THE BUSINESS OF EDUCATION

ICT Services
Key considerations

Herts for Learning Ltd is a not for profit company owned by Hertfordshire schools and the local authority. Providing achievement and business services, it is dedicated to improving standards of education in Hertfordshire and beyond.

Key considerations for academy and MAT transition

The conversion of a School to an Academy, or the establishment of a MAT are complicated and often time-consuming processes. Taking the opportunity to understand the tasks that will need to be completed, as well as the new legislative requirements you will face, will ensure that your endeavour will be successful.

Herts for Learning have produced a range of Key Consideration guides, focusing on all aspects of the business of educational settings. These guides are a great starting point to begin to understand the transition process to becoming an academy or multi academy trust. They may also highlight any skills gap you may have within your setting, and the requirements of any assistance you may need.

To view the full range of Key Consideration guides, please visit
http://www.hertsforlearning.co.uk/content/mats-preparing-for-change

Information and Data

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Management Information Systems

When converting to an Academy, MAT or joining a MAT the MIS tool you currently use may need reviewing.

Consider:

- checking the licence with the vendor and how it would work with multiple sites
- ensuring that you understand any support implications
- ensuring that you are able to provide reporting information on individual sites and across all sites using the existing MIS tool
- whether having a single tool instead of various tools across all sites would be beneficial

MIS systems are an integral part of the running of any school. It is important to think through the support required for your organisation to ensure prompt service responses and regular usage reports.

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DfE Requirements

The information you have to submit to the DfE changes if you become an Academy, MAT or join a MAT . Two key changes which would affect you are:

- School Census has to be submitted directly to DfE via COLLECT rather than to the data collection team at the local authority
- Workforce returns have to be submitted directly to DfE via COLLECT rather than to the data collection team at the local authority

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Data Protection and Security

Data protection is of utmost priority when you are looking to become an Academy, a MAT or join a MAT. This links closely with ensuring the data is safe and secure and educating staff/students/parents on aspects of e-safety.

There are 8 principles under the Data Protection Act 1998; you may want to consider the following additional key points:

- ensuring you know where your data resides
- sharing of data (the systems used to do this)
- issuing of Privacy Notices to staff/students/parents

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Digital presence

As part of becoming an Academy, MAT or joining a MAT ensure you review your digital presence.

Consider:
- reviewing the websites of schools that exist in your MAT and agree how far they need to look and feel the same
- any school website branding reflects your new Academy status or MAT
- reviewing the content of each school website (remember the statutory requirements for school websites only apply to maintained schools)
- whether you can consolidate your online subscriptions

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Technology and Connectivity

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Technology equipment and software

With technology constantly changing you should review regularly the MAT's ICT vision & strategy ensuring it meets the requirements of individual schools as well as the trust.

Consider:

- reviewing your existing ICT equipment (laptops, Chromebooks, iPads etc.) as the delivery of your pedagogy may change
- ensuring the delivery of the ICT curriculum is still being met by reviewing the software used by staff and pupils across the sites
- how you envisage 'technical support' will work for the individual schools and trust (e.g. would you need a technician to visit each site or could this be done centrally?)
- reviewing the core infrastructure at each site (for example cabling, switches, servers and wireless)
- single sign-on solutions to allow ease of access to all systems within the sites

Collaboration between sites

As part of becoming an Academy, a MAT or joining a MAT it is important you take time to consider the systems used and how data will be shared.

Consider:

- Working with your ICT provider to identify how you will share access to systems such as MIS, Finance, Assessment etc. across the school sites
- reviewing consistent payroll and finance systems that work across the MAT
- how the sites will be connecting to the Internet and will this allow for ease of access to data at each site (this may require some re-configuration)
- whether, as your staff move around the various schools, they will still be able to easily access the data they need
- whether you need to investigate and/or implement new systems to enhance collaboration between staff, pupils and parents
- remote access to systems from home for staff, pupils and parents

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ICT Procurement

ICT equipment can be expensive, make sure that it is suitable for your vision and strategy for both individual sites and the MAT as a whole.

Consider:

- reviewing your ICT equipment to ensure it is fit for purpose and can effectively deliver the curriculum to meet the pedagogy
- looking at trusted partners and ICT frameworks to make sure you get best value
- whether you can share equipment resources between sites
- whether you can benefit from collective "buying power"

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Security

Collaboration of data is important for an Academy or MAT and ensuring this data is safe and secure is vital.

Consider:

- who has access to different systems
- how staff/students/parents get access to different systems
- implementing tracking services to monitor and audit who is accessing what data
- reviewing policies and procedures such as ICT Acceptable Use and Data Management)
- data security if your data and systems are "in the cloud"

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Training

As part of any change to, or development of new technologies, it is important to ensure the staff/students/parents are well versed in the use of them.

Consider:
- providing guides and 'How to' documents potentially via an intranet
- having technology champions at individual sites
- setting expectations for new ways of working
- communicating with staff, pupils and parents in a timely manner
- creating a training schedule
- running workshops for staff, pupils and parents

Contact us

For further information on the support available, and to view all Herts for Learning MAT services, please visit http://www.hertsforlearning.co.uk/mats, email business.matters@hertsforlearning.co.uk or call 01438 845111.