

Possible formation of a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) with the Knights Templar School, Baldock (KTS)

Frequently Asked Questions – additions v1

32. Is the reason the MAT is being proposed because we don't want to be pushed into joining another MAT?

How big a risk is there that we may be forced to join a larger, national MAT?

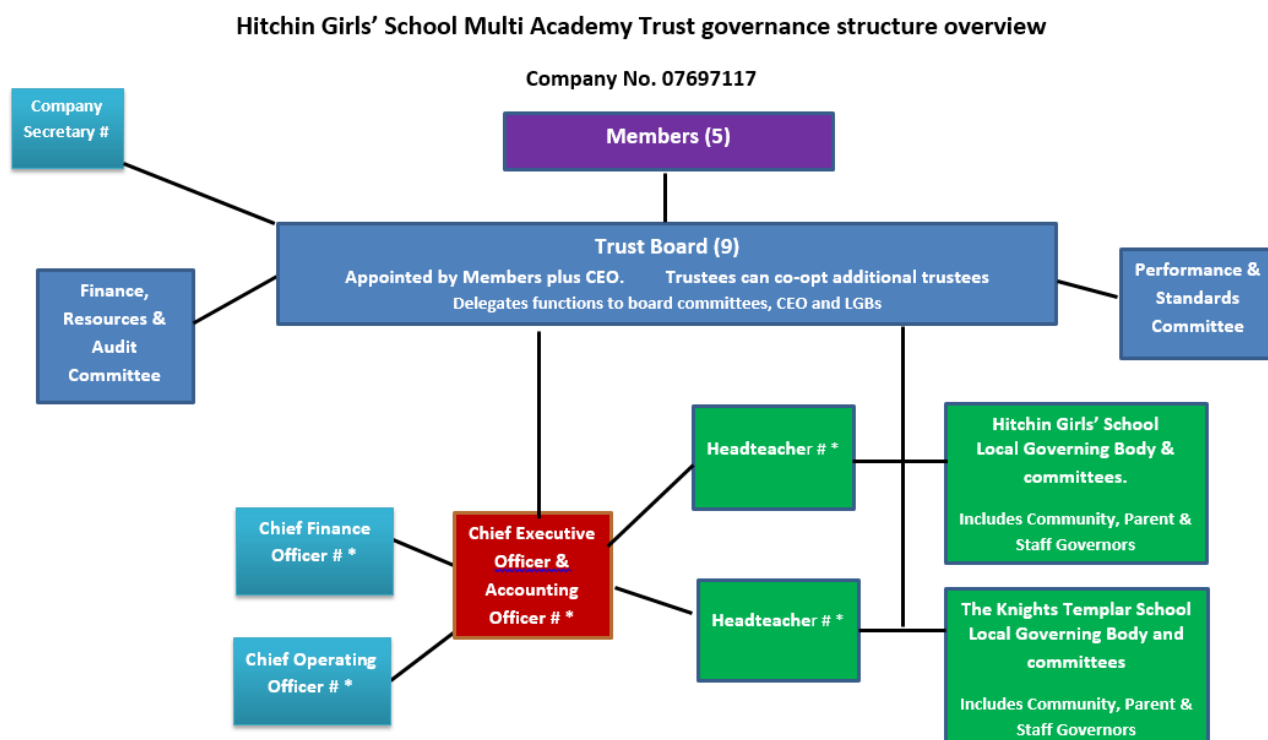
At the moment there is no real risk that we will be made to join a MAT. More MATs are being established in Hertfordshire and schools are joining these, and the larger chains are also taking on other schools. There is a risk that with fewer schools outside of MATS there will be less opportunity for HGS to collaborate with other schools that are in a MAT and HGS could become more isolated.

33. What will the Governance structure actually look like?

Academies have Governors, Trustees and Members. At present at HGS, Governors are also known as Trustees and all are Members of the Academy Trust. Latest guidance from the DfE for academies is that there should be a degree of independence between Members and Trustees and also between Trustees and local Governors.

