



The Bridge Short Stay School
Appleton Drive | Ellesmere Port,
Cheshire | CH65 7EP
Tel: 0151 3376873

9th July 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Over the last 18 months we have been giving a lot of consideration to whether it would be the best interests of The Bridge to convert to Academy Status and if so, which Multi-academy Trust (MAT) would be the best fit for us to become a part of. This conversion would mean moving away from being under the control of a Local Authority and instead working together with a group of schools as part of a MAT.

You may well have seen on the news over recent years, an increasing expectation from The Government that all schools convert to become Academies. This has been one factor that we have considered in our decision making, alongside carefully considering the potential direct benefits of converting. Based on a wide variety of factors we came to the conclusion that should we be able to find the right MAT to work with, becoming an Academy would be in the best interests of everyone involved with the school.

To try and find the right fit we have researched, heard presentations from and visited a wide range of multi-academy trusts to understand how they work, what benefits they could bring to students at The Bridge and whether or not they were organisations we felt the school could work well with. **Following this extensive process, we made an application to join The People's Learning Trust and we're delighted to be able to share the positive news that this application was agreed by The Department for Education last week.**

The People's Learning Trust will initially be a small collection of like-minded schools, with a commitment to inclusive education for all young people. The Trust was initially formed by Everton Free School and Football College, a very successful Alternative Provision linked to the Football Club. The Trust will contain other schools similar to The Bridge creating opportunities for us to work together and learn from each other which will help us to further improve what we're able to provide for the young people of Cheshire West and Chester. As this is the development of a new MAT we will become a founding member of the trust. The benefit of this is that we are now in a position to help shape the trust and have a say in how it develops over time, rather than joining a more established group of schools who may wish to impose their way of doing things upon us.

Within the new trust, there is a commitment to individual schools continuing to have freedom to operate in the way they see fit, in the best interests of their students and communities. This means that when we convert you won't see us being forced to make big changes in the nature of our provision. What we will start to see though is more opportunities to work together with other schools, to improve school through sharing of ideas with other like-minded settings and school achieving cost savings through group purchasing of the things each school would otherwise have to buy individually, which will ultimately leave more money available to be spent directly on supporting our students.



The Bridge Short Stay School
Appleton Drive | Ellesmere Port,
Cheshire | CH65 7EP
Tel: 0151 3376873

To more fully explain this decision, what it means and to answer common questions that you may have, we have created a dedicated page of our website with more information which you can access here

<https://www.thebridge.cheshire.sch.uk/page/academy-conversion/146633>

As we move forward through the coming weeks and months towards a potential conversion we will go into a more formal period of due diligence where all schools involved will seek to understand each other better to ensure that this decision is in everyone's best interests. It is only following that period of due diligence that a final decision on conversion will be made. As part of that we'll now enter into a formal consultation with relevant stakeholders, including parents, we actively welcome questions and feedback on our proposals which you can provide by emailing us on Academy@thebridge.cheshire.sch.uk.

Best Wishes

AD Stenhouse

Damian Stenhouse

Chair of Management Committee

Andy Stewart

Headteacher