

# **PROPOSED SAXMUNDHAM FREE SCHOOL CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

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## Summary

### What is this document?

Following numerous expressions of support from parents and stakeholders, the Secretary of State for Education has approved a proposal for the establishment of the Saxmundham Free School: a free, non-selective, all-ability secondary school for children aged eleven to sixteen. This document invites your views as to whether the proposal should go ahead.

### Who will run the School?

The campaign to open a Free School in Saxmundham was started by a group of parents and community members, all of whom live and work in the town and surrounding villages. In early 2011 they joined together with the Seckford Foundation (registered charity number 1110964) to develop the proposal. The Seckford Foundation is experienced and expert in running and staffing Woodbridge School, a highly successful independent school also in Suffolk. The Saxmundham Free School (referred to in this document as the "**School**") will be run by the "Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust" (or equivalent successor) (referred to in this document as the "**Trust**"), a limited company with Members and Directors from the Seckford Foundation.

The proposed School will be established by means of a Funding Agreement between the Secretary of State and the Trust in accordance with the Academies Act 2010. It will therefore be a state-funded independent school. It will be subject to the same legal obligations in respect of Special Educational Needs as maintained schools, and it will also comply with the law applying to maintained schools in respect of exclusions.

### What will the School be like?

It is proposed that the School will occupy the premises currently occupied by Saxmundham Middle School, which will close in July 2012 as part of the Schools Organisation Review for Suffolk. Suffolk County Council is the freeholder of the site and has confirmed that it does not have a requirement for it after July 2012. The site is close to Saxmundham town centre.

It is anticipated that the School will open in September 2012 for Years 7, 8 and 9. Eventually there will be four classes (of up to 27 students) in each year group, giving a total of 108 students per year. Students will be grouped in two broad ability bands in Years 7 to 9 but this will not be applied across all subjects. At Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11) some setting may be possible, depending on what teaching staff consider will work best for teaching groups in those subjects.

The School's curriculum will be geared towards success in the English Baccalaureate (a performance measure introduced by the Department for Education linked to a range of core academic subjects). To that end, the curriculum at Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9) will place particular emphasis on English, mathematics and sciences. All students will study French in Year 7, and most will begin Spanish as a second Modern Language in Year 8. History, geography, and religious studies/ethics will be compulsory to the end of Key Stage 3. Students will also be offered opportunities through other subjects in the curriculum to develop technological, creative, expressive, aesthetic and physical experiences and skills.

At Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11), all students except those with Individual Learning Plans will be expected to choose the following core subjects: English language and literature (two GCSEs);

mathematics; science and additional science (two GCSEs); French or Spanish; history or geography. In addition, most students will choose an additional two optional subjects from subjects including the following: religious studies/philosophy and ethics; a second modern language; art; drama; music; design and technology: resistant materials; design and technology: textiles; design and technology: food technology.

The School's term dates will run in line with local education authorities' term dates to avoid issues during holiday periods for parents/carers with children at different schools. The school day will be extended. It is anticipated that, following a breakfast club from 08.00 to 08.30, registration will take place at 08:30 and an "enrichment" (sixth) daily session will end the compulsory school day at 16.35. Sessions will be timetabled for 60 or 65 minutes, which it is hoped will be attractive to part-time staff. It is planned that, an optional seventh session (from 16.35 to 17.35) will be used for extra-curricular activities such as sport or drama, initially for two days per week.

The School will attach particular importance to pastoral care. For example, parents will be informed at the start of every year of the names and contact details of the teachers who have direct responsibility for the pastoral care of their children at school. To ensure that Year 7 receives optimum care, a specialist Head of Year 7 will be appointed to liaise with local feeder primary schools and parents and plan transition activities. Years 8 and 9 will have a pastoral head called the Head of Lower School. On the advice of the Head of Year 7, students will be divided into eight tutor groups, each with a mix of students from Years 8 and 9. On moving into Year 10, students will share tutor groups with Year 11 students. Again there will be eight tutor groups each with a specialist Year 10 and 11 tutor, all under the leadership of the Head of Upper School. The Trust believes that the interchange between the year groups which these mixed groups will allow, will encourage the greater coherence of the whole student body.

