Carer