The proposed structure for the MAT will have up to 5 Members, 9 Trustees and a Local Governing Body for each School in the Trust. Some of the initial Members and Trustees will be appointed from existing Governors at either HGS or KTS. Others will be appointed based on their experience, skills set and support for the local community.

A diagram of the proposed structure is shown below.



Role fulfilled by existing staff from HGS/KTS

* Executive Leadership Team

34. Won't this additional layer of Governance cost schools more money?

No. All Members, Trustees and Governors are volunteers and receive no payment for undertaking these roles.

35. Under this new Governance structure, won't HGS no longer be in charge of its own destiny?

One of the reasons for wanting to establish our own MAT is to ensure that the appointed Members and Trustees understand the ethos and history of our two schools. It is intended that the proposed MAT will be a local MAT serving the local community and although the Members and Trustees will change over time, as they do currently,

there needs to be trust that the Members and Trustees who make future appointments will continue to do so in the best interest of our schools and the community. Each school would also have a Local Governing Body which will include elected staff and parent Governors. The Board of Trustees will establish a Scheme of Delegation which will set out how the leadership and governance of the MAT will operate, including the role of the Local Governing Body, and from the outset of discussions with KTS both parties have made it absolutely clear that through this Scheme of Delegation we wish to preserve the independence and unique character of our schools.

35. Establishing the MAT will cost the school money as we will have to pay 10% of our income to the MAT.

This is not true. There is no requirement that all schools in a MAT must pay a fixed amount to the central Trust. Some MATS have created a central function which provides core services to schools in the Trust and the schools contribute to the cost of this through a top slice arrangement. There is no statutory fixed percentage for this and the cost is usually offset by the savings available through centralisation of these functions. In other MATs, the cost of these central services is charged back to schools based on the actual cost of the service. The proposed HGS/KTS MAT will not have a fixed contribution to central MAT costs. If there are any contracts or services provided to both schools in the MAT, this will be charged back equitably based on student numbers, staff numbers or some other appropriate method and it is expected that the overall cost will be less than if the two schools provided these services or functions individually.

36. Will the creation of the MAT require more staff?

No. There is no plan to increase staff numbers as a result of the formation of the MAT. Any roles that are required, e.g. Chief Executive Officer, Finance Officer, will be carried out by staff already working at the schools, with no additional time required.

37. Will there be fewer career opportunities for staff as Heads of Department due to the sharing of TLR's across multiple schools?

No. There are no plans to merge departments across the schools and each school will continue to decide its staffing structure. Heads of Department will remain responsible for the teaching of their subject but we would expect greater opportunities for collaboration and the sharing of ideas and good practice.

38. Will fewer staff be required as a result of forming the MAT?

Over the next 5 years the number of students at Hitchin Girls' School will continue to grow and this will require more teaching staff and support from non-teaching staff. There is no expectation that fewer staff will be needed at HGS as a result of forming a MAT and no plan for redundancies.

39. Will students in Key Stage 4 or 5 be expected to travel to another school for lessons?

KTS does not operate as part of a Sixth Form consortium and there may be opportunities for students wishing to study a subject not offered at KTS to participate via the Hitchin Consortium. Similarly, if there is a course offered at KTS which is not run in Hitchin, and by offering this to a student we have the opportunity to retain them as part of our Sixth Form, then this may be something that can be considered if the timetable allows. There is no plan for Key Stage 4 students to travel to Baldock for lessons.

40. What are the views of the Unions and Ofsted regarding MATs?

Information regarding MATS is available on various websites including:

NEU - <https://neu.org.uk/tags/academies>

NASUWT - <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/advice/academies.html>

ATL - <https://www.atl.org.uk/academies>

OFSTED -

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/817085/Multi_academy_trusts_benefits_challenges_and_functions.pdf