

Free Schools - Proposal Form

Our guidance is the text in the grey boxes. This is our first draft guidance. While we have tried to make sure it is accurate it does *not* represent the views of the Department for Education. The Department of Education is itself coming to a view on various issues as it takes the first proposer groups through the process. We will be providing a series of further guidance – including official guidance – in the near future.

The Proposal Form asks you for details on the educational aims and objectives, parental demand and premises of the proposed Free School. It also asks questions about the suitability of the provider(s) involved. All new Free Schools will be opened with the same legal status as Academies, in a binding agreement with the Secretary of State.

Please note, all information provided in this form may be published on the Department for Education website.

INITIAL DETAILS

Name (Please specify if you are the nominated representative of an organisation that wishes to set up a Free School)

This is the person who will be the key point of contact between the Department for Education and the eventual trust which will set up the school. You therefore need to make sure that:

- a) the group is happy for this person to be the key point of contact;
- b) the nominated person is willing to give sufficient time to act as the liaison between the group and the Department.

If you are an individual (for example an individual head teacher) who wishes to set up a school then please be aware that the Department will have to sign a funding agreement with a Trust which is (a) a company limited by guarantee and (b) a charity.

We understand that if the Academies Bill currently being considered by Parliament is passed then the Department will require you to establish a limited company and then, on signing a funding agreement with you (post Business Plan), you will be made an 'exempt charity'. Exempt charities are exempt from having to register with, and are not regulated by, the Charity Commission. So it is not necessary for you to apply to be a charity now.

If you wish to be paid by the new school (e.g. as the new Head) you should have independent trustees.

The organisation cannot be a profit making one.

Name of your organisation

Address (of organisation or individual)

[REDACTED]

Email Contact

[REDACTED]

Telephone Number

[REDACTED]

Are you an existing independent school wanting to convert to a Free School?

Yes

If yes, please provide your 6-digit school unique reference number (URN)

[REDACTED]

If no, please confirm the nature of your organisation (educational group / charity / business / parent group etc)

Please confirm whether your organisation is incorporated i.e. set up as a Company which is registered at Companies House. If so, please provide the Company Registration Number, Company Address and details of the Directors and Secretary. If not, please indicate the approximate date by which it will be incorporated.

Please be aware that you need a company bank account to receive government funding and setting one up can take a while – so you should get one as soon as you are a company.

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, our organisation is incorporated Company Registration Number: Company Address: Details of Directors and Secretary: <input type="checkbox"/> No, our organisation is not yet incorporated Approximate date by which it will be incorporated:
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In which Local Authority area will the school be based? If you are near to a LA boundary, please include name of neighbouring LA(s)

Local Authority
Neighbouring LAs

Is your Local Authority aware of your intention to set up a Free School?

Yes

(If Y please give details of your discussions with them so far)

If your local authority has previously denied you permission to set up a school, this does not stop you now. While you should seek cooperation and support from the Local Authority if possible, they cannot veto a new school.

SUITABILITY OF PROVIDER

The Secretary of State will consider each proposal on its merits, and take into account all matters relevant to that proposal. Generally, he would expect that all proposals will comply with all aspects of the rigorous suitability and vetting tests throughout the application process, including due diligence and CRB checks and will reject any proposers who advocate violence, intolerance, hatred or whose ideology runs counter to the UK's democratic values.

Do any of the following apply to the organisation (or any consortium member), or to (any of) its director(s)/partners/proprietor(s) or individual applicants (select Y/N):	
Is in a state of bankruptcy, insolvency, compulsory winding up, receivership, composition with creditors (including any Individual Voluntary Arrangement), or subject to an Administration Order or any legal proceedings concerning their solvency?	No
Has been convicted of a criminal offence?	No
Is involved in any illegal activities?	No
Has not fulfilled obligations related to payment of taxes?	No
Is guilty of serious misrepresentation in supplying information?	No
Is not in possession of relevant licences or membership of an appropriate organisation where required by law?	No
Is barred from certain work with children as a result of being:	
[a] included in the list of those barred from Regulated Activity with children, kept by the Independent Safeguarding Authority? Or	No
[b] included in the list kept under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1999(4) (list of those considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children)? Or	No
[c] subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 (5) (or any other disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction)? Or	No

