



Friday 21st November 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Multi Academy Trust – Parent Consultation

As you may already be aware, for some years now the Governing Body have been considering the possibility of Farmor's School becoming part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). Most secondary schools have now made the transition to become part of a MAT, which is the term for a group of schools who form a permanent partnership to collaborate, strategically plan together and share resources.

Farmor's School is currently a 'standalone academy', meaning that we can sometimes be isolated and vulnerable in a number of ways. The benefits of becoming part of a MAT could include:

- Being part of a formal framework for school improvement, collaborating to share knowledge and experience with other schools
- Increased opportunities for staff development, progression and retention within the organisation
- Improved and more efficient governance structures, meaning school governors can be directly involved in school improvement, rather than tasked with less impactful roles (continuous policy reviewing for example)
- Financial security and access to 'economies of scale' - the collective buying power required to obtain and support various resources (for example IT infrastructure, site and premises improvements, HR support). Increased funding is also available for capital investment in the school site and buildings.

The Governing Body has undertaken a rigorous process to analyse the potential trusts which Farmor's could consult to join. This has involved Mark Surowiec as the new Headteacher, and Emma White who is Deputy Headteacher. A range of MATs have been considered and extensive research activities have taken place, including visits to their schools. Central to our decision making has been a set of 'non-negotiable' principles. Any trust we consider joining must:

- Be local, with a sufficient number of secondary schools providing opportunities for collaboration
- Be well established and of significant size, having at least three secondaries in total, at least one with a sixth form
- Allow the 'right' degree of autonomy so that Farmor's School can retain its own unique character and decision making
- Have a culture which allows Farmor's School to have a voice in trust decision making

The outcome of our exploration process is that the Full Governing Body recommended that consultation and due diligence take place to join the Athelstan Trust. They are a well-established, Gloucestershire-focused MAT with headquarters in Tetbury. If you would like to access further information you can visit their website [here](#).

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We have now begun the ‘due diligence’ process with the Athelstan Trust. The purpose of this is to check that they are the right ‘fit’ for us, if we do join a MAT, and equally for the Athelstan Trust to check that we are a school they could include within their group. There is no rush and if we do choose to join, a possible timescale is mapped out below:

Stage 1 Nov 25 - Jan 26	<p>Desktop exercise: Both parties to complete a thorough evaluation of all publicly available information.</p> <p>End point: potential decision to proceed to Stage 2.</p>
Stage 2 Jan 26 - June 26	<p>Deeper dive: Both parties to conduct a more thorough evaluation through assessment of information not publicly available and through reciprocal visits. At this stage, any issues which would need to be resolved should be identified, along with proposed solutions and actions to mitigate risks for either party. Further consultation with stakeholders.</p> <p>End point: potential decision to apply to DfE for conversion.</p>
Stage 3 June 26	<p>Integration: An on-boarding process would begin. This includes Farmor’s School beginning to access some services from The Athelstan Trust. Any solutions to issues not resolved at Stage 2 continue to be explored. Preparations are made for the school to legally join the trust.</p>
Stage 4 January 27 (estimated)	<p>Join Athelstan Trust (if decision made to continue at earlier stages)</p>

There is an early opportunity for us to engage with parents and carers. To that end, we would like to invite you to a meeting on Wednesday 3rd December at 18:00 in the LRC. There will be a presentation and an opportunity for you to ask questions. If you intend to join the consultation meeting, please sign up [here](#) by Friday 28th November.

Yours faithfully

Sam Bartholomew (Chair of Governors) and Mark Surowiec (Headteacher)