

What is a multi-academy trust?

A multi-academy trust is a formal collaboration between two or more academy schools, where all of the schools in the trust are overseen by a single board of trustees.

Schools in a multi-academy trust do not need to be the same type of school. For example, primary schools can be in a multi-academy trust with secondary and/or special schools.

Once established, multi-academy trusts are able to grow if more schools wish to join.

KEY TERMS

Maintained school – A state-funded school that receives its budget via the local authority it sits in

Academy – A state-funded school that receives its budget share directly from the government. Academies have greater freedoms than maintained schools in areas such as the curriculum, admissions, and staff conditions

Board of trustees – A group of individuals who oversee an academy or multi-academy trust. This board is directly accountable to the secretary of state for education

What are the possible benefits of joining a multi-academy trust?

The government believes that being part of a multi-academy trust allows schools to:

- Share best practice
- Be more financially efficient than standalone schools (for example by centralising services)
- Focus funds where they are most needed
- Have more flexibility in how staff are deployed
- Establish succession planning programmes

Will the school lose its independence by becoming part of a multi-academy trust?

The government has stressed that the multi-academy trust model allows schools to benefit from working together while retaining a level of autonomy and unique identity.

Although there will be a single board to oversee all the multi-academy trust, each school still has the opportunity to maintain a local governing body. The governors on this local board are there to represent the interests of their school.

In addition, headteachers continue to lead their own schools in the multi-academy trust, but are more able to focus on teaching and learning as many of the operational aspects of school management are dealt with across the trust.

FAQs

Do schools in a multi-academy trust receive more funding?

Academies receive the same levels of funding for their pupils as maintained schools, and there is no additional funding for being in a multi-academy trust.

In some multi-academy trusts a percentage of the individual schools' budget is put into a central pot and redistributed to where it is most needed.

Will being in a multi-academy trust have an impact on the curriculum?

Academies are not required to follow the National Curriculum and have greater freedom to determine the content of the school's curriculum, but are still required to teach:

- English, maths and science
- Religious education
- Sex and relationships education
- Careers guidance (for pupils in years 8 to 13)

Will my child have new teachers when the school joins a multi-academy trust?

When a school joins a multi-academy trust the staff currently employed by the school transfer into the employment of the trust.

Under this model staff have more flexibility to move between schools to share good practice, but decisions on how staff are deployed are made by the board of trustees in consultation with staff.