The School will provide a safe and caring environment promoting mutual tolerance and respect, where any form of bullying is unacceptable. Clear rules setting out standards of behaviour will be issued to every student when they start. Each student and his or her parent/carer will be requested to sign a contract with the School setting out those standards. The School will raise self-esteem by ensuring that the academic, sporting and artistic achievements of all students, of whatever ability, are recognised and celebrated. Positive performance will be reinforced through a reward system.

Admission arrangements will be set out in the agreement between the Trust and the Secretary of State establishing the School and will be consistent with the Schools admission code and the School admission appeals code as they apply to maintained schools. For the academic year 2012/13, the School will admit a maximum of 54 students in Year 7, 81 in Year 8, and 81 in Year 9, rising in 2013/14 to 108 students per year. In the event of oversubscription, after the admission of students with Statements of Special Educational Needs where the School is named on the statement, the following criteria will be applied in the following order to determine priority:

1. Children in public care;
2. Children with a sibling attending the School at the time of the application;
3. Other children by distance from the School, with priority for admission given to children who live nearest to the School as the crow flies.

A waiting list will be maintained up to the end of the term after the beginning of each school year for the School and mid-year admissions will be possible.

The School will require children to wear a school uniform (including sports kit during PE lessons). All compulsory items will be reasonably priced. In due course a second-hand uniform shop will be run selling quality, nearly new items.

The Saxmundham Middle School site is readily accessible on foot and by bike. It is also well-served by public bus and rail services. For those students who qualify for free home to school transport provided by the local authority, the Trust is committed to exploring affordable and viable means of transporting students to and from the School with Suffolk County Council. However, Suffolk County Council's Home to School Transport Policy is currently under review and the new policy will not be in place until 2013/14. The Trust is therefore working with the Council to find a workable temporary policy.

No student will be excluded from taking part in educational school trips and visits due to an inability to pay. The School will take part in the Suffolk-wide musical instrument loan schemes.

Community engagement will be at the heart of the School's ethos. Using the experience of the Seckford Foundation, the School's facilities will be used to provide learning programmes for the local community, in particular those who are disadvantaged or marginalised. The Trust also intends that students will go into the community to work on volunteer projects, obtain work experience and get an understanding of life outside school and home.

### Should the School go ahead?

On the basis of the research it has carried out and the feedback from parents and others received so far, the Trust firmly believes that there is a need and demand for a school of the standard of the proposed School. Although the population of Saxmundham has doubled in the past 20 years, there will not be any 11+ educational provision in the town unless action is taken. The proposed School has already received strong support from parents and the community and, as at 14 December 2011, Suffolk County Council had received at least 104 expressions of interest for places at the School in September 2012. The Trust believes that the nature of the School will result in the provision of an extremely high quality education for its students.

The Trust has identified a number of impacts, positive and negative, to other schools and educational institutions in Suffolk, as well as impacts on the local community, on pages 27 & 28 below.

The Trust recognises that there will be those with concerns and questions about the proposal. Some Frequently Asked Questions are answered on page 29 below.

### What to do next

Before the School opens, it will be necessary for the Secretary of State for Education to enter into what are known as "Academy arrangements" (a contract between the Secretary of State and the Trust under which the Trust agrees to establish, maintain and run the School and the Secretary of State agrees to provide funding for it).

We want to know **whether you think those "Academy arrangements" should be entered into, and the reasons for your views**. We are particularly interested in the impact (positive or negative) which

you think the proposed School would have on other schools and educational establishments in Suffolk. Details of how to respond, the length of the consultation period, further events during the consultation period, and who can respond, are provided at Appendix 1 below.

A website for the proposed School has been set up at [www.saxmundhamfreeschool.org.uk](http://www.saxmundhamfreeschool.org.uk). The website provides information about the nature of the School, explains how to express an interest for a place at the School in September 2012, and provides answers to some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

## **What is this document?**

### Background to consultation

On 10 October 2011, the Secretary of State for Education approved the application made by the Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust (referred to in this document as the "**Trust**") to establish an Academy, or "Free School", (referred to in this document as the "**School**") in the Suffolk area. Before the School opens, it will be necessary for the Secretary of State to enter into what are known as "Academy arrangements" (a contract between the Secretary of State and the Trust under which the Trust agrees to establish, maintain and run the School and the Secretary of State agrees to provide funding for it).

