



# TRANSFER TO THE COLLEGIATE TRUST

## Woodcote High School

### Frequently Asked Questions 1 – 12.1.2023

This document sets out summary answers to the main questions that have been posed by staff, students and parents in the consultation regarding the transfer of *Woodcote High School* (WHS) to *The Collegiate Trust* (TCT). It is not possible to record here a detailed answer to every specific question; however, should you wish to ask a further question that we can address in FAQs 2, please send it to [governance@woodcotehigh.com](mailto:governance@woodcotehigh.com).

#### 1. Why has *The Collegiate Trust* been chosen?

The *Full Governing Body* (FGB) established a set of criteria for the multi-academy trusts that we would consider for WHS to join. Governors were clear that they were seeking a trust that:

- would respect the traditions and nurture the established culture and ethos of WHS.
- would maintain the individuality of WHS within the MAT.
- will support the strategic and day-to-day leadership of the school.
- has the capacity for professional investment in the development of leaders and staff at all levels.
- can provide a family network to ensure staff are benefitting from and contributing to collaborative development and improvement.
- has established governance structures that will support the development of Woodcote but respect the importance of local agency.
- can quickly pick up the full range of financial management of the school, integrating current systems.

From an initial longlist of 16 local and national MATS, the FGB established a shortlist of 3 MATS which Governors visited and interviewed. At the end of this interview the FGB made a preliminary and clear decision in favour of joining TCT; from their research, visits and the interview, Governors were convinced that TCT met all of the criteria set out above.

In choosing TCT, the FGB also recognised that the values of TCT were aligned with WHS. TCT believes in *exceptional education for all* which includes great learning across the academic, creative and vocational curriculum as well as personal development of all students; TCT works to provide great learning for all abilities, all special needs and all groups of students. These values are very much in line with the well-established approaches at *Woodcote High School*.

#### 2. What has happened since that decision?

The FGB has consulted with staff and parents to find out their views on their preliminary decision to join TCT. Following consultation meetings and an analysis of questionnaire returns, the FGB noted the very strong response in favour of joining TCT and has confirmed its decision, at a meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022, that *Woodcote High School* **should** join *The Collegiate Trust*. A letter was sent to parents and staff on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 to inform them of this decision by the FGB.

The *Regional Director for London*, who acts on behalf of the *Secretary of State for Education* on these matters, has also approved the transfer of WHS to TCT following a meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

TCT has now begun a process of due diligence as part of the transfer process.

#### 3. How will TCT change our School?

TCT is currently a family of 7 schools, each of which has its own individuality and is run by its own Headteacher (known in TCT as Principal) and a *Local Governing Body* (LGB), who are accountable to the CEO and the Board of Directors. Decisions about Woodcote will continue to be made by our staff

and governors, in conjunction with the support and challenge to improve the quality of education for our students provided by our new colleagues within the TCT family. TCT has a well-established and successful school improvement team, strong and effective governance systems and people, and an excellent business support and finance team; colleagues at WHS will work closely with each of these teams to benefit our community.

Decisions about our school curriculum, teaching and learning, the school day, term dates, uniform, and day-to-day approaches will continue to be made at Woodcote, operating under the framework for delivering an exceptional education for all set out by TCT.

#### **4. What are the benefits for our students and staff of joining TCT?**

By joining a local family of schools, our staff will benefit from collaboration with a great range of colleagues to support the development of the highest quality of teaching and learning. This collaboration will include additional professional development opportunities that are wholly focused on making sure the experience of every student at WHS is enjoyable and successful.

One of the concerns expressed about this move is that it could disrupt teaching and learning, with a particular concern about the impact on current GCSE and Sixth Form students as we enter a crucial time of year. We would want to assure you that, since the actual move is a legal and technical process, there will be no distraction for teachers and support staff delivering the curriculum and our determination is that students taking exams this year will hopefully match the record results achieved at GCSE and in Sixth Form in 2022. The work on the transfer concerning staff will be conducted by local union representatives acting on their behalf, working with Governors and senior administrative staff from WHS and representatives from TCT. At the point that WHS becomes part of TCT, all of our colleagues will continue to carry out their current roles with the same terms and conditions.

#### **5. How will this change affect finances?**

All schools in a MAT are funded in the same way as local authority schools or those, like WHS at the moment, that are standalone academies. Therefore, we shall not receive additional resources as a result of this move. However, by being part of a larger family, we shall be able to achieve better value for money through economies of scale; this will allow us to keep more resource focused on classroom provision and improving facilities for students and staff. TCT has a rigorous approach to supporting each school to operate effectively within its budget allocation.

Schools within TCT make a financial contribution that allows the trust to provide school improvement support, financial and HR management, leadership of governance work, management of capital improvements and a range of other services. Each school gets full benefit from these services, which also allows school-based staff to be fully focused on the learning of students.