



# SEAHAM HIGH SCHOOL

*Engaging minds, broadening horizons*

Seaham High School  
Station Road  
Seaham  
Co. Durham  
SR7 0BH

01915161600

Head Teacher: Mr G.W Lumsdon

Deputy Head: Mrs A Carr  
Deputy Head: Mr J.E Henderson

**Monday 24th June 2019**

Dear Parents/Carers,

## **Consultation - Academy Status**

For some time, our school has benefitted from working closely with Ferryhill Enterprise and Business College and The Eden Learning Trust.

Having given the matter very careful consideration, our Governing Body has decided to consult parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders on whether our school should become an academy and join Eden Learning Trust.

We are therefore commencing formal consultation today, Monday 24th June 2019 for a period of three weeks. Consultation will end at 5pm on Friday 12th July 2019.

## **What is an Academy?**

An academy is a state school, funded directly by the Department for Education, instead of the local authority. Originally, underperforming schools were turned into Academies to help the school improve rapidly, however in 2010, the Government extended the opportunity to convert to Academy status to all schools that are successful and performing well, and as a result there are now over 7,000 academies in the country, including an increasing number in Durham Local Authority.

An academy is a charitable trust run by a board of trustees. Academies are rightly expected to work with and support other schools, including lower-performing schools. Should you wish to know more about the Government's policy, the Department for Education has its own Academies bookmark on <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/convert-to-an-academy-information-for-schools> We have also attached some frequently asked questions to this letter.

## **About The Eden Learning Trust**

The Eden Learning Trust is a Multi Academy Trust based in County Durham, currently consisting of two secondary schools and a primary school. Its aim is to provide the strongest possible education opportunities, in an environment where every one of our children really matters. Our banner of 'Achievement for all' is testament to this aim and has supported the founding schools in good stead over the past 5 years.

As a Trust we are defined by our ambition for our students, our warmth and our approachability as well as our drive to help in each other through collaboration and mutual support.

A great trust is about great people and within the Eden Learning Trust our staff are most definitely, our greatest asset. Their skills, unwavering professionalism and good humour are at the core of what makes education great. We are driven to support our staff in their development, to help them to become great at every part of their role. We believe that a successful staff, make successful learners and a happy and successful school.



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Ferryhill Business and Enterprise College (FEBEC) was the founding school within the Trust and is a high performing 11-16 school in County Durham. In the past few years FEBEC has been named as one of the top 100 most improved schools and regularly posts results that are in the top 10% in England. The school is now over-subscribed in Year 7 and regularly has students arriving in other year groups.

## Trust CEO

Kevin Brennan is the CEO of the Eden Learning Trust. For the past 5 years he has worked as Headteacher at Ferryhill Business and Enterprise College and has overseen a step change in school performance. His vision was and still is one of partnership, placing value on each persons' contribution towards the whole and strong emphasis on mutual respect for students and staff.

## What are the potential benefits for our School within a Multi Academy Trust?

The main benefits of Academy status include:

- Educational benefits for our pupils as a result of additional freedoms available to academies in terms of the curriculum we offer, and how we prioritise our resources.
- Greater control over our finances and the money due to our school, including capital funding.
- The option to work in closer partnership with other schools, and share expertise and services that will benefit all of our students and staff.
- Sharing resources and expertise, to allow us to target funding towards improving front line teaching and learning.
- The potential to employ our own experts e.g. education psychologists, dedicated school improvement advisers.
- Develop our own solutions collaboratively.

## What changes will Academy status bring?

- Additional financial and legal responsibilities however these will be dealt with by the Trust.
- The Academy Trust would employ our staff rather than the local authority.
- Additional responsibilities in planning the services previously delivered by the Local Authority – however this is happening anyway as a result of changes to Local Authority services.

## How do I respond to the consultation?

Our Governing Body would very much like to hear your opinion. We will be holding public drop in session attended by the Head Teacher, Governors from our school and representatives from Eden Learning Trust on: Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July at 5.00pm in the main hall.



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As Headteacher I feel strongly that the school would benefit from being part of the Eden Learning Trust. It is important that we join with partners that can complement our school and preserve its individual identity and culture. The Eden Learning Trust celebrates diversity and does not adopt a one size fits all approach to education.

They place great value on the importance of their staffing and delivering a high quality educational experience including a broad and balanced curriculum and vibrant enrichment programme to develop life-long skills. This resonates with our core values here at Seaham High. And why we have chosen this Trust to apply to join rather than others.

The aim of the drop-in sessions is to hear your views and answer any questions you might have. We have published a list of frequently asked questions on our school website, for anyone who wishes to know more.

Finally, we have provided a consultation response sheet attached to this letter if you wish to provide a written response to the consultation.

Yours sincerely,

**Mr G Lumsdon**  
**Head Teacher**



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