This document forms part of a consultation process, undertaken by the Trust, to decide **whether those "Academy arrangements" should be entered into**. It provides details about the nature of the proposed School and invites responses as to whether it should be set up. The Trust would like your views generally on that question. It would also, specifically, like your views on what the impact of establishing the School would be likely to be on maintained schools, Academies and institutions within the further education sector in Suffolk.

Some consultation has already taken place. Following the approval of the application, the Trust held a public meeting on 13 October 2011 at which the School was described and discussed, with questions asked and answered. This consultation document, published on 21 December 2011, will be followed by a further public meeting on 19 January 2012, in the Market Hall, High Street, Saxmundham at which you are invited to ask questions about, and provide responses to, what is proposed. In addition, it is intended to publish responses to Frequently Asked Questions during the course of the consultation period, as appropriate.

### The consultation period

The consultation period is expected to last seven weeks. You should therefore assume that the last date on which responses to the consultation will be accepted will be on 8 February 2012 (by 1700hrs). The consultation timetable is set out in full in Appendix 1 to this document. Please note that responses received after the closing date may not be considered.

### Who can respond?

This document has been made publicly available on the internet at [www.saxmundhamfreeschool.org.uk](http://www.saxmundhamfreeschool.org.uk). Consultation responses are invited from any person with an interest in the proposal. Hard copies of this document have been made available to particular groups, but it is not the case that only these groups can respond. All responses received by the deadline will be conscientiously taken into account and carefully considered.

### How to respond

In addition to attending and participating in the public meeting scheduled for 19 January 2012, explained above, consultees are invited to respond to this document (by providing comments or questions, as appropriate) by any of the following means:

- By e-mail to [enquiries@saxmundhamfreeschool.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@saxmundhamfreeschool.org.uk)
- By letter or in other hard-copy format to Saxmundham Free School, c/o The Seckford Foundation, Burkitt Road, Woodbridge, IP12 4JJ.

## **Introduction**

### **What are Free Schools?**

Free Schools are state-funded independent schools, set up under the Academies Act 2010. State-funded independent schools have existed for several decades. A Free School is a type of Academy. Academies have been being established since 2000, but have generally been formed by transferring an existing school to Academy status. The expression “Free School” usually describes a school which is set up in an area where there is demonstrable parental demand. A Free School is not the same as a maintained or independent school transferring to Academy status; it is a new school altogether.

Where (as in this case) a Free School is not proposed as a special school, it must have characteristics that include that:

- it has a balanced and broadly based curriculum
- it provides education for students of different abilities and
- it provides education for students who are wholly or mainly drawn from the area in which the school is situated.

The proprietor of the Free School must also comply with legal obligations in respect of Special Educational Needs. No charge may be made for admission or attendance at a Free School.

Free Schools are legally underpinned by “Academy arrangements”, a type of contract defined in the Academy Act 2010, which is made between the person setting up the Free School and the Secretary of State for Education. The Department for Education publishes “Model Funding Agreements”, with a number of relevant Annexes, on its website, which can be accessed at the following web address: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools/guidance/a0074737/free-schools-model-funding-agreement>. These documents comprise the likely nature of the contract which will exist between the Trust and the Secretary of State if the proposed School is established.

Various different groups of people can come together to enter into “Academy arrangements” with the Secretary of State. The nature of the group in this case is explained below (see “Who would run the Saxmundham Free School?”).

### **What is the overall vision for the School?**

The School will be a truly local school which will welcome students aged eleven to sixteen of all abilities and will give each an equal chance to follow a sound academic curriculum, underpinned by high quality pastoral care. By focusing the curriculum on core subjects as encouraged by the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), a clear goal for all students will be provided and one that can be easily understood and supported by parents.

The Trust believes that the School has the potential to raise standards, not only of education in the town, but throughout the local pyramid of schools, both by the quality of its students’ achievement and the competition provided to other schools.

Detail about the School is provided in this document.

### Where did the idea for the School come from?

The campaign to open a new secondary school in Saxmundham was started by a group of parents and community members, all of whom live and work in the town and surrounding villages. They founded Fromus Valley Educational Trust, a not-for-profit charitable organisation specifically for the purpose of applying to open a Free School in Saxmundham.

