

Our Ref: HTSA/Academy/BRE/JOD

Date: 28th November 2012

Dear Parent/Carer

Formalisation of the partnership between Ruskin High School and Sandbach HSSFC

Over recent months, there have been on-going discussions with our colleagues at Sandbach High School and Sixth Form College regarding the formalisation of the partnership work between our two schools. For over two years, colleagues from the two schools have been supporting one another on a range of matters - from curriculum support to financial matters, and also more informal general issues. In addition, a growing number of students leave Ruskin at the end of Year 11 to join Sandbach HSSFC for their post 16 education.

The formalisation of our links would be through the creation of a Multi Academy Trust, a move welcomed and supported by the Department for Education. Sandbach HSSFC is already an academy and it is proposed that, as an existing academy, they would support Ruskin in converting to an academy.

The academy initiative is growing fast, with nearly 60% of secondary schools nationally having already converted. At Ruskin, we feel in a position to want to take this step now.

A multi academy trust is essentially a group of two or more schools working together within a formal arrangement but key to our proposal is the need for both schools to retain their own identity, leadership and the features that make them special. Together, we believe we can sustain the identity of our two schools whilst sharing a range of benefits which will further the development of our respective schools.

In essence there would be a lead Governing body for the two schools, focused on the current Governing Body at Sandbach HSSFC. Each school would appoint Governors from their respective bodies to be on the Governing Body of the other school. Given the current status of the two schools and the fact that Sandbach is already an academy, the Governing Body of Sandbach HSSFC would, in effect, become the lead authority for both schools and staff across the two schools would become employees of Sandbach HSSFC.

There are many advantages associated with the proposal including the ability at both schools to increase the curriculum offer, extend the range of extra-curricular activities available to all pupils, professional development opportunities for teachers and support staff.

Financial benefits include the opportunity to negotiate more favourable contracts for advertising, waste collection, grounds maintenance and so forth.

In addition teachers and support staff could be appointed to work across the two schools to provide greater flexibility again to support subjects and promote extra curricular activities.

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Given the progress of this exciting development it was thought it should be shared with you and for you to have the opportunity to reflect on the situation. In due course we will hold a meeting for all interested parties. In the meantime if you have any thoughts or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me. You can do this in person, by phone or by email - brette@ruskin.cheshire.sch.uk

Yours sincerely

Mrs E Brett
Headteacher