

PUBLIC CONSULTATION
Changing to Foundation School Status and acquiring
a Charitable Trust

Dear Stakeholder/Parent/Carer/Colleague

Sudbury Upper School and Arts College is thinking about becoming a Trust School and the Governing Body has passed a resolution to consult about changing from a Community School to a Foundation School and acquiring Trust status. This letter, together with the accompanying information, is to explain our ideas and proposals as part of the consultation process and to ask for your views.

Our Proposed Trust

Trust Schools are a new kind of maintained school – part of the Local Authority system, but supported by a charitable Trust that will appoint some, but not the majority, of governors. The Governing Body and the Headteacher will continue to run the school and be responsible for its performance. We shall still maintain our strengths as a local comprehensive secondary school, serving our local community and as part of the local authority family of schools.

Great Cornard Upper School and Technology College is also going through the same process and we intend to share the same trust arrangements. In this way our proposed Trust will create a formal partnership between the schools and will provide us with the opportunity to develop and share new ways of working to improve further the achievements, well-being and aspirations of all students.

Each school will retain its own Governing Body but the Trust will allow us to involve external partners who will bring additional capacity, experience and expertise. So far, we have commitment from University Campus Suffolk and West Suffolk College to join the Trust and help to achieve its vision. We are also talking to potential partners such as the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, St Nicholas Hospice, the John Lewis partnership and World Challenge.

The added value our Trust and external partners bring will be:

- To raise the aspirations of all young people and to advance and enhance their education.
- To work with the local family of schools to develop the educational experience and progress of our students from 4 to 19.
- To develop choice and diversity in a formal partnership with Great Cornard Upper School.

What does this mean for parents?

The school will remain part of the local authority's family of maintained schools which means that we still teach the National Curriculum and we will continue to be bound by the Schools' Admissions Code. The school will retain its specialist school status, its place within the community and a commitment to innovation for the benefit of all

What does this mean for employees?

It is important to realise that the Governing Body, not the Trust, will continue to run the school and to be responsible and accountable for its performance. The school budget will continue to be delegated to the Governing Body by the LA under the same County wide arrangements as for all LA maintained schools.

The existing terms and conditions of teachers would be fully protected if the school acquires a Trust. We would still be bound by the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document but employees will be employed by the school Governing Body instead of the Local Authority. All staff would be safeguarded under their current terms and conditions and we would continue to recognise the same unions – all in exactly the same way as we do at the moment.

The school would set terms and conditions for support staff. However, terms and conditions would be safeguarded for existing support staff and they will maintain the same employment rights as local authority employees. Governors have no intention to alter any Conditions of Service (including membership of the Pension Scheme) which would disadvantage any existing and new support staff against those of the Local Authority.

Staff would still be represented on the Governing Body, as elected by their colleagues. There would also be representatives from parents, the community and the LA as is the case now. Governors appointed by the Trust to the Governing Body would be a minimum of two and would be always in the minority.

Consultation Process

Please let us know what you think about the proposal. You can:

- Talk to governors. In order to do this, please contact the Headteacher's PA at the school.
- Send back your consultation questionnaire which is included with this letter or write to or email us at the school.
- Come to the open meeting for Stakeholders which will be held at Sudbury Upper School on **Wednesday, November 19th 2008 at 7 pm.**

You can comment at any time until **Friday, December 5th**. The governors will then review all the comments and will decide whether to go ahead and whether to amend the proposals to reflect your suggestions and concerns. Stakeholders, parents and staff will be given an opportunity to view the feedback to our proposals, a summary of which will be posted on our website and there will be another chance to comment on any formal proposals which might be made during the Spring Term, before a final decision is taken.

We look forward to receiving your comments.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Ann Pizzey
Chair of Governors

Timeline of Consultation

Consultation starts:	Friday, November 7 th 2008
Stakeholder Consultation Meeting :	Wednesday, November 19 th 2008 (7pm – Sudbury Upper School)
Consultation ends:	Friday, December 5 th 2008

Following this, the Governors will review all the comments and will decide whether or not to go ahead or whether to amend the proposals to reflect suggestions and concerns and undertake further consultation early in the new year.

