

## Joining a School Trust: Engagement and consultation

School Trusts are groups of schools that come together to form a single organisation. They are sometimes called Multi-Academy Trusts or MATs, but we prefer School Trusts because the word 'school' is universally understood and best describes what academies are.

The Department for Education advises that you let staff, parents, and pupils know that your governing body is considering applying for your school to join a School Trust. You will need to run a statutory consultation on whether your school should convert, which you can begin once a decision has been reached or later in the process once a legal adviser has been appointed.

If your school has a separate unit providing specialist provision (SEND or Alternative Provision), you should let them know of plans to convert; you should also tell your school's nursery or equivalent, and let your local authority know.

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| Phase one:<br>Engagement<br>Four-12 weeks       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Before you apply, map your stakeholder groups and work out what you already know about stakeholder views.</li><li>• Define your key messages.</li><li>• Plan your engagement activities.</li></ul>  |
| Phase two:<br>Consultation<br>Four-12 weeks     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review your stakeholder groups.</li><li>• Prepare your formal consultation document.</li><li>• Plan your formal engagement activities.</li><li>• Start informal discussions with staff.</li></ul>   |
| Phase three:<br>Board response<br>Two-six weeks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your Governing board will respond to the consultation and communicate the decision.</li><li>• Submit an application to convert.</li></ul>   |
| Phase four:<br>Board response<br>Two-six weeks  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• While your application is pending, segment your stakeholder groups and refine your messages.</li><li>• Plan your strategy and approach.</li><li>• Continue discussions with staff.</li></ul>  |
| Phase five:<br>Decision                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• With the Trust, review your mapping of stakeholder groups, engagement activity, and analysis of each group perception.</li><li>• Refine key messages with the Trust.</li><li>• Work with the Trust to plan your strategy and approach.</li><li>• Agree a programme of activities, key meetings, and reciprocal visits/training for staff.</li></ul> |

CST is the national organisation and sector body for School Trusts - advocating for, connecting and supporting Trusts.

Find out how CST can support you by visiting our website [cstuk.org.uk](http://cstuk.org.uk)