In early 2011, after extensive discussions, Fromus Valley Educational Trust joined with the Seckford Foundation (referred to below as the "**Foundation**"), a registered charity (registered charity number 1110964) (<http://www.seckford-foundation.org.uk>), to develop the proposal for the School.

The Foundation was created in 1587 and has been educating young people for more than 400 years since that date through the provision of Woodbridge School. Woodbridge School is judged by the Independent School Inspectorate to be exceptional in many areas, including the strength of its community links. The Foundation is also an experienced employer: as at 31 August 2010, it employed a total of 329 staff across a range of roles including teachers, care staff and administrative and support staff. The Foundation is experienced and expert in running a successful school and has access to a full range of professional support.

### Who will run the School?

The application for the School now approved by the Secretary of State was made by the Trust. The Trust is an "Academy Trust" and it, or an equivalent successor which also fulfils the legal requirements of an "Academy Trust", will run the School.

### What is an Academy Trust?

In law, an Academy Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee, comprising of Directors and Members. The Members play a similar role to that of shareholders in a commercial company (although, for example, they have no entitlement to the assets of the company and no right to receive profits from it). The Directors are responsible for the day to day management and administration of the Trust, and will also be the Governors of the School.

The Chairman of the Foundation is currently a Director of the Trust. The Director of the Foundation and the Headmaster of Woodbridge School are also currently Directors of the Trust, both of whom are expected to become Governors of the School when it opens. Ultimately the Governors are expected to comprise of:

- up to eleven Governors appointed by the Members
- the Headteacher of the School (with, potentially, some other members of staff at the School)
- (possibly) one person appointed by Suffolk County Council
- A minimum of two parents of students at the School.

At present, the Foundation itself, the Chairman of the Foundation, the Chairman of the Foundation Finance and Audit Committee, and a member of the local group of parents and community members supporting the establishment of the School, are Members of the Trust. Various other Members of the Academy Trust running the School will be appointed when the School is set up, including up to six people appointed by the Foundation, (possibly) one person appointed by the Secretary of State and the Chairman of the Governors of the School.

The Foundation's officers, staff and advisors have agreed to make themselves available to lead and direct the creation of the School. It is also envisaged that the Foundation will supply support services, such as finance, grounds management, building maintenance and human resources management to the Trust where appropriate.

## What will the School be like?

### Education

#### Opening

It is anticipated that the School will open in September 2012 for entry to Years 7, 8 and 9. At the end of the School year 2012-2013, the oldest year group will move up (i.e. Year 9 would become Year 10) and another group of children will be admitted to Year 7 until the School eventually has a full quota of five year groups.

#### Size

The School will accept up to a maximum of 108 students per year group. Further detail as to individual class size and structure is provided below.

### Curriculum

#### *Key Stage 3*

Particular features of the Key Stage 3 curriculum (Years 7 to 9) will be as follows:

- enhanced curriculum time for English and mathematics in Year 7
- two modern languages in Years 8 and 9 for all students (except those with particular learning difficulties)
- increased curriculum time allocated to the sciences
- history and geography to have increased emphasis in Years 8 and 9
- religious studies/ethics lessons to encourage discussion skills and values
- range of creative, aesthetic, expressive subjects
- each school day to have an "enrichment period" for all
- curriculum designed to provide a solid foundation for success in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc)
- innovative and quality Personal Health and Social Education (PHSE) and citizenship provision
- physical education.

The curriculum at Key Stage 3 will place particular emphasis on the subjects which comprise the English Baccalaureate (referred to in this document as "**EBacc**"). The EBacc is a performance measure introduced by the Department for Education, rather than a qualification in itself. It recognises where students have secured a C grade or better across a core of academic subjects comprising: English; mathematics; science; a language; and history or geography.

To ensure the best possible start to study at this level, Year 7 English (which will also include drama) and mathematics will be allocated nearly half of curriculum time. All students will study English language skills and literature.

All students will also study French as their first modern language, and in Year 8 all will begin Spanish, apart from those whose language work in Year 7 shows very little progress, or who have special or particular educational needs or disabilities which hinder linguistic progress. These students will be offered intervention literacy support instead.