SUDBURY UPPER SCHOOL AND ARTS COLLEGE

PROPOSAL TO BECOME A TRUST SCHOOL

The Governing Body of Sudbury Upper School and Arts College is considering becoming a Trust School. This document is intended to tell you what a Trust School is, why Trust Status would benefit the school and who our potential partners in the Trust may be. It also sets out what would happen if, after consultation, it was decided to take up Trust Status.

Please give it careful consideration and let us know what you think.

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TRUST STATUS CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

1. The Governing Body of Sudbury Upper School and Arts College is proposing a change of school category from community school to foundation school which will acquire a charitable trust. This is a new type of school that, while still being part of the Local Authority, has the opportunity to be supported by a Charitable Trust set up to help the drive for improved standards both in school and the wider educational community. The Governors of Sudbury Upper School and Arts College are proposing to establish, through the shared Trust, a formal partnership with Great Cornard Upper School and Technology College. Great Cornard Upper School and Technology College is also consulting on a similar change of status to facilitate the proposed partnership. Both schools will be members of, and supported by, the same Trust, whilst retaining their own governing bodies. University Campus Suffolk and West Suffolk College will add capacity to support this partnership as trustees. We are also consulting with Suffolk Wild-life Trust, St Nicholas Hospice, World Challenge and the John Lewis Partnership.
2. The full consultation document explains our proposals in more detail. Stakeholders, such as parents, local councils and other local education providers, have the opportunity to comment on these proposals during the consultation period which runs from Friday, November 7th 2008 until Friday, December 5th 2008. The Governors will consider the outcome of the consultation and then decide on whether to publish the Statutory Proposals on changing category and acquiring a charitable trust or to remain a community school. Details of the consultation process and how to respond are included in this document.

OUR VISION AND VALUES

1. Trust Schools are a new kind of school – part of the local authority system, but supported by a Charitable Trust which will appoint some of the Governors. The Governing Body will continue to run the school and be responsible for its performance and Mr Forrest will continue as Headteacher. We shall still maintain our strength as a local maintained comprehensive secondary school serving our local community.

In order to make the change we are proposing to change our status to become a Foundation School and at the same time formally acquire with our partner Upper School, a shared Trust, the Stour Valley Educational Trust. We are seeking your views on these two related processes.

2. The principle objectives of the trust will be:
 - To raise the aspirations of all young people
 - To advance and enhance the education of all young people without distinction.
 - To work with the local family of schools to develop the educational experience and progress of our students from 4 to 19.
 - To develop choice and diversity in partnership with local schools.
 - To engage Trustees as effective partners who can help to develop the school's aims.
 - To support students and their families in enabling learning and overcoming barriers to participation in learning and to raise aspiration, engagement and outcomes.
 - To develop staff expertise and collaboration within the school and across our family of schools to enhance the learning of each student.
 - To develop support and resources appropriate to the personalisation of each student's learning.
 - To respond quickly and effectively to change.
 - To maximise the resources available to support these aims.

We are keenly aware of the need to raise the aspirations and broaden the horizons of all young people. Our proposed partners, who span the world of higher education, business and charitable institutions, have connections which will benefit us and will act as gateways giving students access to wider organisations and opportunities.

Trust status will cement the relationship between Sudbury and Great Cornard Upper Schools and will connect both schools to a wide field of expertise and opportunity. It will also help us to develop a version of 4 to 19 learning enabling close collaboration between primary, middle and upper schools including local special school provision. Our charitable status will open new funding streams, including Lottery money and our increased autonomy will enable Governors to take the decisions that are right for the school and will lead to improved outcomes for the students.

WHAT IS A TRUST SCHOOL?

The following information provides an overview of Trust Status.

- A Trust School is a local authority maintained school which is supported by a charitable trust which appoints some of the governors.
- The charitable trust establishes a long-term relationship with external partners and involves them in school governance and leadership.
- The skills and experience of Trust-appointed governors will give the school a clear sense of direction and ensure that its resources are focused on raising standards.

Trust schools have the freedom to:

- Appoint staff. All staff will be employed by the Governing Body. Teachers will continue to be covered by the Schoolteachers' Pay and Conditions Document and the pay and conditions of all staff will be protected.
- Own the school's assets. The school's land and buildings will transfer to the Trust to be held in trust for the benefit of the school. The Governing Body will have day-to-day control over the school premises and may enter into agreements with the LA or with commercial organisations.
- Set their own admissions arrangements. The school must operate within the legal framework of the School Admissions Code.

