

# FAQs

## **What is a free school?**

Free schools are independent, state-funded schools with the same legal status as academies.

## **Will the school be able to make a profit?**

No. The school will be run on a not-for-profit basis by Maiden Erlegh Trust. The school will be run by the Headteacher and their leadership team and they will be answerable to a Local Advisory Board.

## **What does it mean to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education?**

When an academy enters into a Funding Agreement, they effectively enter into a contract between themselves and the Secretary of State for Education. This contract, or Funding Agreement, is how academies are held accountable to the Department for Education.

## **Will funding the school mean there will be less money for the other special and mainstream provision in the area?**

No. Funding for Maiden Erlegh Trust will be worked out equivalent to the funding available to other special schools in the area and it will not reduce the overall funding available.

## **Will Oak Tree School be inspected by Ofsted?**

Yes. The school will be subject to inspection in the same way that other schools are. All new schools are also inspected by Ofsted prior to the school opening and receive ongoing scrutiny from the DfE.

## **How will the school be accountable?**

The school will be run by a Local Advisory Board who will be accountable to the Trustees of Maiden Erlegh Trust. In addition, the school will be accountable to the Secretary of State for Education through the terms of its Funding Agreement. The school will, of course, be accountable day to day to parents/carers and the wider community.

## **Can the Trust still progress with pre-opening the school during a pandemic?**

Yes, the Trust has the capacity to deliver operational and strategic developments during this time. Covid-19 hasn't removed either the need or the capacity to develop future schools to meet the needs of SEND pupils now and for generations to come.

The contractors' work on site to construct the school and the Trust's work on the strategic development and educational planning have been carried out in compliance with Covid guidelines. Furthermore, this consultation will be conducted virtually to ensure the safety of all participants.

**What type of children's needs will be catered for and what interventions will OTS be providing?**

Oak Tree School will cater for children with ASD and/or SEMH needs. The school will provide numerous interventions such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and canine therapy.

**Will children need to have an EHCP finalised before naming the school or would the school admit children whose EHCPs are still being drafted?**

Children will need to have a finalised EHCP to start Oak Tree, but Oak Tree can also play a part in the drafting of the EHCP.

**Will the school have its own governing body within the Trust?**

Maiden Erlegh Trust has a Board of Trustees, but each school in the Trust has a Local Advisory Board that looks after the school in their care and has responsibility for community links.

**How will you share best practice to ensure the school is as good as it can be?**

There is a pre-existing range of age and ability within Maiden Erlegh Trust schools, and the Trust is committed to ensure we are exchanging and sharing of expertise, both formally (e.g CPD, training, conferences), and informally through knowledge sharing.

**What are you doing to ensure there is a voice from the Winnersh community that will be heard?**

Oak Tree School will engage in regular outreach work with all local stakeholders to make sure feedback is heard, and the community's needs are being met.

**How many places will be available in the first year and across which year groups?**

The school will start with filling year 7 (KS3), and then move into year 3 and year 10. While it may not be filled at the beginning we expect to be at capacity rapidly.

**How many children will be in each class?**

Most likely, there will be around 6-8 pupils in each class.

**How will the numbers in each year group work (primary v secondary)?**

The school will be mainly secondary.

**Will there be provision for places to be available at Oak Tree School to start in Year 3, 4, 5 and Years 8 and 9, outside of a usual transition year, for children who are facing learning difficulties such as anxiety, or sensory issues at mainstream?**

Children in a mainstream school would be considered outside of the usual transition year, if there are spaces available.

**What are the timescales regarding the site and building? How long will it take to build the school and when is it likely to open?**

Construction should be starting at the end of summer. The school is planning to open in September 2022.

**When will you start recruitment, and how much staff will you look to recruit?**

Recruitment will begin in Autumn as we will need some posts to be filled during the Spring, with others starting in September 2022. There are likely to be around 120 members of teaching and non-teaching staff when the school is full with 150 pupils.

**Where will the school be located?**

Please find below a map of where the school will be located.



If there are any questions you would like to ask us about Oak Tree School, feel free to email us at [OTSconsultation@maidenerleghtrust.org](mailto:OTSconsultation@maidenerleghtrust.org).

If you would like to receive regular updates about Oak Tree School, please visit our website [www.oaktreeschool.org](http://www.oaktreeschool.org) and complete the [online form](#) to register your interest. The website contains a wealth of information about the school and gives details of future events and opportunities to meet with staff who can answer any questions you may have about Oak Tree School.

Email enquiries: [OTSconsultation@maidenerleghtrust.org](mailto:OTSconsultation@maidenerleghtrust.org)

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