History, geography, and religious studies/ethics will all be compulsory to the end of Key Stage 3, with more time devoted to history and geography in Years 8 and 9 to prepare for success in the EBacc. The wealth of local sites of regional or national historic and geographical importance will allow learning in the humanities to be developed "in the field". It is envisaged that sites such as Dunwich (coastal erosion) and Sutton Hoo (King Rædwald's burial ship) will enliven the teaching of these subjects.

Students will be offered opportunities through other subjects in the curriculum to develop technological, creative, expressive, aesthetic and physical experiences and skills. In Year 7, design will incorporate the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) and will become a discrete subject in Years 8 and 9 in three strands (resistant materials, textiles, and food technology). The ICT programme of study will ensure that all students have the skills to use ICT for their other studies and to use the "managed learning environment" (comprising of on-line learning resources) which the School intends to use. Those students whose skills after the first year are not deemed sufficiently secure will be offered further ICT lessons in Years 8 and 9.

To ensure the best possible chance of success at GCSE, subjects in Year 9, particularly English and mathematics will include work at GCSE level to introduce students early to GCSE standard.

The Trust believes that high quality health and social education will be vital. This will be provided by professionals (for example in the areas of health, community policing, and cyber safety) who will deliver half-day sessions, off timetable, to all year groups once a term. These sessions will be followed up by discussion with tutors in form time.

#### *Key Stage 4*

Particular features of the Key Stage 4 curriculum (Years 10 and 11) will be as follows:

- enhanced allocation of time for English, mathematics, science and modern foreign language
- the majority of students guided to study GCSEs eligible for the EBacc
- the majority of students to be able to enter for at least nine GCSE subjects (five EBacc subjects plus literature, additional science and two optional subjects)
- religious studies/ethics, citizenship, careers guidance and PHSE for all students
- Functional Skills will be included within English and mathematics for foundation students
- students with proven aptitude may opt for two modern languages
- additional optional subjects will be available in the "enrichment periods", allowing for ten or eleven GCSEs
- form period for careers guidance, controversial issues and thinking skills
- innovative PHSE and citizenship provision
- physical education (although not at GCSE unless the "enrichment period" is used).

All students, except those with Individual Learning Plans, will be expected to choose the following core subjects:

- English language and literature (two GCSEs)
- mathematics
- science and additional science (two GCSEs)
- French or Spanish
- history or geography

English will continue to be a key subject, with all students being prepared for both language and literature GCSEs. The scheme of work will build on the GCSE work already started in Year 9. For those who are unlikely to achieve at least grade C at GCSE, Functional Skills will be taught. In those classes with students who have real difficulty with English, learning assistants will be deployed.

Mathematics will benefit from a generous allocation of time throughout Key Stages 3 and 4. Functional Skills will also be offered to those in the less able group, who will also benefit from support from learning support assistants.

Sciences (physics, chemistry, biology) will be taught for a dual award GCSE within the main curriculum. Students who are particularly interested in taking their scientific knowledge further will be able to take the three sciences as individual GCSE subjects through use of the "enrichment period" as described below.

Students (except those on Individual Learning Plans) will have to choose a modern language to GCSE (either French or Spanish). The Trust believes that the teaching of French and Spanish will be enhanced by opportunities to participate in the two established exchange programmes (to Clermont-Ferrand and Pamplona) run by Woodbridge School.

In addition, students will have to select either history or geography (or may do both).

Most students will also choose an additional two optional subjects from the following:

- religious studies/philosophy and ethics
- a second modern language
- art
- drama
- music
- design and technology: resistant materials
- design and technology: textiles
- design and technology: food technology

An "enrichment period" (period 6 each day: see below) will allow for the provision of several other GCSE subjects. These will include:

- physical education (as a GCSE)
- information and communication technology (ICT)
- separate science GCSEs
- Latin

In Years 10 and 11, the form period will be used by tutors to introduce careers guidance, study skills and strands of the citizenship programme.

### The school day

The School will run each day from Monday to Friday. The School will attempt to keep in line with the local education authority's term dates, conferring with the other schools in the local pyramid to avoid complicated issues during holiday periods for parents/carers with children at different schools.

Thus, the school year will run from September until July, with three terms further divided into six half-terms.

