

FAQs for Parents, Staff and Students

Why has Fred Longworth High School been given this option?

We are an Outstanding school. The option to convert to academy status under the new law was given first to Outstanding schools because it is believed that they are strong enough to be able to make the most of the change. The “old style” academies you may have read or heard about were usually formed from closing schools; the new academies do not close, they simply change their status.

How does an academy work?

An academy runs in the same way as a school but it receives its funding directly from the Department for Education. It receives the same level of funding as other local schools plus the amount that the Local Authority currently spends on its behalf. An Academy Trust and the Board of Governors employ the staff and oversee the operation of the academy in a similar manner as they do in any school.

How would Fred Longworth High School change if it became an academy?

In many ways there would be no change. We would have the same buildings, the same staff and the same governors. Most importantly, we would have exactly the same vision and ethos as we do now. The increased freedom to spend all of our money, together with freedoms around the curriculum would, however, mean we had more scope to benefit our students.

Would Fred Longworth become a selective school?

Absolutely not! We would retain our current vision and ethos. Even as an academy, we would be bound by the national rules on admissions, but we are completely committed to remaining as a non-selective comprehensive school that serves its local community.

Would there be changes to the catchment area or admissions criteria?

No - we would retain our current catchment area, admission arrangements and standard intake number. In fact we will be bound by the national admissions code just as we are now.

Would the school continue to admit students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)?

Yes. Fred Longworth would absolutely retain its current inclusive ethos; we would not change our approach towards young people with SEN (or any other vulnerable young people) in any way at all.

How would becoming an academy affect the relationship between the school and its feeder primary schools?

We believe that becoming an academy would actually allow us to build even closer links with our local primaries.

What would the relationship be with the Local Authority?

As an academy, we would cease to be a “local authority maintained school.” However, we enjoy a good relationship with the LA and we would like this to continue. We would probably continue to buy several services from the LA – those that we believe to be of high quality. As an academy we would be free to buy services from other sources in addition to the LA and we would buy from wherever the quality is highest and value for money is best.

How will the pay and conditions of the current staff be affected?

Staff would transfer to the academy on their present pay and conditions (TUPE regulations). We would also adopt the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document (for teachers) and the Local Government Pay and Conditions (for support staff). Staff would therefore retain their current pay and conditions and continuous service; new staff would join on the same terms and conditions.

What would be the impact on staff pensions?

Teaching staff would continue to be members of the Teachers’ Pension Scheme. Support Staff would continue to have access to the Local Authority’s scheme. There would therefore be no change on pensions.

Would staff have to reapply for their jobs? Would there be redundancies?

Staff would transfer automatically to the academy and would not have to reapply for their jobs. Conversion to academy status would not lead to redundancies. Actually the increased funding as an academy may even protect the school from some cuts that might otherwise have to be made due to public spending cuts.

Would staff be still allowed to be members of a trade union or professional association?

Fred Longworth has a good working relationship with the unions in the school and locally. The school has always recommended membership to all staff and this would not change.

Would the name of the school change?

No, we would continue to be Fred Longworth High School. The word Academy does not have to be incorporated into our name.

Would the school still have the same uniform?

The uniform would not change.

Would the school working pattern change?

The school day and the number/ length of school holidays would remain the same.

Would the Governing Body 'make-up' be the same?

The school board of governors would be appointed by the Academy Trust and these can be the existing governors.

Would the school have to raise our own capital funding for major building works?

No. All schools, including academies, will be able to apply for Government capital funding.

Would the school be at risk if there was a fire or other serious accident with the buildings?

We are required to be insured to cover risks to the buildings such as fire. This would not change and the school would be at no greater risk as an academy.

What would happen to all the policies that the school uses at the moment?

Schools and colleges are required to have a range of policies, and this is no different for academies. We would adopt all of the current policies.

This process seems to be happening very quickly, is it not being rushed?

This is happening very quickly now but the school has been mindful of this potential opportunity since the government first announced this as an opportunity for OFSTED Outstanding Schools. We have chosen to explore this more thoroughly now because there are many schools nationally who are in the process of converting to be academies. Fred Longworth High School has always looked "outwards" to explore possibly good opportunities to move forward.

What happens next?

This informal consultation will close on 25th March 2011 at 3.30pm and responses will be considered as they are received. Governors will meet on 28th March 2011 to consider all responses and make a decision on whether or not to pursue Academy Status. The table below details the consultation timeline:

31/01/11	Governors meet to decide whether to consult and gain stakeholder views
02/02/11	Informal staff meeting to outline the reasons for the decision.
09/02/11	Consult with feeder primary school headteachers.
14/02/11	Student assemblies and consultation letter sent to all parents.
28/02/11	Whole staff meeting to consider responses.
10/03/11	Parents information evening
25/03/11	Informal consultation closes
28/03/11	Governors meet to consider responses to the informal consultation.

Students have asked.....

Would we have to come to school on Saturdays?

No! At the moment, some exam groups volunteer to come in to do extra revision on Saturdays, and they would still be able to do so if they wish. However, the number of days you have to attend would stay the same.

Would we have longer school days or terms?

No. There are already lots of exciting activities after school and these would still take place, but no-one would be made to attend. Holidays would also remain the same.

Would there be a sixth form?

No. We would not be able to open a sixth form. The school would “convert” to be an academy with the same year groups (Year 7 – Year 11) as it has at the moment.

Would our teachers change?

No. We would keep all the staff we have at the moment. Of course, some teachers leave and new ones join the school from time to time, but this has nothing to do with changing to be an academy.

What’s the point in changing?

We would be free to make decisions about how our money is spent so that it benefits our students. We would also be able to decide exactly what we teach in school so that we can make sure you are learning what is best for you. We think that the school knows its students really well so that it is able to make the best possible decisions.

Would my younger brother still be able to get in to Freddie’s?

Yes. We would keep exactly the same rules on who joins the school as we have now.