

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) for Staff

Cathedral School Trust and Trust in Learning Academies

Many thanks to all those who have submitted responses so far regarding our proposed merger. Below are responses to general questions that we have received. If questions are related to specific schools or people, we will endeavour to respond individually over the coming weeks.

These initial FAQs are to answer any immediate questions you may have regarding the merger and to provide further information on what this could mean for our pupils, staff, schools, and the wider community. We will be looking to provide opportunities for staff to submit further questions as we move through the process, and we will endeavour to update these on a regular basis to ensure your questions where possible are answered and you feel fully informed.

1. Why are you proposing to merge the two trusts?

Drivers

A NEW BRISTOL TRUST- Proactive opportunities



For Children

- Highest quality curriculum support
- Opportunity to improve educational outcomes for our most vulnerable children
- Highest quality teaching and QA
- Wider enrichment opportunities
- Improved transition



For Staff

- Higher quality professional development
- Greater opportunities for career progression
- Enhanced professional learning
- Recruitment and retention improvements
- Reducing workload for staff
- Secondary growth support opportunity



For Families

- Clearer transition opportunities
- Opportunities for wider co-curricular enrichment
- Simplifying communication
- Greater signposting for support

Drivers

A NEW BRISTOL TRUST- Reactive and response to risks



THE WIDER SYSTEM IS REFORMING

- We need to oversee our own destiny.
- Mergers are becoming common.
- A larger MAT will enable risks to be absorbed and make it easier for us to respond to national policy change.



THE ECONOMIC CLIMATE IS NOT IMPROVING

- Scale helps us weather that storm ensuring that we can continue to support our schools effectively and efficiently.



WE NEED TO HAVE A LARGER VOICE IN REDESIGNING EDUCATION ACROSS GREATER BRISTOL

- There are a number of schools not in our families who require support.
- Secondary growth is needed to support collaboration

We believe that between TiLA and CST we have complementary strengths to enhance outcomes of our pupils, and by building on these strengths through collaborative and sharing excellent practices by enabling the most efficient use of our resources. The joining of both trusts will ensure the long-term stability of all schools. Our ambition is that all schools will benefit from shared networks and systems as well as building on our existing strong working relationship.

2. What will the benefits be?

We want to reassure you that this merger is about creating more opportunities and delivering the best possible education for all our pupils, staff and the wider community.

For pupils:

At the heart of this merger is the pupil's education and experience in school. By bringing together the strength of both Trusts we aim to:

- Offer the highest quality curriculum, combining the strongest elements from each Trust
- Enhance teaching and learning for pupils by ensuring our staff have access to the highest and relevant high-quality training and development.
- Improved and enhanced access to technology to support student learning.
- Offer widespread enrichment opportunities building on strengths, such as CST's music Trailblazers scheme and partnership with Bristol Beacon, and TiLA's speak-up challenge.
- Strengthen transitions between schools and key stages, so pupils will have a greater sense of safety and belonging, with many children able to stay within the Trust from age 3 to 18.

For staff:

We know that a well-supported and highly skilled teaching team is key to providing the best education.

- Increased career and professional development opportunities for all staff through collaborative opportunities, enabling us to recruit and retain the very best staff.
- There will be a greater opportunity to share practice and learn from a larger group of colleagues through professional learning communities and networks. The Chartered College of Teaching Network for Bristol is held at Orchard School Bristol (TiLA)
- Opportunities for secondments, enhancing practice through teaching in different contexts without leaving our family of schools

For families, communities and Bristol:

Both TiLA and CST are committed to working locally, serving children and families in the Bristol area. Many of our schools are closely geographically located and there are good links between schools, the Local Authority and other trusts locally.

- A unified Bristol school offer, as all schools in the Trust will provide a consistently strong high-quality education for children, including for children with SEND.
- A consistent experience from 3 – 18 years for children, through staying within a Trust with a clear identity, strong relationships and agreed approaches
- Greater trust in education, built up over a longer period of time, with more likelihood for children to continue in education and transform their life choices
- A larger trust which fully represents the communities of Bristol, and is able to adapt to contextual changes and opportunities
- An enhanced capacity for civic responsibility, with a strong and developed working relationship with the Local Authority, expanding and unifying existing avenues.

