



NOTTINGHAM
FREE SCHOOL

Frequently Asked Questions

Section A: Developing a Free School

1: What is a Free School?

Free Schools are state or maintained schools that receive their funding entirely from central government. As such they are automatically 'Academies' and sit outside Local Authority control but adhere to the School Admissions Code of Practice. Free Schools are non-selective and free to all attending pupils. They are set up by interested local groups who feel their area would benefit from a Free School and can demonstrate local demand for one.

2: Why are you establishing the school?

We believe that every child deserves a good, local school. Local residents tell us that an additional secondary school choice would be welcomed. Many students currently do not secure places at their first choice school and end up travelling long distances, leaving the state sector or attending schools they had not chosen.

The community deserves a new outstanding school.

3: How many children are you accepting in September 2014?

We are accepting 90 places for September 2014. We will only be accepting Year 7 students in the first year. We will build year by year, with an eventual number on roll of 600 students by September 2018.

4: Why do I need to express my interest now?

In order to secure funding we have to demonstrate sufficient parental interest in our school to the DfE.

Expressing your interest in the school by completing our survey is all you have to do at this stage, indicating that The Nottingham Free School may be a preference for you. This will help ensure that you and other parents have the future choice of The Nottingham Free School.

5: What if I sign up then change my mind?

Expressing your interest at this stage does not commit you to sending your child to the school. You will complete your school choices when your child is in Year 6 in the usual way.

6: How and when do I apply to The Nottingham Free School?

Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City residents should apply through the Local Authority application process, selecting The Nottingham Free School as one of your preferences. The school is happy to assist with this process. The process starts when your child is in Year 6.

We will retain a list of potential parents and keep you updated on our progress.

7: Is your location decided and has the site been secured?

We have identified suitable premises. Once public consultation has been concluded we will work with the Department for Education to finalise the plans and get the site ready for opening.

8: How will my child get to the school?

Once we have a clearer idea of where pupils live in relation to the school we will begin to explore transport options. Nottinghamshire County Council are currently committed to funding transport to parent's first choice school.

9: How does the funding work?

The Nottingham Free School will receive a package of funding direct from the DfE to set up and establish the school. From September 2014

the school receives a per pupil funding settlement from the Local Authority in line with all maintained secondary schools.

10: What happens if there is a change in government / education policy?

Upon opening, all free schools receive the same legal status as academies. We are joining a group of hundreds of existing academies, a policy supported across the political spectrum.

Section B: Academic Culture and Ethos

1: Will you be focused on academic excellence?

Yes. Our academic priority is to deliver excellent GCSE results in the English Baccalaureate subjects, providing a secure foundation for 'A' level success. This will enable students to secure places at the Russell Group Universities.

2: What is your track record?

The Torch Academy Gateway Trust currently leads two secondary schools. Our founder school was rated as 'outstanding' by Ofsted in 2011 and is ranked in the top 2% of all schools nationally for student progress. For the past 4 years every student has secured at least 5 'good' grades at GCSE.

Our sponsored school has been transformed under our leadership and is one of the most of the most improved schools nationally.

Our track record of success is second to none.

3: What is the track record of the school leaders?

Our Executive Head teacher is a National Leader of Education, with extensive experience of leading secondary schools.

He is supported by an extended leadership team, used to securing high outcomes for students. This includes experienced 'Heads of School' and an accredited Ofsted Inspector.

In December 2011 Ofsted made the following comment:

'The headteacher sets exceptionally high standards for students and staff. He is supported by a strong leadership team.'

4: What will you be looking for in your staff?

We will be recruiting outstanding professionals, who share our vision for education, our passion and who are committed to do whatever it takes to deliver excellence for our students. We will be recruiting teachers on the basis of their academic qualifications, quality of classroom practice, commitment to learning (that of students and their own) and our vision.

Being part of a highly successful wider group of schools enables us to use teachers who we already know are outstanding.

5: My child has special needs? How will you cater for them?

We will follow the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice to ensure that students are appropriately supported. We have access to experienced, specialist support teachers, for example to support students who are dyslexic.

6: Will there be a school uniform?

Yes. School uniform is an important factor that helps promote school identity and set high standards. Uniform will include blazers and school ties. There will be a competitive package available for parents to buy directly from the school.

7: Will there be after schools clubs for those with working parents?

Yes. The Nottingham Free School will run an extended school day, which will finish at 4.45pm.

8: What sports will be offered?

Sport will form an important part of our school. We will offer a wide range of sporting opportunities and high quality sports coaching. Sports will include team games (for example football, rugby, cricket, netball, and rowing) and individual pursuits (rowing, athletics, personal fitness). A big difference between us and other schools will be our use

of specialist coaches, ensuring sporting excellence can be developed and nurtured.

9: Will you encourage arts education – music and drama?

Yes – this is a key part of our offer. Our afternoon sessions will allow access to music, drama and artistic opportunities. We will use the skills of professional actors, musicians and artists to enhance the quality and variety of our overall provision and provide students with experience of professional working practices.

10: What other activities will you offer?

We will offer opportunities for leadership development, public speaking, debating, enterprise activities, language exchanges, Duke of Edinburgh, community development, social responsibility and residential trips and visits.

11: Do you intend to open a Post-16 school?

Yes, we will extend our provision to Post 16 where we will offer a suite of A-Level subjects.

Section C: How to get involved

1: How can I become more involved now?

The Nottingham Free School is committed to serving the community. We are initially looking for parent ambassadors to promote the School and its ethos during the development phase.

Once the school is running parental involvement through the governors and the Parent Association will be a vital part of school life.

2: How can parents get involved in the running / future of the school?

We seek to engage positively with our parents. Parents will be invited into school regularly and will meet formally with their child's mentor twice a year.

A parental focus group will operate throughout our pre-opening stages and this will continue to offer a regular voice for parents after opening.

Parents will be represented on the school's governing body.

3: How can I stay in touch as the project develops?

Over the next two years we will continue to involve prospective parents in every aspect of the project.

We will provide regular updates via Facebook, Twitter and our website.

We will also run regular formal and informal information evenings and provide a range of extra curricular opportunities for potential students.