



The Blue Coat School

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Headteacher: Mrs J A Hollis, M.A.

Our Reference: JAHCLA/634

26th April, 2011

Dear Parents/Guardians/Carers/Parishioners/Members of the community,

Consideration of Academy Status for The Blue Coat School

On 14th July 2010, following discussion with the Henshaw Trust and initial consultation with parents and staff, the Governing Body unanimously decided to apply for conversion to Academy status and, responding to issues raised in that initial consultation, adopted a series of principles which would underpin the final decision. The principles are attached to this letter.

As a Voluntary-Aided Church of England School, the governing body also had to ask for consent from the Manchester Diocesan Board of Education. The National Society of the Church of England advised Dioceses to wait until the legal framework for the conversion of Church schools had been resolved. This suite of documentation was agreed by the Department for Education and the lawyers acting for the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church in late November, 2010. The Governing Body presented its business case to the Diocesan Board of Education in December and received formal consent in January, 2011 to apply for conversion.

The Governing Body has always been clear that this is a process where specialist legal and financial advice is necessary, so that the implications for the whole school are fully understood. It has therefore waited for an Academy Order to be issued by the Secretary of State. This enables the Governing Body to access a grant of £25,000, which is being used to engage specialist advice.

The Governing Body is therefore now renewing its consultation with stakeholders before taking a decision about whether or not to convert. At the same time it is consulting with the appropriate representatives of the employees of the school to ensure that the Governing Body complies fully with its obligations under employment law.

The consultation process with stakeholders opens on Wednesday, 27th April, and closes on Wednesday, 25th May, at 2.00pm. I am attaching to this letter some Frequently Asked Questions specific to Blue Coat which were raised by parents and staff who responded to the initial consultation, or which have been asked by students in school. Please could I also draw your attention to the DfE Website: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies>, where you will also find a detailed FAQ section.

Blue Coat embraces a very wide geographical community. Our pupils come annually from over 100 (changing) primary schools across six Local Authorities and three Dioceses. To ensure transparency and to enable as many people as possible to give their views the school is creating a parent/stakeholder consultation forum on the Academy section of the school website, where representations may be made and questions asked. The full details are on the website.



Representations/questions may also be made in writing to the school (please mark the letter "Academy Consultation") or via e-mail (Ref: Academy Consultation) to secretary@blue-coat.org. Whilst it will not be possible to reply individually to every question/representation, the Governing Body will, through the school, update the FAQs and, at the end of the consultation, publish a summary of both the representations received and the responses. The views obtained will then be considered by the Governing Body in its decision to convert.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs J A Hollis
Headteacher

For and on behalf of the Governing Body of The Blue Coat School, Oldham



ACADEMY CONVERSION

Principles – to be embedded in the Academy Trust’s Articles of Association.

- The school will retain and maintain its distinctive Anglican and Christian ethos and character.
- Collective worship will continue to be distinctly Christian in character and central to the daily life of the school.
- Religious Education will remain part of the core curriculum for all students, and the curriculum will faithfully reflect the Diocesan scheme.
- The leadership and management of the school will engage with distinctive Christian values in developing the vision for the school.
- The school will maintain its close association with the Henshaw Trust as part of the Academy Trust, and this relationship will be reflected in governance.
- Governance will include the representation of all stakeholders – the Henshaw Trust, parents, staff, the deanery, the Diocese and the LA.
- The school will retain its Admissions Policy and will give priority to the children of practising Anglican families.
- The school will play a full and committed part in the family of Oldham schools, working in partnership to build the best for provision and opportunities for all our young people.
- National agreements on pay and terms and conditions for teaching and support staff will not be affected by a transfer to Academy status, and will be upheld by the Academy.