It is anticipated that school days will be arranged as follows:

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
0800-0830	<i>breakfast club</i>
0830-0840	<i>registration</i>
0840-0945	<b>session 1</b>
0945-1045	<b>session 2</b>
1045-1105	<i>break</i>
1105-1210	<b>session 3</b>
1210-1310	<b>session 4</b>
1310-1420	<i>lunch/clubs</i>
1420-1430	<i>registration</i>
1430-1530	<b>session 5</b>
1535-1635	<b>session 6</b> (compulsory “enrichment” session)
1635-1735	<i>(optional) session 7 (initially two days per week)</i>

Each session will be timetabled for 60 or 65 minutes, ensuring that it is attractive to part-time staff. The compulsory timetable is designed to comprise 30 lessons including a sixth lesson which will be used in a variety of ways to support and extend learning, for example:

- form/tutor periods
- year group assemblies
- extra ICT support at beyond Year 8
- additional subjects at GCSE (e.g. ICT, separate sciences, minority subjects)
- additional language practical sessions for GCSE

The optional session 7 will initially be used for extra-curricular activities such as:

- sports practices
- music ensembles
- school newspaper
- subject clubs (e.g. drama, art, young engineers)
- sports leadership award

The proposed School budget will allow for this session to take place on two evenings per week, as it will involve (for instance) additional school bus costs and employing additional coaching staff.

Academic structure

Eventually there will be four classes in each year group, each of an average of 27, giving a total of 108 students.

There will be two broad ability bands in Years 7 to 9. This allows some flexibility for the timetable but will not be applied across all subjects so that there is as little segregation of students according to ability as possible. These bands will be created according to performance data from the feeder primary schools, performance in national SATs tests and the baseline tests taken at the start of Key Stage 3.

The model for Key Stage 3 could therefore look like this:

	Y7	Y8	Y9	2 ability bands	Whole year ability
<b>band X</b> -----	2 classes -----	2 classes -----	2 classes -----	in upper and lower bands for e.g.: English mathematics science	several single period subjects e.g.: music art
<b>band Y</b>	2 classes	2 classes	2 classes	French history geography (the EBacc suite of subjects)	PE design will be grouped across the year and timetabled together.

The above model will allow flexibility of grouping so that there could be set 1 and set 2 (ability groups) in the upper band, but two parallel classes in the lower band. Groupings will be decided on a variety of factors of each individual year group, to ensure the best combination of students in each class to produce the best possible learning environment. This model will also allow mathematics to be set within the band, for example from Year 8. In the initial years, setting will depend on staff availability.

At Key Stage 4, depending on staffing numbers, some setting of children into ability groups may be possible in Years 10 and 11. The aim is for subject leaders to have control over the grouping of students in these two years. They may prefer to put students into groups 1 to 4 in order of ability or to adopt a mixture of parallel groups; whichever works best for teaching groups in the subject should be accepted.

### Pastoral care

The Trust believes that for students to succeed academically, they have to feel supported, secure and respected as individuals. To ensure that the School becomes a confident, constructive and happy place, students will receive excellent pastoral care in a small school setting which will enable the staff to get to know each of their students as individuals. The School will look to develop a partnership with the families of all its students, and clear and open channels of communication will facilitate the sharing of information vital to each student's well-being. Parents will be informed at the start of every year of the names and contact details of the teachers who have direct responsibility for the pastoral care of their children at School. Attention will be given to School/home communication through the students' homework diaries as well as electronically. If anyone within the School has reasons for concern about the well-being of one of its students, school policy will require them to share these with the designated safeguarding member of staff.

To ensure that Year 7 receives optimum care, a specialist Head of Year 7 will be appointed to liaise with local feeder primary schools and parents, and plan transition activities. There will be four tutor groups, each with a tutor who will become specialised in this transition year group. Careful induction of students and introduction of tutors to parents, as well as clear communications between home and school will ensure that all students are supported.

Years 8 and 9 will have a pastoral head called the Head of Lower School. On the advice of the Head of Year 7, students will be divided into eight tutor groups, each with a mix of students from Years 8 and 9. The point of these mixed groups is to allow interchange between the year groups, encouraging the older year to realise their role as mentors and sharing experience, helping the student body to cohere. For instance, it is hoped that being in a group with older students who have already embarked on some GCSE work and thinking about GCSE options will help Year 8 to see their own work and development in more of a long-term context. Tutors will become specialised in these Lower School forms.