HOW IS A TRUST SCHOOL GOVERNED?

The Governing Body remains responsible for all major decisions about the school and its future.

The Governing Body will consist of at least two Trust Governors together with Parent Governors, Community Governors, Staff Governors and Local Authority Governors.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY?

- Trust Schools are funded by the Local Authority on the same basis as other schools.
- The Local Authority is responsible for funding the maintenance of Trust School buildings and the school will receive devolved capital on the same basis as community schools.
- The Local Authority can intervene if a Trust School is under-performing or failing and it can publish proposals to make changes and to close the school.

CAN THE TRUST BE EXTENDED/ENDED?

The Trust can be extended to include other schools and other partners.

The Trust can be ended by following the procedures laid down.

WHAT THE TRUST WILL DO

1. The Trust will establish a long term sustainable relationship that will bring together in a formal arrangement the two Upper Schools and their partners.
2. The Trust will support this partnership and create an environment where all students will have access to and support for a wide range of learning opportunities. It will help to raise standards and make a direct contribution to raising achievement and improving the well being and aspirations of students.
3. As the Trust develops its work in the long term, it may be appropriate to consider additional partnerships. There will be a process involving existing Trustees to ensure that any future partner will comply fully with the vision of the Trust.

HOW THE TRUST WILL WORK

1. The Trust will be a charitable, not for profit Trust, meeting the legal and other requirements as set out by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). It will carry out its duties in relation to the schools as set out by the DCSF, specifically by appointing a minority of the members of the Governing Body of each school and by holding the land and assets of each school on trust.
2. The Trust will be legally established with the Charities Commission and registered as a company limited by guarantee with Companies House. The Charities Commission will regulate its activities (as with all charities).
3. Trustees will not be able to derive an income from the Trust. Any income generated by the Trust must only be used to support its charitable aims. The Trust will not seek to alter the individual characteristics of the partner schools and will not seek to change the character (religious or otherwise) of a partner school.
4. The Trust will meet a minimum of three times a year (co-ordinated with school governance as required). The voting Trustees will be selected by the Trust member organisations and checked by the governing bodies to ensure that they comply with DCSF legislation. The Chair of the Trust will be elected from the Trustees.
5. The Trust will support the vision and aims of the partnership.
6. At each school the Trust will appoint a minority of Governors.

FOUNDATION STATUS

1. To facilitate the organisation of the Trust, the partner schools are required to alter their current status to become foundation schools. In acquiring Foundation Status, each Governing Body and not the Trust, will assume new responsibilities including:
 - for the employment of staff
 - for the admission of students to their school, although this is likely to be delegated to the Local Authority
 - for the management of the school's assets.
2. All existing staff will transfer under arrangements which will protect their existing conditions of service.
3. Existing and new teaching staff will continue to work under the terms of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document. Sudbury Upper School and Arts College Governing Body will set out the terms and conditions for new support staff which will be no less favourable than those applying to existing staff. All staff will therefore enjoy the same terms and conditions of employment as in any maintained state school.
4. Sudbury Upper School and Arts College will continue to teach the national curriculum and will be inspected by OFSTED at appropriate times. Sudbury Upper School will retain its Specialist Performing Arts status and Great Cornard Upper School will retain its Specialist Technology status.

5. The school's Governing Body will continue to have day to day control of the school's land and assets (which the Trust will hold in trust for the school).
6. Sudbury Upper School and Arts College will work in collaboration with the Local Authority ensuring strict adherence to the national Code of Practice for Admissions within the local context.
 - If adopted, these arrangements will not be applied until the admissions of September 2010;
 - This has been discussed and agreed in principle with the Local Authority.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PARENTS?