3. Which schools will be part of the merged Trust?

Trust	Primary	Secondary
Trust in Learning Academy	Filton Avenue Primary School Little Mead Primary Academy Parson Street Primary School Henbury Court Primary Academy Fonthill Primary Academy Charlton Wood Primary Academy Nova Primary School	Orchard School Bristol
	Bridge Learning Campus (All-through)	
Cathedral Schools Trust	Henleaze Junior School Cathedral Primary School Hotwells Primary School Victoria Park Primary School Headley Park Primary School Stoke Park Primary School St Werburgh's Primary School Ashton Gate Primary School Henleaze Infant School	Bristol Cathedral Choir School St Katherine's School Trinity Academy

4. What are the timescales for the merger?

Subject to feedback and approval, by the Department for Education and agreement from both Trust Boards, the earliest the merger would take place is **1st January 2026**.

5. What does this mean for the school I work in?

What makes your school special will remain the same. Each school will retain its unique ethos and commitment to delivering a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of the young people and families it serves. Over time we will co-construct ways to make our schools stronger.

6. What does this mean for the current day-to-day experience?

There are no plans to change the school day or uniform. Any future changes would always involve full consultation with parents and carers of the respective school.

For staff based within schools, there will be no change to their place of work as a result of the merger.

7. Will the admission criteria change for my child's school under the merged Trust?

All schools across both trusts will continue to fully adhere to the national Admissions Code of Practice. Further information on the school admissions code is available on the [Department of Education website](#) and each school's admission policy can be found on the school website. There are no current plans to change the admissions criteria at any of our schools as a result of this merger. All schools in both Trusts are fully compliant with the national Admissions Code of Practice.

8. Which Trust will become the legal entity of the newly merged Trust?

We are working with both Trust Boards, the Department for Education and the Diocese, and once appointed, our legal advisers, to evaluate and determine this. There are various factors that will inform this decision not least ensuring that we proactively manage the costs associated with the merger. In many ways it is a moot point, as we are clear that our proposed merger is a fully equitable partnership.

Nevertheless, we recognise that there will be a group of staff that will need to TUPE transfer. Therefore, subject to our application to the Department for Education being approved, we will share the option that is agreed between all parties at the earliest possible point, which we anticipate will be before the end of the academic year. This will ensure we can offer clarity over any TUPE process ready for the autumn term. We have provided some initial questions regarding TUPE further in these FAQ's to provide some initial assurances to staff around the protections this legislation affords.

9. Will the name of the newly merged Trust change?

Yes, we plan on changing the name of the trust. Although none of the school names will change, we would like to establish a new identity for our Trust. We have not made any decisions about what the new name would be and will involve schools in helping us to shape our new identity.

10. What changes will be made to Governance as a result of the merger?

With the merger of the two Trusts, we will need to identify new Members and Trustees, the majority, if not all, will be drawn from our existing Trust Boards where we are fortunate to have dedicated volunteers with a wide range of outstanding skills, experience and expertise.

The Board of Trustees provides strategic oversight while decision-making for some functions will continue to be delegated to the school Governing Boards for each school. This ensures that each school can continue to meet the unique needs of its community while benefiting from the strength and support of the wider Trust. We believe this balance of local autonomy and collective collaboration is key to ensuring the best outcomes for our children and young people.

A key focus will be to maintain and strengthen effective leadership, both at the Trust level and within each individual school. By ensuring strong and supportive leadership across all levels, we can continue to provide the best possible education and opportunities for our children and young people.

11. What changes will be made to Leadership as a result of the merger?

Leadership in individual schools will remain unchanged as a result of the Trust merger. At Trust level we will be looking to bring together our highly skilled central teams under one Trust leadership team. Subject to merger approval we will be working with both teams to carefully manage this transition.

12. How will you take into account staff wellbeing through this process?

We do not envisage that the merger initially will bring about significant change for the majority of staff. We will endeavour to manage any change sensitively and thoughtfully. Both Trusts are committed to

- Ensuring that staff are engaged in how and when changes should take place.
- Ensuring that the best from both Trusts will be taken when approaching change, seeking to share the load of change between the two Trusts
- Developing structures, systems and processes at a pace that is necessary for the effective functioning of schools but at a pace that is manageable for all.
- Ensuring that we have sufficient capacity to manage changes

13. Cathedral School Trust has some faith-based schools; how will this affect other schools?

Our Trust will be home to a diverse range of schools, including those with faith-based traditions. We believe in celebrating this diversity and we are committed to maintaining the unique character

of each school. Each school within the Trust is committed to our common and shared values, making us a unique collective.

