

Induction Process for New Academies Joining SWECET

Date: November 2017

DRAFT

SWECET Induction Process

Rationale

As the Trust evolves and grows it is essential that it does so in such a way that does not jeopardise its future success and sustainability and is always with regard to the risks and benefits in doing so. This documents sets out the considerations and processes which will ensure that any new schools joining SWECET understand their role and position in doing so, how processes of due diligence and information sharing will be carried out and how the Board will support and develop the Trust.

Induction of a new school

When a recommendation or application is made for a new school to join SWECET, the Board, subject to permission granted from the DFE, will always take seriously the impact of a new school doing so. Once the Board has met and approved a new school joining in principle, a process of due diligence will be carried out.

Due Diligence

Before a new school is considered to convert and join the Trust, professional scrutiny will be undertaken in the following areas:

- Financial Position
- Historic attainment and trends
- Views of parents and the local community
- Current assessment performance
- Leadership and Governance Capacity
- Asset Condition

A formal report will then be provided back to the Board and the LGB of the school wishing to join the Trust sharing the outcomes of the due diligence checks.

Proceeding to conversion

Upon a successful recommendation for progression to conversion and the awarding of an Academy order from the DFE the relevant processes to support the conversion will ensue. The Chief Operating Officer will provide support to the school in this period to support the process of conversion, communicating progress within this back to the Board and working in conjunction with legal advisors for support and advice.

Throughout the conversion process and beyond

As part of the induction process and ongoing schedule of evaluation and improvement, the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer and Trustees will be involved in the following activities which will form part of SWECET's continual improvement:

- Agreeing and formulating the plans for medium and long-term development of the trust and how they build capacity within the Trust and their schools;
- Continually evaluating the needs and development challenges for all the schools within the Trust, irrespective of current performance levels;
- Ensuring there is sufficient financial expertise to oversee the Trust's financial operations;
- Carrying out financial planning which is integrated in to the Trust's overall strategy for its school(s);
- Ensuring the Trust's vision remains deliverable and resilient to operational changes in income, such as changes in pupil numbers or characteristics or the implications of the introduction of a national funding formula.
- Making sure that there are robust contingency plans in place, with clear triggers for enacting these plans.

Risk Management

The SWECET Board will ensure that the Trust and any new schools have effective procedures in place to identify, monitor and mitigate at both school and trust level – risk management is not a box-ticking exercise. The Risk Management process will be completed by each individual school and these documents will be used to inform the SWECET risk register. Annual reviews will take place.

Post Conversion

Policies

Post conversion the new joining school will be asked to adhere to key SWECET policies including such aspects as Health and Safety, Sickness, Whistleblowing and Financial Regulations. These can be given as part of the Induction package and are available from the Chief Operating Officer.

Systems

New schools joining will be offered the support of schools already within the Trust for the implementation and management of new processes and procedures, such as finance packages. This will be organised by the Chief Operating Officer in conjunction with the individual Headteachers and relevant staff.

Support for Staff

Times of change can be challenging for staff, especially if it feels there is more work to be done as an academy. Established SWECET schools will support new joining schools. It is anticipated by putting in an adequate level of support at the start that this will future proof against complications further down the line. Peer to peer support for office staff, finance teams and individual school Headteachers is essential in the early stages post conversion. SWECET is committed to putting this level of support in place for all schools that join.