

18 May 2016



Dear Parent/Carer

Proposal for Futures Community College to Convert to Academy Status

Following the formal letter sent to you last week, you will know that Futures Community College is considering becoming an academy. As you are probably aware, many schools nationally, and almost all the secondary schools in Southend-on-Sea, have already taken this step.

This letter is to give you some further information about why we have decided to propose this action and what it will mean for the school and its students.

The Interim Executive Board (IEB) of Futures Community College has been in place since January 2014 and has overseen the good progress that the school has made, with Ofsted removing the school from Special Measures earlier this year. To ensure that the school has the capacity to continue this improvement and give every Futures student a good educational experience, the IEB is exploring the possibility of becoming a sponsored academy with effect from 01 September 2016. We have spoken to a number of potential sponsors but have been particularly impressed with our proposed sponsor, Partnership Learning, and their approach to sponsoring and supporting schools.

We believe that they share our ambition for every young person to have access to the same opportunities that the most favoured can access and are determined that every student should receive the very highest quality of teaching and learning as well as access to a great range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities.

The sponsorship by Partnership Learning is not a definite decision; we are at the stage of consultation with all involved and staff, students and parents/carers now have the opportunity to comment on the proposals. The Consultation Period has now commenced and will run until 24 June 2016

Parents/Carers of existing school students have been invited to attend a drop-in session, being held in the Main Hall on Thursday 26 May 2016 from 4:00pm to 7:00pm, to ask questions and seek further information. Should you be unable to attend this meeting, or have subsequent queries, then you can write to the school, addressing the envelope to 'Academy Consultation', or email academyconsultation@futures.uk.com

All queries and comments which arrive before the 24 June will be considered by the IEB. Meanwhile, the following FAQs may answer some of your questions.

What is an academy?

An academy is essentially a school which is funded directly by the state and is independent of the Local Authority. It receives its funding from central government. This means that academy trusts receive more funding because none is retained by the Local Authority for the provision of central services.

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Tel: 01702 415300
Fax: 01702 584611
Email: info@futures.uk.com

www.futures.uk.com
www.twitter.com/futurescollege
www.facebook.com/futurescollege



Futures Community College, Southchurch Boulevard, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 4UY

Headteacher: Mr S Reynolds

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What are the benefits of joining an academy trust?

- Academies are independent of the Local Authority – this means more freedom about how they conduct themselves
- Academies have more freedom over the curriculum taught
- Academies set their own pay and conditions of service for their staff – this means both could be improved
- Schools within the trust can work together – resources and expertise are more available. Working with an outstanding school will enable greater support and more opportunities to share good practice and improve attainment.

Are there disadvantages?

Academy Trusts are liable for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities, pensions, health and safety, property maintenance etc. However, as previously mentioned, more funding is received in order to help meet these additional costs

Will the admissions code change?

No. As an academy, the trust will deal with admission arrangements and would still be bound by the national Admissions Code and admissions Appeals Code.

Will staff leave?

If the school converts to an academy, all staff currently employed by the school will automatically transfer to the new academy on their current pay and conditions. Although the academy will have more freedom to amend those pay and conditions in the future, Partnership Learning does not intend to take such a step in the foreseeable future.

How can I find out more?

We would encourage you to attend the drop-in session on the 26 May 2016 if you have any questions or simply want to learn more. There is also more information on the DfE website: <http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>

Yours sincerely



John Grover
Chair: Futures Community College IEB