



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Frequently Asked Questions that are often asked about MATs (Multi Academy Trusts) and we are publishing these now in light of the proposal that Highcliffe, IWEF and Test Valley schools join the HISP MAT**

#### ***What is an Academy Trust?***

An Academy Trust is a charitable company limited by Guarantee. It receives its funding directly from the Secretary of State rather than via the Local Authority

#### ***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

#### ***What is the current status of HISP, Highcliffe, IOW and Test Valley Schools?***

HISP has been a Multi Academy Trust with 3 schools (Thornden Secondary School –Chandlers Ford, Tanners Brook Primary School and Portswood Primary School, both in Southampton) since July 2020. Highcliffe School is an Academy, IWEF and Test Valley are Local Authority schools

#### ***How many children are taught in academies?***

Over 55% of students in state funded schools (over 80% of secondary) are now taught in academies; a number that continues to increase. Strong families of schools in Multi Academy Trusts are increasing as schools come together with other like-minded schools.

#### ***Why are Highcliffe, IWEF and Test Valley and HISP considering this?***

Extending the HISP MAT with great schools choosing to join us, will enable our schools to work together even more closely 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 the pupils/students, staff, parents, and the communities we serve, enhancing the educational experience and opportunities we can offer.

#### ***Are schools being forced to join the MAT?***

No. This is a decision that is being considered by the governors of Highcliffe, IWEF and Test Valley Schools and the trustees of HISP, who believe that Highcliffe, IWEF and Test Valley School joining the MAT will support and strengthen both the schools and MAT.

#### ***What does this mean for the unique character of each school?***

Within our MAT each school maintains its unique character, identity, and position within the community that it serves. This is important to HISP and all the schools within it, as well as those considering joining. All the MAT schools maintain their own uniforms, character, local governance as well as other things that make them unique within their communities. This is something that is valued by HISP and each school.





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### ***What could this do to the school catchment areas?***

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

### ***Would the students from other schools be at a disadvantage?***

No. Existing HISP schools, Highcliffe, IWEF and Test Valley Schools work within their communities and beyond. Anything we do individually or collectively will not impact in a negative way on schools and pupils/students in other schools. In fact, it is quite the opposite, HISP has a number of designations including Teaching School Hub status, Maths Hub, Research Schools and Science Learning partnership. They also have a School Centred Initial Teacher Training. These entities already support significant numbers of teachers and subsequently pupils/students across our wider region.

### ***Can other schools join the MAT?***

As a MAT, HISP is ambitious to grow with the intention of supporting more pupils/students, families, staff and communities, challenging ourselves that everything we do should improve opportunities for our learners. 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 the MAT should access our website for more information [HISP Multi Academy Trust - Home \(hispmat.org\)](http://hispmat.org)

### ***Can the MAT continue to work with the Local Authority and other providers?***

Yes, we will always work with Local Authorities and other local providers to support our children. We will have the option to continue to work with Local Authorities in a number of ways and will be able to continue to access services on a contractual basis. Alternatively, the MAT will also source services from other providers if this would be in the best interests of the schools and pupils, or if financially it would be better to do so.

### ***How will 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. Generally, there are 5 Members. The Trustees are responsible for any academy operating individually or within a MAT. In a MAT each school will have an Academy Committee/Local governance with delegated powers for the specific school. Academy Committees would retain the strength and involvement one would expect to see in great schools. Both staff and parental representation can be visible on Academy Committees. If an Academy committee is not sustainable, we will set up a parental engagement group to maintain links to our community.

### ***Autonomy in relation to school leadership?***

The Executive Headteachers, Headteachers, Heads of School and Senior Leaders in each school are best placed to make decisions relating to students and the day to day running of each school. This would not change. But support will never be far away.





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### ***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 within and for the school it is allocated to.

### ***Who employs the staff?***

In a MAT, the staff are employed by the MAT rather than the 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 will, however, hope to create exciting opportunities which allow staff to work over more than one school. HISP has some staff who are not specifically allocated to one school and can be used flexibly to support schools for short periods of time or teach in a school that has a specific need for a given academic year. During the pandemic HISP have been able to keep schools open on a number of occasions when staffing has been short by using these central staff.

### ***Who will own the land?***

MATs/academies lease the land (generally from the Local Authority) on a long-term lease (125 years), but the MAT/academies 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 and as such they will be considered carefully. We will create a list of additional frequently asked questions at the end of week 2 and 3 of this consultation process and publish them on our website.

You can find out more about HISP on [HISP Multi Academy Trust - Home \(hispmat.org\)](http://hispmat.org)

We will also hold a parental session where the HISP CEO, Su Whelan and Deputy CEO, Amanda Parry and trustees will talk with parents about the potential of Highcliffe and Test Valley joining HISP.

There is information about MAT academies on the DfE website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>

Contact: [info@hispmat.org](mailto:info@hispmat.org)