<p>[d] disqualified from working with children under sections 28, 29 or 29A of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000(6)?</p> <p>For further information on [a], [b], [c] and [d], please contact the CRB www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Is disqualified from registration under Part 10A of the Children Act 1989(7) for child minding or providing day care?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Is disqualified from registration under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006(8)?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Is a member, or has been a member in the past, of a proscribed organisation?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>If the answer to any of these questions is “Yes” please give details below:</p>	

EDUCATIONAL RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

Briefly outline your reasons for wanting to set up a Free School. Max 200 words.

Here you need to set out briefly why you think a new school is needed. That may be because a particular kind of education provision e.g. a certain ethos is not available in your area. It may be because there are not enough local schools. Or it may be because you feel that performance in the local area would be raised.

You should think about including views of parents in the area on local schools/need for a new school (not a full survey but some examples of quotes), quotes from supportive local businesses and other employers, Ofsted reports, and results of local schools if they are relevant. Supportive quotes are not a substitute for demonstrating demand (see below) but it will indicate why you have decided that setting up a free school is important.

This can include specialist provision for people who want to set up special schools. With any intended religious character you should indicate whether this will be reflected in your admissions procedures. Please be aware that you can only admit up to 50% of your pupils on the basis of faith criteria agreed with your religious authority - and the rules on admissions for religious schools are extremely complicated. You should read the Admissions Code for more details.

If you do want a school with a religious character, you should say so here - with any views of your diocese, synagogue, mosque etc and their contact details.

Please set out the Free School's aims and objectives. You should also describe:

- the teaching methods that will be used and whether the Free School will follow a particular philosophy (eg Montessori);
- the outline of the Free School's proposed curriculum, including any religious ethos;
- how the Free School will improve pupil learning and ensure strong discipline;

Max 2000 words.

The teaching methods.

This section is asking for two things:

- 1) Whether you are following a general education philosophy which is well known and established in schools in the UK or abroad (e.g. Montessori).
- 2) Whether there are particular approaches to teaching that you plan to

use (e.g. Lemov's 'Teach Like a Champion')

The outline of the Free School's proposed curriculum.

Clearly you cannot include the entire curriculum here – we assume that will be required at full Business Plan stage - but you should be giving details of:

- o The subjects taught – by year.
 - o If you are following a particular curriculum – the National Curriculum, a Montessori curriculum, Civitas' imminent Core Curriculum etc.
 - o The qualifications that you would intend for students to be entered for.
- How the Free School will improve pupil learning and ensure strong discipline.

You should cover here some basic details of:

Tracking pupil performance.

Tracking classroom delivery and teacher performance.

Intervention for particular pupils who are not achieving the expected standards or for whom there are discipline issues.

Any targets you will set for performance.

What are your organisation's core areas of work / aims? Max 500 words.

What capacity and capability do you have (or have access to) in order to deliver the educational vision set out above? Please indicate the resources, experience and expertise (educational and legal) that you have or have access to. Max 500 words.

You do not have to have set up a school or run a school in the past to get through this process. However we do strongly recommend that if you have no educational experience you talk to teachers or other education organisations who can help you either through a formal partnership, as part of the Trust or governing body, or through *pro bono* support.

Obviously some groups will not be able to afford legal services and we will try to help you find *pro bono* support from the New Schools Network or elsewhere. Please contact us if you have issues.

Do you have plans to work with a 3rd party organisation? If so, please include their details below and set out the intended nature of that relationship (for example, a contract, co-sponsorship arrangement, informal partnership).

E.g. If you intend to contract a significant proportion of services from a company, you should declare it here (though obviously not every detail of every organisation you will work with).