14. When will a final decision be made on the decision to merge?

Subject to approval by the DfE (via the Headteacher board) both Trust Boards will take a final decision on the merger following completion of full due diligence on each Trust which will include education, finance, HR, buildings etc. in order to ensure the merger process is in the best interests of both Trusts.

15. How will the financial equity of schools be approached?

Both trusts currently consider that school budgets will remain the delegated responsibility of the Headteachers who will manage the budget.

16. How will staff be kept informed during the merger process?

We understand that during times of change, clear and open communication is essential. We'll be keeping you updated regularly through our usual channels, ensuring you have all the information you need.

17. What will the new trust's approach be to trade union engagement and recognition?

The newly formed trust is already engaging with trade union colleagues regarding this proposal and will continue to recognise all existing Trade Unions post-merger. We are committed to continuing to work closely with union colleagues and maintaining open, constructive dialogue as the new trust structure takes shape.

18. How much change to the staff team do you envisage?

As the two trusts come together, our priority is to work collaboratively across our staff teams, providing enhanced opportunities for staff development. There are no immediate plans for any significant staffing changes in the short-term. Over the next 2–3 years, as the newly merged trust integrates together, we may naturally move towards a more aligned structure through careful planning and review but any change would be approached thoughtfully, with minimum impact and in full consultation with staff and union colleagues.

19. Will there be any changes to curriculum as a result of the merger?

If and once approval from the Department of Education and both Trustee boards has been confirmed there will be a period of time for due diligence to take place by both Trusts. This will include areas of finance, HR, compliance and of course education, amongst many others. As part of the education due diligence, we will conduct a review of all aspects of the curriculum to ensure that we are offering the very best educational experience for all of the young people in schools across both Trusts. We will work with staff to ensure that any future curriculum changes will be implemented with minimum disruption and at the appropriate time.

20. What financial considerations are being considered as part of the merger planning, and how might it support greater alignment or efficiency in shared services such as HR, finance, and school improvement?

At this stage, the financial position and consideration of the merger are being carefully reviewed as part of the due diligence process. All schools contribute to a central services arrangement, which provides essential functions such as school improvement, payroll, HR, finance, ICT, legal and compliance. These are services every school requires. Delivering these through a coordinated central team reduces cost and duplication, and ensures more effective compliance.

One of the aims of the trust model is to ensure that schools are well led, financially efficient, and able to focus resources on improving outcomes for pupils. Each school retains responsibility for managing its own budget in line with its priorities and context. As the merged trust develops, opportunities for improved service delivery and operational alignment will continue to be explored.

Initial TUPE FAQ's

Subject to approval to proceed with the merger and a decision on the legal entity to remain open, staff transferring into the Trust to remain open will transfer under a process known as 'TUPE'. As an existing Academy Trust's many of our employees will have experienced a TUPE transfer previously and will be familiar with what this entails. However, for those that haven't we have provided some answers below to some of the initial questions you may be concerned about.

1. What do the TUPE Regulations stand for?

Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 as amended in 2014 and 2018.

2. What is the purpose of the TUPE Regulations?

The main purpose of the TUPE Regulations is to preserve continuity of employment and to safeguard the employment rights of all employees whose employment transfers which in the case of our proposed merger will be the employees of the closing trust who will transfer to the trust/legal entity that is to remain open.

Under TUPE, the terms and conditions of employment, as set out in employment contracts of staff affected by the transfer are protected. This will include any specific set of terms and conditions of employment for example, the Burgundy Book (Teachers), the Green Book (Support Staff), the date of continuous service and any pension provision.

TUPE places a statutory requirement on both the outgoing Trust employer (the 'transferor') and the Trust remaining open (the 'transferee') as the incoming employer to consult affected staff and their representatives.

As part of the TUPE process there is a requirement to identify if there are going to be any changes to terms and conditions (either positive or negative) that are in connection with the transfer (these

are called measures). As we move through the process, you will be advised if there are to be any measures in due course.

3. Will my terms and conditions remain the same as they are now?

Upon merger, staff from both Trusts will continue to be employed on the same terms and conditions of employment subject to any 'measures' (changes) that are declared and consulted upon.