1. The school will remain part of the Local Authority's family of maintained schools. We will continue to have fair admissions and will not introduce selection by ability. Parents will apply for places to Sudbury Upper School and Arts College as part of the Local Authority process. Sudbury Upper School and Arts College will work in partnership with the Local Authority to ensure pupil places are given fairly in line with the published admissions criteria which will conform to the National Code of Practice on Admissions.
2. Sixth form student places will be available for all pupils who fulfil entry qualifications and who attend Sudbury Upper School and Arts College. The school will continue to welcome applications from students from other schools.
3. The current situation of appointing Parent Governors, Community Governors, Local Authority Governors and Staff Governors will be maintained.
4. School standards including those relating to behaviour and academic performance will be unchanged. The school's Vision and Values and its expectations of students will form the basis for the work of the Trust and will be enhanced by the change in school status. It is envisaged that the new partnership arrangements will contribute significantly to further improvement in school performance and better educational experience and outcomes for every young person and their family.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

Please let us know what you think about the proposal. There are a number of ways in which you can do this. You can:

1. Send in your written comments to the school, marked 'Trust Consultation', by **Friday, December 5th 2008**.
2. If you are a parent, talk to the Parent Governors. In order to arrange this, please contact the Headteacher's PA.
3. If you are a staff member, talk to a Staff Governor.
4. If you are a parent or a staff member, come to the Trust Consultation meeting which will be held at Sudbury Upper School on **Wednesday, November 19th 2008 at 7 pm**.
5. Students of the School will be consulted through the Student Council.

This consultation will be open until **Friday, December 5th 2008**. The Governors will review all the comments and will decide whether or not to go ahead or whether to amend the proposals to reflect your suggestions and concerns. We will be making available the feedback on the school web-site. If you wish to receive a written copy of the feedback, please contact the school.

There will be another chance to comment on any formal proposals which might be made before a final decision is taken. All documents relating to Trust Status can be viewed on the school web-site. Any one who has any queries or concerns, particularly with regard to access to the documentation, should contact the school.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

CHANGING TO FOUNDATION SCHOOL STATUS AND ACQUIRING A CHARITABLE TRUST CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill in the consultation questionnaire by ticking (✓) the appropriate box (**left-hand column**) and adding any comments (**right-hand column**) as required. Please feel free to attach separate sheet if necessary.

The completed questionnaire should be returned to the school by **Friday, December 5th**.

QUESTION ABOUT TRUST STATUS

1. How do you feel about Sudbury Upper School becoming a Foundation school and acquiring a Trust?

(✓)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I support the proposals
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am not sure and would like more information on...
<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not think the school should become a Foundation School and acquire a Trust because...

QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTNERS

2. How do you feel about Sudbury Upper School working with:
Great Cornard Upper School and Technology College, University Campus Suffolk and West Suffolk College
The John Lewis Partnership, Suffolk Wild-life Trust, World Challenge, St Nicholas Hospice

(✓)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	These are the right partners
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am concerned about the school working with... because...
<input type="checkbox"/>	I think the school should think about working with... as well/instead because...

3. The partners share our commitment to strive to realise every student’s potential. The Trust will appoint a minority of governors who have the expertise to help the school to make this a reality for all our students. The visions and aims of the partnership will support the following priorities:
- a) To raise the aspirations of all students
 - b) To work with the local family of schools to develop the educational experience and progress of our students from 4 to 19
 - c) To develop staff expertise and collaboration within the school and across our family of schools

(✓)

	These are right for the school
	I don’t think... should be a priority in the vision because...
	I would like to see... included in the school’s vision.

4. We propose that the Trust should appoint a minority of governors. This would bring in expertise from our partners, but these would not have overall control and one third of governors would still be elected parents. Do you think this model is right for the school?

(✓)

	Yes – this sounds like a good idea
	Yes, but I am concerned about...
	No, I would prefer the Trust to appoint more governors because...
	No, I don’t like this proposal because...

General

5. Do you have any other comments, concerns or suggestion that we should think about before we publish formal proposals? **Please feel free to continue overleaf or attach a separate sheet if necessary.**

(please continue overleaf if required)

It would be useful if you could provide us with your contact details, especially if you represent a particular organisation, but you do not need to do so (unless you have requested further information to be sent to you).

Name:.....

Parent/Staff/Other (please give details).....

Address:

.....

Email address.....

Contact Telephone Number

Please return completed questionnaire to the Headteacher's P.A. at the school- thank you

COMMENTS (continued)