Please name the key individuals / trustees involved in setting up the Free School (if available). Please also indicate whether trustees have been chosen and their roles confirmed. Please provide details of employment of these individuals and any conflicts of interest you believe might arise.

EVIDENCE OF DEMAND

What evidence of local parental demand do you have? For example, a petition or a declaration from interested parents or pupil number projections for the area. Max 200 words.

Existing schools can clearly use current pupil numbers as some indication of demand – although we would recommend a consultation with parents to indicate whether they would intend to stay in the school.

For others here are some of the things you should consider.

- o Full pupil data for the LA including, if it exists, evidence for a lack of places for the area (this is not necessary to set up a school but if there is a shortage of places you should make this clear) ;
- o The number of children of primary/secondary age in the LA (starting from the proposed start date);
- o The number of children educated in the LA in maintained schools;
- o The number of children educated outside the LA in maintained schools;
- o The number of children from outside the LA educated in maintained schools in the LEA;
- o The number of children educated in independent schools;
- o Local polls/surveys of parents with children of a relevant age on whether they are looking for a new school (if possible with the education philosophy the potential provider wishes their school to embody);
- o Signatures from local parents indicating a firm intention of sending their child to the school;
- o Signatures from local parents indicating strong interest in sending their child to the school.

What is the proposed capacity (number of pupils)? Max 200 words.

Although the Department has not asked for a budget at this stage you should be thinking about it, and whether your planned pupil numbers will allow you to teach the curriculum you intend within the per pupil funding of your area. For guidance on that funding please contact us.

What is the proposed age range of the Free School? Please include details of planned pupil numbers in each year group.

This will usually mean a primary or secondary school – although you could have a ‘middle school’, an all-through school (5-18), a sixth form (16-18) etc (although you should think about at what point parents will apply for a new school in your area).

When do you hope the Free School will start operating (for your first set of pupils)?

The opening date will usually be the September of the year after the school has opened up for admissions. Parents apply for places on 31 October for secondary schools and 15 January for primary. As far as possible admissions for the following September will need to be agreed a month before these dates at the latest. (We will issue further guidance on this shortly.)

They need to be informed of the admission arrangements and when the school opens. The LA publishes an admissions prospectus that contains information each year on admission arrangements and admission numbers for all schools in the area.

It is important to be realistic – you will need to recruit a head and staff, renovate or build premises (or find a temporary site) and ensure that the curriculum, teaching, assessment and professional development plans are fully developed and link properly.

We would expect most schools will start with a single year intake. Building sufficient capacity for a full school from scratch is difficult.

PREMISES

What steps have you taken to identify a potential site? Please include details of the geographical area the school seeks to serve; a list of any sites you have considered; and any discussions you have had to identify a suitable site. If known, please include the proposed location, premises and postcode of the Free School.

If you don't have a site yet that doesn't matter, but you should at least have done some analysis of potential local sites. An indicative location is needed to make evidence of parent demand and budgeting plausible.

We have started to publish available D1 sites on the NSN website.

Further information

Please note, all information provided on this form will be published on the Department for Education website. Information that you supply on this form may be shared with (a) the New Schools Network and (b) the Local Authority in which you wish to set up the Free School. Information about the New Schools Network can be found at <http://www.newschoolsnetwork.org>.

Submission of this form will be treated as consent, from both you and anyone else whose personal data is contained on this form, to the sharing of this information as set out above.

In addition, information that you provide on this form, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

Next Steps

Please email completed Proposal Form to
freeschools.registration@education.gsi.gov.uk

You will hear back from a named official at the Department for Education within two weeks, who will offer you advice on how best to progress your application. The Secretary of State will make a judgement on the potential of the project based on criteria relating to educational aims and objectives, evidence of demand, potential premises, suitability of provider and any other relevant considerations to decide whether the proposed Free School project should move into stage 3, namely that of drawing up a business case and plan.