On moving in to Year 10, students will share tutor groups with Year 11 students. There will be eight tutor groups each with a specialist Year 10 and 11 tutor, all under the leadership of the Head of Upper School. The holder of this post will have key responsibilities for helping Years 10 and 11 develop an awareness of the world of education and training opportunities post sixteen and the world of work beyond that. It is believed that there will also be academic benefits in the tutor groups being mixed years: Year 10 will become aware, through the drip-feeding of information to them by Year 11, of the choices to be made about the next stage of their education.

### Provision for children with Special Educational Needs

Children have special educational needs (SEN) if they require special provision in order to achieve levels commensurate with their ability. Under the Academies Act 2010, Free Schools must be under equivalent legal obligations in respect of SEN as governing bodies of maintained schools. Annex C to the Secretary of State's Model Funding Agreement deals with this.

The proposed School will therefore assume responsibilities towards children with SEN equivalent to those held by maintained schools, and according with the SEN Code of Practice and the County Policy Statement on SEN. It will maintain a SEN policy, which will include processes for the identification and monitoring of students with SEN, and an identification of the physical and staff resources required to offer additional support to facilitate student access to the curriculum.

All parents of students with SEN will be treated as partners and supported to play an active and valued role in their children's education. The Trust also appreciates that young people with SEN often have a unique knowledge of their own needs and views about what sort of intervention they require helping them make the most of their education. They will therefore be encouraged to participate in all the decision-making processes including annual and other reviews.

The School will appoint a person responsible for coordinating day-to-day SEN provision - the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (referred to below as "**SENCO**"), who's duties will include ensuring the smooth transition into the school of children already with statements.

In the event that a student leaving primary school has needs which have not previously been identified, the School will aim to make an early identification and assessment of the child, put together a plan for meeting his/her needs in consultation with the student, his/her parents or carers and the relevant outside agencies, and then provide the child with the relevant level of additional support. The School will ensure that the register for SEN is kept updated.

A member of the SEN team will be an experienced Leading Teacher for Gifted and Talented Education. S/he will work with the teaching and support staff to ensure that the nurturing of aptitude and talent throughout the curriculum is built in to the work of all subjects and that individual gifted and talented students are identified and provided with opportunities, both in school and beyond, to extend their learning and development.

The School will aim for all students to have maximum possible access to the full curriculum. Modification to the subjects taken by an individual will be based on an awareness of each student's needs and his/her potential and will ensure that access to the curriculum is as free and unfettered as the school can make it.

Where appropriate, Individual Learning Plans will be produced specifically for students with additional needs. The level of support will depend upon the needs of each individual student and could range from one-to-one support to small group work in, or outside, the classroom and will be delivered by learning support assistants and higher level teaching assistants working alongside the subject teachers.

#### *Student development and achievement*

Each student will have his/her ability benchmarked on entry using baseline testing methods developed by the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM, University of Durham) and successfully employed by Woodbridge School. The aspiration for the whole School will be that at least 75% of students show greater progress than would normally be expected. In addition, as the curriculum of the School focuses on subjects that contribute to the EBacc, the whole school target will be that 50% of students taking the first GCSEs (in 2015) will meet the requirements of the EBacc (i.e. a C Grade or better in GCSEs in: English; mathematics; science; a language; and history or geography).

#### *School uniform*

Students at the School will be expected to wear a school uniform (including sports kit for PE lessons). The uniform will be designed to ensure that compulsory items are reasonably priced. The list of compulsory items will be as limited as possible, and will not require purchase of more costly items such as hockey boots and/or a rugby shirt, even if a child plays for a school team. In due course, the

School will run a second-hand uniform shop selling quality, nearly new items. It is also anticipated that the Foundation's grant-making programme and other charities will help parents fund school uniform (which may include provision of a spread payments scheme).

#### Other benefits

*Equipment loan.* The School will take part in the Suffolk-wide musical instrument loan schemes, which will ensure that no student is excluded from achieving his or her musical potential. Additionally, when students require specialist equipment for sports or music to develop a talent, the Foundation's Grant Programme will consider applications from those excluded on economic grounds. The Foundation has a proven track record of providing such help to students from other maintained schools.

*School trip support.* No student will be excluded from taking part in educational school trips and visits due to an inability to pay.

