

Barnet Academy Accord

1. Purpose of the Accord

- 1.1 The purpose of this Accord is to cement partnership working between the local authority and the Academy Trust to achieve continuous improvement in the educational outcomes for Barnet's children and young people. Our ambition in Barnet is for a world-class education offer that is rich and engaging, giving children and young people the skills, knowledge and abilities they need to achieve the best they can, delivering the vision set out in Barnet's Children and Young People Plan:

All children and young people in Barnet should achieve the best possible outcomes, to enable them to become successful adults, especially our most vulnerable children. They should be supported by high quality, integrated and inclusive services that identify additional support needs early, are accessible, responsive and affordable for the individual child and their family.'

- 1.2 The council as a commissioner and champion of children and parents wishes to work in partnership with Academy Trusts in Barnet, as the providers and facilitators of education and wider services for children and young people, to achieve this vision. The council believes that strong and productive relationships with Academy Trusts and collaborative working across the schools partnership is a key factor in bringing about sustained improvements to the lives of children and young people attending schools in Barnet.
- 1.3 This Accord sets out the framework for engagement between the council and the Academy Trust and takes account of the powers and duties retained by the local authority and of the government's policy position on academies, which is that they are autonomous, centrally-funded state schools.

2. Ensuring high standards

2.1 Data

- 2.1.1 The local authority will include data for academies and maintained schools in all data sets produced to enable academies to benchmark performance against similar schools in the area and to drive up standards
- 2.1.2 Barnet council and the Academy Trust agree that key performance data (to be agreed) will be shared to enable the council to fulfil its championing role, particularly in respect of vulnerable children and to enable the Academy Trust to meet its pupils needs.

2.2 School improvement

- 2.2.1 The underlying principle of school improvement is that academies are responsible – like community, trust and aided schools – for their own improvement. Barnet council respects the independence of the Academy Trust, and wishes to offer constructive support to the Trust's schools in the area. The Academy Trust will be invited to participate in all networks and forums co-ordinated by the local authority and will have full access to the range of school improvement traded services offered by the local authority.
- 2.2.2 The council and the Academy Trust agree, where requested by either party, to meet at least annually to 'keep in touch' and identify any local issues or concerns.

- 2.2.3 Where the council has particular concerns about the performance of an academy, it will ensure that the Academy Trust is fully informed of the concern. It will in the first instance contact the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. Where appropriate, the local authority will make the Academy Trust aware of its recommended actions to meet the concern. The Academy Trust will share its plans for improvement with the local authority e.g. through an appropriate statement of action. The local authority may offer advice about (or broker access to) locally recommended school improvement support services.
- 2.2.4 The Academy Trust should clearly set out where it requires support from the local authority to resolve any issues about services for which the local authority has responsibility. The local authority will seek to resolve any identified issues for which it is responsible.
- 2.2.5 The local authority recognises that there may be circumstances where this arrangement is not effective. Where serious concerns arise (such as the school is in an Ofsted category requiring intervention or improvement: the school meets the criteria set out in the section 60(2) of the 2006 education and Inspections Act, 2006 where for a maintained school the local authority could consider a warning notice or there is evidence of poor leadership and/or governance) and the engagement has not been effective, the council will consider contacting the secretary of state and/or HMCI setting out its concerns, and the attempts it has made to agree with the Academy Trust action to tackle the issues that have been identified. The local authority commits to informing the Academy Trust before taking this course of action.

3. Admissions and school place planning

- 3.1 The Council will ensure that the annual co-ordinated admissions processes are administered in accordance with legal requirements and the determined schemes. It will consult both the Academy Trust (and its schools) on the annual schemes.
- 3.2 The Academy Trust commits to actively engaging in the local place planning process and to sharing relevant information in support of that process.
- 3.3 The Headteacher and representative Governors will be invited to participate in Barnet's Fair Access Panel (on a rotating basis) that oversees the implementation of Barnet Fair Access Protocol
- 3.4 Barnet council and the Academy Trust agree to meet to discuss any admissions dispute involving an academy within the trust to seek to avoid any application to the Secretary of State for education to admit a child.