4. How will we approach staff pay alignment especially support staff?

As part of two trust's merging together it is likely that we will see some differences in terms and conditions across the two trusts. In line with TUPE, we will be required to protect terms and conditions of employment and as such there will be no immediate plans to align or harmonise these. We will be undergoing a process of detailed HR due diligence to understand any differences and in time we will be looking to undertake a staged approach to ensuring we can achieve alignment across terms and conditions whilst protecting against any significant impacts on staff.

5. Will my job description change?

As detailed above, staff from both Trusts will continue to be employed on the same terms and conditions of employment, this includes job descriptions. Where there are any proposed changes to job descriptions, particularly across our central teams, this will be subject to full consultation.

6. Can I be asked to work from a different school post-merger?

You may be asked to, but you will not be forced to. As a proposed merged Trust, this will provide for greater additional opportunities for development, training, sharing best practice, progression and development. Staff will be strongly encouraged to explore these opportunities wherever possible, but no one will be forced to work outside of the provisions of their contract of employment.

7. What will happen to any current approved arrangements re home working?

We are committed to wherever possible providing flexibility to our staff and where existing arrangements are in place for homeworking these will continue provided it continues to meet the needs of the trust. Should this ever need to change in the future this would be discussed with staff on an individual basis.

8. If I am identified as a staff member subject to TUPE, will we be issued with a new employment contract when our Trust's merge?

The purpose of TUPE is to preserve your service of employment and safeguard your employment rights. In effect, your contract of employment transfers intact to the newly merged Trust. However, your contract of employment is made up of multiple terms contained within a variety of

documents including national agreements, local agreements, individual arrangements all of which will be protected under the regulations etc.

9. If I am subject to a TUPE transfer. Will my continuous service be protected?

Yes, any accrued service will be transferred and protected under TUPE. Legislation is in place that allows employment service with different local authority associated employers to be accrued as continuous service for the purpose of redundancy payments and for some staff (support staff), annual leave, sick pay and maternity pay. This legislation is called the Redundancy Modification Order (RMO).

The Local Government Employers Organisation has confirmed that all Academy Trust's established under the Academies Act 2010 will be a recognised local authority associated employer covered by the RMO.

10. What consultation will take place in relation to staff subject to TUPE?

Under the TUPE regulations there is a requirement to inform and, where appropriate, consult with staff and their recognised trade union representatives regarding the implications of the transfer. We anticipate that subject to approval to proceed the TUPE consultation period would commence in the Autumn Term (September 25). Further details will follow on what this entails and whether you are subject to a TUPE transfer following the decision on which Trust will remain open.

11. Is there a time limit on TUPE consultation?

No. TUPE requires consultation to be meaningful and therefore formal consultation periods will be set to ensure all staff affected have the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions around the proposed transfer.

12. What happens to my Teachers Pension (TPS) or Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) pension upon merger?

The newly merged Trust would continue to be a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and the Teacher's Pension Scheme (TPS), and your pension would be protected under additional provisions provided for under the Academies Act. Therefore, your pension will be unaffected by the transfer.

The newly merged Trust would also continue to offer access to TPS and LGPS to any new staff appointed post-transfer

If you are already a member of the TPS or the LGPS you will see no difference to your scheme membership. Where appropriate your pension records will be automatically transferred into the name of the newly merged trust, there will be no change to the pension benefits you accrue, and you do not need to take any further action.

13. What will happen upon transfer if I am not currently in the TPS or LGPS?

If you are opted out of the relevant pension scheme at the point of transfer, you will be automatically enrolled into the TPS or LGPS in accordance with Auto Enrolment Regulations. Again, further details and information will be provided in relation to this as we move through the process.

14. Does an employee have to transfer to the newly merged Trust?

When there is a TUPE transfer, its effect is to transfer all those employees who are assigned to the outgoing Trust immediately before the transfer. When the transfer happens, you will become employed by the newly merged Trust (the legal entity).

The only exception is if you were to object to the transfer. Should you object then under TUPE regulations and employment law this would be treated as a resignation from your role. In these circumstances there is no dismissal in law, so you would not be entitled to any dismissal-based claims, including for a redundancy payment as your role will have transferred to the merged trust. Should anyone be considering an objection to the transfer we would encourage further discussions with your managers and trade union representatives before any decisions are made.

15. How do I ask questions or provide feedback in relation to the proposed merger?

We encourage you to submit any questions or comments by emailing our independent project managers, Edwin People at engagement@edwinpeople.com by Friday 16th May 2025, or [click here](#) to complete the response form. Engagement and communication will be ongoing throughout the process.