

DFD/A/AM001

Thursday, 03 May 2012

Dear Parents/Carers,

After discussion at the Governors' meeting in March, a decision was made to further investigate the possibility of St. Margaret's converting to Academy status. Before making a formal application, Governors wish to consult with parents/carers, staff and students and receive feedback about conversion.

What are Academies?

Currently about 10% of secondary schools are academies. St. Margaret's would be one of the new style academies referred to as "conversion" Academies. More detail about the new style Academies can be found at www.dfes.gov.uk and the Q&A document on the school website. Academies are independent of the Local Authority and receive their funding directly from the government. They have more freedom than schools that are maintained under Local Authority control.

As an Academy, St. Margaret's would retain the same admission criteria as currently. The school will continue to be a Church of England school which serves the whole of the Liverpool Diocese. New style academies are run by a trust made up of members who are taken from the existing governing body. The members appoint the governors, who ensure that the school is run properly and who provide challenge and support for the Head Teacher and Senior Management Team.

Why become an Academy?

At our last Ofsted we were judged to be a school that is "good with outstanding features" and, as such, we have been offered the opportunity to apply to convert to an Academy and, thereby, have greater control over the budget we receive and the decisions we make. As a Voluntary Aided school, St. Margaret's has more independence than other maintained schools. The Governors employ staff. The school, along with the Diocese, owns the land and buildings and the Governing Body is the admissions authority for the school.

As a VA school, the Governors are responsible for 10% of the cost of any capital works undertaken by the school. As an Academy this would no longer be the case.

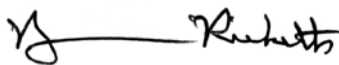
The Senior Management Team and the Governors believe that progressing with Academy status is a sensible next step. We believe that these freedoms can be used to make decisions in the best interest of our students and their families. As an Academy we expect the school to remain the same in terms of its ethos, vision, values and distinctive Christian character, continuing to work with the Diocese and Parishes of Liverpool. There are no plans, for example, to change the school day or terms or to change the working conditions for staff. We want to build on our existing strengths and ensure that we target the budget to continue to improve the educational provision for our school and the local community.

What happens next?

The Governors are interested to hear your views on Academy status. You may forward your views in writing to Dr. D. F. Dennison, Headmaster, marking your envelope "Academy Consultation" or by emailing AcademyParent@stmargaretshigh.com. On 22nd May 2012, between 5.00pm and 7.00pm, we will hold an informal "drop-in" session for anyone wishing to know more about academy status. If you would like to attend this meeting please email clerk2governors@stmargaretshigh.com so that we have an idea of numbers attending. The "drop-in" will be held in the Sixth Form Internet Lounge and you may come along at whatever time is convenient to you.

The consultation period ends on 11th June 2012. Following this the Governing Body will meet again to consider your views and the outcome of the consultation will be published on the school's website. If you would like further information about what conversion to Academy status means for St. Margaret's, you will also find this on the school's website. You may find the document, "Frequently Asked Questions and Answers" helpful in providing information about the School's stance on conversion.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Brian Ricketts
Chair of Governors