4. Vulnerable children

The Academy Trust commits to participating in local arrangements for the early identification of children at risk of underachievement for a variety of reasons and to utilise local referral arrangements (e.g. the CAF) where appropriate to access locally co-ordinated support services offered by the local authority and other agencies and to work in partnership with them.

Barnet council and the Academy Trust agree to meet to discuss any disputes involving an academy within the trust in relation to the assessment, support, progress or placement of any vulnerable pupil (special educational need, Looked After Children, at risk of exclusion).

4.1 Special educational need

4.1.1 For the purpose of agreement about the provision made from delegated funds for special educational needs provision, the Academy Trust (and its schools) agree the 'additional and different' arrangements it is expected to make for pupils at School Action stages and pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need. These could relate to all aspects of school life: in the classroom, during the school day and in activities beyond the school day. They should include 'additional and different' arrangements for:

- teaching and learning;
- the way in which learning and wellbeing is assessed;
- the ways in which access to the curriculum is facilitated;
- drawing on specialist expertise, within and beyond the school;
- pastoral support;
- intervention programmes over and above high quality classroom teaching for all pupils;
- equipment that schools / academies provide;
- staffing arrangements to promote access;
- more intensive engagement with parents and carers; and
- monitoring and evaluating the impact of the 'additional and different' arrangements on progress and outcomes for pupils with SEN.

4.1.2 The Academy Trust agrees to ensure that additional funding for any individual pupil provided through a Statement is used in order to support that pupil (as stipulated in the detail of the Statement).

4.2 Looked After Children

4.2.1 The Academy Trust recognises the particular role of the local authority as the corporate parent of Barnet children and young people Looked After, and will share data, progress and concerns as it would with any other parent.

4.2.2 The Academy Trust commits to contributing to the local arrangements for planning and monitoring of progress of Barnet's Looked After Children.

5. Exclusions and fair access

5.1 Barnet council respects the independence of the Academy Trust to use exclusion in line with guidance issued by the DfE, but will offer constructive support to the Trust's schools in the area with regard to the use of permanent and fixed term exclusion. The Academy Trust commits to supporting Barnet council in its aim to reduce permanent exclusions from vulnerable groups by consulting the local authority when considering the exclusion of children in care, those with a statement of special educational needs and any others from over-represented groups.

5.2 The Academy Trust will be given equal access to the services offered by the local authority maintained pupil referral units through the use of positive referral managed by the local authority.

5.3 The local authority will work with the Academy Trust to support the commissioning of alternative education provision and the development of bespoke provision matching local needs.

5.4 The Academy Trust will follow the arrangements currently in place in Barnet for the flow of funding following a pupil after a permanent exclusion.

5.5 The Academy Trust will support local protocols and will abide by the fair access protocol.

6. Traded services

6.1 The council sees no difference between maintained schools and academies in terms of offering traded services. All services offered by the council on a traded service basis will be available to the Academy Trust.

7. Safeguarding

7.1 The local authority will ensure up-to-date local authority procedures are made available to the Academy Trust. It will also provide locally agreed pro-forma for self-evaluation and action planning.

7.2 The Academy Trust agrees to

- adopt the LA procedures;
- self-evaluate all aspects of safeguarding at least biennially using the authority's section 11 audit tool or an evaluation form of similar quality; and
- produce an action plan to meet concerns identified in the self-evaluation / audit, which should contain appropriate actions that are measurable, with deadlines and a named person responsible.

8. Catastrophes/Major incidents

8.1 The Academy Trust agrees to inform the appropriate senior council official of any catastrophe or major incident; and to assist the council in any dealings with statutory bodies resulting from the event.

8.2 The council will act promptly in response to any catastrophe or major incident in close liaison with the school or schools concerned, outside its statutory duties but in line with its capacity.

8.3 Where there is a serious incident, the council will use its resources – for example, communications staff, educational psychologists and other support teams to assist in any way practicable. There will be no difference between maintained schools and Academies in terms of access to the critical incident support provided by the Educational Psychology Team.

8.4 The council will liaise as appropriate with the responsible authorities in respect of any financial or other issues arising.

8.5 The Academy Trust agrees to assist the council in responding to any major incident or catastrophe within the borough that requires the assistance of schools.

Local Authority.....

Academy Trust.....

Date.....