



Academisation Consultation - Sussex Pioneer Trust

Wednesday 22nd May – Wednesday 19th June

Dear Pioneer Staff,

We are writing to you all to share some news about the future of The Pioneer Federation of Schools. This is an exciting piece of news and will possibly involve Pioneer becoming a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT).

The Governors of Pioneer Federation are always looking for further opportunities to fulfil our vision, to enable our children to flourish and prepare them for the next stage in their learning.

In March 2022, the government published a white paper which stated all schools were required to develop or join a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) by the end of 2030. As a result, the Governors and the Leadership team began to explore options for our schools in conversations with both the Local Authority and Diocese of Chichester.

While the government has now withdrawn the immediate need to academise, the future direction for all schools is towards academisation, with the Local Authority having less capacity to support the maintained schools in East Sussex. After much research and investigation, the Governors felt that developing our own Multi Academy Trust would mean that our schools could provide even more opportunities and improve outcomes for everyone.

In arriving at this conclusion, we have had discussions with the Department for Education's South East Regional Director, Leaders at the Diocese and Local Authority and other MATs. We have also attended several MAT interviews at the Diocese.

Throughout the process, it became clear that the Pioneer Federation had been operating as a MAT for several years in all but name. By developing our own Trust we are able to choose the direction and own destiny for our group of small schools, all without losing our unique identity and our characteristics, which make our schools special.

Our proposal now is to establish a Multi Academy Trust called **Sussex Pioneer Trust**. It would be a Diocesan academy trust, co-sponsored by the Diocese of Chichester that will include both church and non-church schools, with the Diocese providing support and expertise for the Trust. It would be a small school MAT, specialising in schools with less than 150 pupils. Over the last 12 years, we have become experts in small school improvement and development. Other schools would potentially join our group of schools as we have a strong understanding of the benefits and pressures of small school mixed aged classes/teaching.

We have learned through our federation that collaborative working with other schools can provide improved educational experiences for our own pupils through teaching and learning, an enhanced and engaging curriculum, staff development and opportunities for progression, streamlined services including finance, human resources, legal services, school improvement structures, and governance arrangements.

Whilst they are united behind a core Pioneer vision and ethos, the schools in the Pioneer Federation are all unique, and this is something that we would want to continue to preserve and celebrate in the future as a MAT.

The conversion will bring little change to our day-to-day activity in school. There will be no change to the staffing in the school as a direct result of any conversion. However, it would mean that your employment would transfer from East Sussex County Council to Sussex Pioneer Trust. This change of employer is classed as a transfer of undertaking, and legal protection to all employees is provided through the Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations (commonly referred to as TUPE). This means that all staff have the right to transfer to the new employer whilst retaining their existing pay, terms and conditions. Pioneer staff in all schools are on the same national terms and conditions as those in maintained schools. All staff will continue to be enrolled in their existing pension scheme and continue to have the same pension benefits as they do now. Maternity and sickness benefits all remain the same.

We understand that you are likely to have questions about these proposals. In order to ensure complete dissemination of information to all, we invite you use the survey, which can be found using the following link https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSFwDzP8XFIQnQej25rDKsnyIVyMhWAOmoJPDQ2BmTyNF-sXtA/viewform?usp=sf_link or in the QR code below, to ask any questions or raise any concerns you might have and we will publish all questions and answers on the website for everyone to access.

We also invite you to meet with representatives of Pioneer Governors and Leaders to hear more about the Trust and to ask questions at **Chiddingly School on Wednesday 5th June 4:00pm**. Union representatives in East Sussex have been informed of these meetings. There will be a more formal consultation with you under Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment Regulations (TUPE), attended by Janet Bowen, Lead HR Consultant for Schools and union representatives, later in the process and subject to the earlier stakeholder consultation process.

Some answers to common questions are attached to this letter and see the document Generic TUPE Fact Sheet.

The key requirement throughout this process has been to focus on the benefit for all our children and staff. The school leadership sees this as an exciting and positive step for the school and we hope that you will agree.

Yours sincerely,



Alan Brundle- Pioneer Federation Chair of Governors & Vice Chair of Chiddingly



Jeremy Sykes – Vice Chair of East Hoathly



Kelly McDonagh- Vice Chair of Park Mead



John Black and Lorna Duggleby- Joint Vice Chairs of St Mary

Academisation Consultation Survey

