



Orchard Community Trust Induction Policy for new schools joining the Trust

Approved by: OCT Trust Board **Date:** 19th September 2019

Last reviewed on: 22nd July 2019

Next review due by: 22nd July 2022

Version 1

Orchard Community Trust Induction Policy for new schools joining the Trust

Rationale

As our new multi-academy Trust develops and grows over time, it will be essential to do so in a way that is in harmony with our vision and values and in a way that does not jeopardise our future success and stability. Regard will always be given by members and Trustees to the risks and benefits of any expansion in the number of schools in the Trust.

This policy sets out the agreed considerations and processes of the OCT Board which will ensure that any new schools joining OCT understand their role and position in doing so, how processes of due diligence and information sharing will be carried out and how the Board will support and develop new trustees when a new school joins the MAT.

Induction of a new school

When a recommendation or application is made for a new school to join the MAT, the OCT Board, subject to permission granted from the DFE, will always take seriously the impact of a new school doing so. Once the Board has met and approved a new school joining in principle, a process of due diligence to be carried out, this will also be communicated to LGBs in all schools concerned.

Due Diligence

Before a new school is considered to convert and join the OCT MAT, professional scrutiny will be undertaken in the following areas:

Financial Position

Historic attainment and trends

Views of parents and the local community

Current assessment of the schools' performance

Leadership and Governance Capacity

Asset Condition

Capacity and other risks, with mitigating factors

A formal report will then be provided back to the Board and the LGB of the school wishing

Proceeding to conversion

Upon a successful recommendation for progression to conversion and the awarding of an Academy order from the DfE the relevant processes to support the conversion will ensue.

It is the expectation that any school joining OCT will utilise the existing expertise and consultancy provided by the Board's solicitors, accountants etc. The Senior Executive

Leader and the Chief Finance Officer will provide support to the school in this period to support the process of conversion, communicating progress within this back to the Board.

Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors will meet as per an agreed calendar to support this process at local level.

Induction of new trustees to the board

The DfE believes effective governance at all levels is based on six key features:

- **Strategic leadership** that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy.
- **Accountability** that drives up educational standards and financial performance.
- **People** with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity.
- **Structures** that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- **Compliance** with statutory and contractual requirements.
- **Evaluation** to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance

As such any new members of the Trust Board are given a full and comprehensive induction. Within this they must read and understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to the very important public duty they hold. A list of these can be found below:

- Code of Conduct For Trustees
- [Academy's Financial Handbook](#)
- [Governance Handbook](#)
- Articles of Association
- [Companies Act 2006](#)
- [CC3: the essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do.](#)
- 21 Questions for Mat Boards
- MAT Funding Agreement
- [7 Principles of Public Life](#)

In addition, prospective Trustees and schools must demonstrate that they have the required personal qualities and pre-requisite skills for joining the OCT Board. This may be ascertained through the use of a skills audit. All members of the Board are accountable and responsible for all the decisions made and all schools joining OCT must operate within the powers and authority delegated to them.

The OCT Board also recognises that principles and personal attributes that individuals bring to the board are just as important. All those involved in governance should be:

Committed – devoting the required time to the role

Confident – of an independent mind, able to lead and contribute to courageous conversations

Curious – an enquiring mind and analytical approach

Challenging – providing appropriate challenge to the status quo, not taking information at face value

Collaborative – prepared to listen and work in partnership with others

Critical – critical friendship which enables both challenge and support

Creative – able to challenge convention wisdom and be open-minded

Throughout the conversion process and beyond

As part of the induction process and ongoing schedule of evaluation and improvement, the trustees will be involved in the following activities which will form part of the MAT board's cycle for continual improvement:

- Agreeing and formulating the plans for medium and long-term development of the trust and how they build capacity within their trust and their schools;
- Continually evaluating the needs and development challenges are for all the schools within the trust, irrespective of current performance levels;
- Determining how the trust will contribute to wider system improvement and develop and retain good links with other MATs, teaching schools and a wide range of stakeholders
- Ensuring there is sufficient financial expertise to oversee the trust's financial operations;
- Carrying out financial planning which is integrated in to the trust's overall strategy for its school(s);
- Ensuring the trust's vision remains deliverable and resilient to operational changes in income, such as changes in pupil numbers or characteristics or the implications of the introduction of a national funding formula.
- Making sure that there are robust contingency plans in place, with clear triggers for enacting these plans.

Risk Management

The OCT Board will ensure that OCT and any new schools have effective procedures in place to identify, monitor and mitigate at both school and trust level – risk management is not a box-ticking exercise. This will be achieved in the following ways:

- its scheme of delegation makes clear what risks are managed at what level so no issues 'fall between the gaps';
- the trust has a clear idea of how the way it manages risk may need to change as the trust grows, and has made a balanced assessment of the risks expansion and opportunities might pose to its existing schools;
- the trust has access to appropriate due diligence expertise so that they can be confident the trust knows what it is taking on (both in terms of benefits and risks) when an additional school joins it; and
- the trust has capacity to manage the estate for which they are responsible.

Appointments to the OCT Board

The OCT Board is structured as per the Articles of Association. Any new schools joining the MAT will understand the representation at Board level available to them, if at all. Notwithstanding that CECET must have 25% representation at Board and Member level. Any new trustees must possess the requisite skills and demonstrate the ability to meet the expectations of the Code of Conduct and other above-mentioned documents.

Training and Professional Development

All trustees and members will access training which will support them in fulfilling their

Post Conversion

Policies

Post conversion the new joining school will be asked to adhere to key OCT Policies such as Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Performance Management, Whistleblowing, Financial based policies in the first instance. These can be given as part of the Induction package.

Systems

New schools joining will be offered the support of schools already within the MAT for the implementation and management of new processes, such as finance packages, purchasing and other systems and processes that may be pertinent. This will be organised by the Finance Director/ABM in conjunction with the individual Head Teachers.

Support for Staff

Times of change can be challenging for staff, especially if it feels there is more work to be done as an academy. Established OCT schools will support new joining schools by “buddying up” key staff as a first point of support.

In addition to this, support will be increased in the first year post conversion for new tasks such as the first few month-end returns the school has to do. It is anticipated by putting in an adequate level of support at the start that this will future proof against complications further down the line.

Peer to peer support for office staff and individual school Head Teachers is essential in the early stages post conversion. OCT is committed to putting this level of support in place for all schools that join.

Agreed by the OCT Board on:

Signed Chairman of the Board and the by

Vice- of the OCT Board of Trustees:



Orchard Community Trust Multi – Academy Trust Application

Due Diligence Report

Appraiser:

Date:

Criteria	Risk			Evidence / Notes
	L	M	H	
Finance				
Attainment related issues				
Views of parents & local community				
Current performance assessment				
Leadership and Governance				
Asset condition				
Capacity and other risks, with mitigating factors				

Recommendation – considering the following criteria:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Do we have an existing school in the locality (organic growth)?· Can the new school be part of a MAT?· Are parents / staff in support?· Outcome of due diligence report (analysis).· Attainment levels |
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