

converting to an academy?



Academy status can bring exciting opportunities for schools. Mills & Reeve's dedicated academies team will guide you through the legal red tape before, during and after the conversion process, enabling a smooth transition to academy status on time and on budget.

What are academies?

Academies are publicly funded, independent schools. Essentially, academies benefit from greater freedoms to make decisions about how they operate and deliver education, allowing them to innovate and raise standards of schooling in England.

Who can become an academy?

The Academies Act 2010 was born following the Government's desire to expand the Academies programme, through a simplified, streamlined process. All maintained primary, secondary and special schools in England have the opportunity to convert to academy status.

What does the conversion process involve?

The conversion process has been made as simple as possible. The key steps the school must take are all explained in the [Department for Education's](#) (DfE) website. In summary, the school should:

- Complete the [online registration form](#) on the DfE website. At this point the DfE will provide a named contact who will support you through the process.
- Submit an application to convert form. If approved, the Secretary of State will grant an Academy Order.
- Obtain and sign a funding agreement.
- Set up new financial systems and contractual arrangements.

How we can help

There are a number of significant legal issues which can hinder the path to a smooth conversion.

Mills & Reeve's specialist academies team can help you to understand the new accelerated academy framework and documents required by the DfE. The team will not only guide you through all the necessary legal formalities for conversion but will provide practical support to enable a smooth transition to academy status.

Some of the legal aspects we can help you with include:

- **Establishing the Academy Trust.**
- **Drawing up and advising on the Funding Agreement.**
- **Advising on the transfer of staff employment contracts and pensions.**
- **Advising on the transfer of land and buildings.**
- **Review and completion of the asset transfer agreement.**
- **Advising on any tax and charity implications.**
- **Post completion support such as company secretarial and property portfolio management services.**

Through its extensive experience and solid working relationships with the DfE, Companies House, project managers and local authorities, our team will work seamlessly with all parties to ensure the academy is open on time and budget.

Contact us

Having advised on over 40 academy conversions, including accelerated "outstanding" rated schools becoming academies to more traditional models involving third party sponsors, foundations, trusts, primary and community schools and federations – our dedicated academies team of over 20 lawyers is ideally placed and ready to help you through the process.

If you are interested in converting your school into an academy or in sponsoring an academy, we offer a free initial consultation to talk you through the process involved and issues which can arise on academy conversions. If you decide to go ahead, where possible and for costs certainty, we seek to provide a **fixed fee**. Our team would be delighted to discuss any concerns or questions you might have, so do please get in touch.



Stuart Pemble
Head of Academies
 t: 0121 456 8335
 e: stuart.pemble@mills-reeve.com

our academy and free schools projects

- **Appleton Academy, Bradford**
- **Ashingdon Primary School, Essex**
- **Aston Engineering Academy, Birmingham**
- **Bell Wood Primary School, Kent**
- **Beths Grammar School, Kent**
- **Bexleyheath School, London**
- **Brockworth School, Gloucestershire**
- **Cambridge Phoenix Foundation Free School**
- **Chalfonts Community College, Buckinghamshire**
- **Christ's School, Richmond**
- **City Academy Norwich, Norfolk**
- **Coleshill Academy, Coleshill**
- **Columbus School and College, Essex**
- **Corsham Academy, Wiltshire**
- **De Warenne Academy, Doncaster**
- **Essex federated academies (x3 sites)**
- **Eston Park School, Middlesbrough**
- **Everest Community College, Hampshire**
- **Felixstowe Academy, Suffolk (x3 sites)**
- **Freebrough Academy, Cleveland**
- **The Gateway Academy, Essex**
- **Gilbrook School, Middlesbrough**
- **Greenwich Free School**
- **Grey Court School, Richmond**
- **Heart of England School, Solihull**
- **Hillcrest School, Birmingham**
- **Hounslow Manor School, Middlesex**
- **Isle of Wight Innovation Centre**
- **Kirkley High School, Suffolk**
- **Manchester academies**
- **Marine Academy, Plymouth**
- **Miltoncross School, Portsmouth**
- **Ninestiles Academy, Birmingham**
- **Northampton Free School**
- **Plumberow School, Essex**
- **Oak Trees Primary School, Kent**
- **Orleans Park School, Richmond**
- **Richard Rose federated academies, Cumbria (x3 sites)**
- **Richmond Academy, London**
- **Ryde High School, Isle of Wight**
- **Sandham Middle School, Isle of Wight**
- **Sandown High School, Isle of Wight**
- **Shirebrook Academy, Derbyshire**
- **Teddington School, Richmond**
- **Stephenson Studio School, Leicestershire**
- **Tendring Community College, Essex**
- **Thomas Deacon Academy, Peterborough**
- **Trafford Academy, Manchester**
- **Tudor Grange Academy, Solihull**
- **Tudor Grange Academy, Worcester**
- **Unity City Academy, Middlesbrough**
- **Waldegrave School for Girls, Richmond**
- **Westborough Academy, Essex**
- **Westerings Primary School, Essex**
- **West Lakes Academy, Cumbria**
- **Whitley Abbey, Coventry**
- **Wood Green High Academy, Wednesbury**
- **Woodlands Community College, Southampton**

