

Frequently Asked Questions when joining a multi-academy trust (MAT)

What is a multi-academy trust (MAT)?

A MAT is formed when two or more academy schools join as one legal entity. When a local authority school joins a MAT, it first becomes an academy then immediately comes into the MAT.

How many children are taught in academies?

Over 56% of pupils in state funded schools (over 81% of secondary) are now taught in academies; a number that continues to increase. Strong families of schools in MATs are increasing as schools come together with other like-minded schools.

What is the current status of Bright Futures Educational Trust?

Bright Futures has been a MAT since 2011. We have 11 schools at present plus two Teaching School Hubs, a Maths Hub, a SCITT (Early Years, Primary, Secondary), an Early Years Stronger Practice Hub and a commercial offer providing first-class school improvement services and CPD called Bright Futures Training.

How big is Bright Futures intending to grow?

Bright Futures is ambitious to grow with the intention of supporting more pupils, families, staff and communities, challenging ourselves that everything we do should improve opportunities for our learners - our vision is 'the best for everyone, the best from everyone'. Growth is considered and measured as we seek like-minded partner schools who share a similar vision. Schools wishing to talk to us, or parents looking for more information about Bright Futures should access our [website](http://www.bright-futures.co.uk): www.bright-futures.co.uk for more information.

Why are some schools considering joining a MAT?

Many schools are increasingly recognising the value of joining a MAT, not only for the exciting opportunities to collaborate but also for the strength and stability it brings, ensuring schools are better supported and resilient in facing challenges. Our schools thrive through working closely with other great schools, with a commitment to do so with aspiration, continuous improvement, supportive environments, and strong links to our communities. This aligned ethos and accountability, along with a reduction in bureaucratic barriers, will continue to strengthen opportunities for our pupils, staff, parents, and the communities we serve, enhancing the educational experience and opportunities we can offer.

How is funding allocated in a MAT?

Schools are funded based on the number of pupils they have. Money allocated to a school is used both within and for the school it is allocated to. All MATs take a 'management fee' or 'top slice' and this varies from MAT to MAT. At Bright Futures our current percentage is really low at 4%. Remember, schools will no longer need service level agreements for things like HR, Educational Psychologists, Marketing support, external school reviews etc. as this is all provided by our Central Team.



If our school joined Bright Futures ...

What would this mean for the unique character of our school?

Within our MAT each school maintains its unique character, identity, and position within the community that it serves. This is important to us at Bright Futures and all the schools within it, as well as those considering joining. All our MAT schools maintain their own character, curriculum, uniform and local governance as well as other things that make them unique within their communities. This is something we value.

Would a curriculum be mandated?

Absolutely not.

Would we continue to work with the Local Authority and other providers?

Yes, we are committed to working collaboratively with local authorities and other providers to support the best outcomes for our children. For example, our Teaching School Hubs and Maths Hub have formal joint working with strategic boards. We strongly encourage our schools to maintain close relationships with local authorities and neighbouring schools, recognising the importance of 'place'. As a Trust, we also maintain regular contact with local authorities and remain open to sourcing services from other providers when it serves the best interests of our pupils and schools, or if financially it would be better to do so but still in the best interests of our pupils and schools.

How would governance be structured?

In academies and MATs, the structure includes a group of members who are similar to shareholders in a company; they can appoint trustees and amend the articles of association. Usually there are five members. The trustees are responsible for any academy operating individually or within a MAT. In a MAT each school will have a local governing body, and their main focus will be the core business of the school: teaching and learning.

Would our school have autonomy in relation to leadership?

The principal/headteacher and senior leaders in each school are best placed to make decisions relating to pupils and the day-to-day running of each school. This would not change but support would never be far away.

What would this do to our school's catchment area?

Schools within Bright Futures retain their own catchment areas and admissions criteria. Being a member of our MAT does not change anything about the individual school catchment areas or pupil admissions.

Who would employ our staff?

In a MAT, the staff are employed by the MAT rather than a local authority or single school. When schools join together, staff from the school joining the MAT will go through a TUPE* process and are employed by the MAT. When school staff apply for jobs, they generally apply to a single school. This will continue and most staff will spend their time at one school. We do, however, create exciting opportunities which allow staff to work over more than one school. *Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment rights.

What would be provided centrally to support our school?

We have a wonderful central offer in Bright Futures to support our schools. It is easier to talk you through these but just to give you an idea:

- Strong leadership - we have a strong Executive Team led by our CEO. You can find more information [here](http://www.bright-futures.co.uk/about-us/our-executive-team/) (www.bright-futures.co.uk/about-us/our-executive-team/)
- People & HR team - we have a central People & HR team to provide leadership, advice and guidance
- Professional Development Institute
- Central Finance support - we have an excellent central finance team
- Educational Psychologists - we have a team of Educational Psychologists
- Marketing & Comms - we support with everything from digital website support to press release planning
- Estates Team
- Procurement Team
- Teaching School Hubs - ECT support - we provide the Early Career Framework for our new teachers and NPOs - we provide the full suite of National Leadership Qualifications
- Subject support - through our Maths Hub and system leaders we provide subject CPD/support

Who would own our school's land?

MATs/academies lease the land (generally from their local authority) on a long-term lease (125 years), but the MAT/academy take responsibility and liability for the buildings and maintenance.

Contact details for further questions

If you have comments or questions, please submit them using the contact details below.
Your questions are important to us.

Call us: 0161 941 5681

Email us: admin@bright-futures.co.uk



The best *for* everyone, the best *from* everyone