#### Behaviour

The School will provide a safe and caring environment which promotes mutual tolerance and respect, where any form of bullying is unacceptable. Students will be expected to be well behaved, respectful individuals, whilst being allowed the room to be children. Clear rules setting out standards of behaviour will be issued to every student when they start and will also be included in students' "weekly planners" to constantly reinforce the standards of behaviour required. In addition, each student and a parent/carer representative will be asked to sign a contract with the School, to include principles such as that:

- disruption of other children's learning will not be tolerated
- where students fail to achieve the required behavioural standards, or where they behave in an uncooperative or irresponsible manner, disciplinary sanctions will be applied
- initially sanctions shall include revocation of privileges. Other sanctions may include detention, extra work, being placed on special report or withdrawal from lessons
- parents shall be involved if the behavioural issue is deemed serious, or is repeated
- exclusion shall be enforced only where misdemeanours are considered grave and/or all other attempts to improve behaviour have failed.

The School will follow the law and government guidance on exclusions which apply to maintained schools. Annex D of the Secretary of State's Model Funding Agreement deals with this.

The School will expect that homework should be completed to the expected standard and within the timescales specified and will ask parents/carers to assist children in managing their homework planning. The School will hold parent/teacher meetings at which issues such as performance and behaviour may be discussed. Children will usually be invited to attend these meetings; the Trust believes this will help in ensuring that all discussions are fair and include the child's perspective.

The Trust believes that education includes not only dealing appropriately with poor behaviour but rewarding achievement. The School will ensure that the academic, sporting and artistic achievements of all students, of whatever ability, are recognised and celebrated. Positive performance will be reinforced through a reward system. The School wants to establish a learning environment which is both enjoyable and provides a feeling of belonging.

### Attendance

By law, all schools must differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absences in the registers. If the child is absent for any reason other than ill health, religious observance or a failure of the official school transport system, the School will expect parents/carers to inform the School before the child is absent.

In exceptional circumstances only, the School may give permission for students to be absent from School where parents have no alternative than to take annual holidays during school time (for example to children of parents employed in the farming or power generation industry where shift work and seasonal commitments may apply).

The Trust considers that the link between absenteeism and poor academic performance is proven. The school will set clear targets for regular attendance which will be monitored. Instances of concern will be investigated and discussed with parents, carers and others as appropriate.

### Community Engagement

As explained above, the idea of opening a Free School in Saxmundham was conceived by members of the local community. Community involvement (both of the community in the School, and the School in the community) is therefore at the very core of the proposal.

The Trust recognises that families of students are part of the wider School community and will keep them informed about the School through regular bulletins.

The Trust intends to invite visitors into the School to talk to students, supporting learning and offer insight into the world of work, other faiths and nationalities.

The School facilities will be used to provide learning programmes for the community, in particular those who are disadvantaged or marginalised. For example, this may include using the food technology room to deliver healthy eating programmes and the sports grounds to provide activities for diverting young people away from anti-social behaviour.

The Trust also intends that students will go into the community to work on volunteer projects, gain work experience and an understanding of life outside school and home. For instance:

- the Trust aims to build on the established Eco-School status of Saxmundham Middle School and the school garden to link with local food producers
- the Trust aims to extend links with local police community liaison officers – keeping safe, being aware of the safety of others, cycling safety etc
- the Trust aims to work with local health care providers to ensure children understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle – visits from a dentist, school nurse, smoking cessation nurse, drug awareness councillors, sexual health councillors etc

### Admissions policy

The admission arrangements for the School will form part of the agreement establishing the school between the Trust and the Secretary of State. The latest version of the anticipated admission requirements as agreed by the Department for Education are at Appendix 2 to this document.

The key points, in summary, are as follows.

The School will be a non-selective inclusive school so the admissions policy and criteria will be minimal. Subject to oversubscription, every valid applicant who wishes to attend the School will have a place.

The Trust will adopt practices and arrangements that are consistent with the Schools Admission Code and the School Admission Appeals Code as they apply to maintained schools. In addition, children who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs which specifically names the School will be offered a place at the School in accordance with any legal requirement in place at the time.

The admission arrangements will be managed by Suffolk County Council so that parents will apply via the normal Suffolk Schools Application process and can include the School alongside others as their first, second or third choice.

The School will adhere to its Published Admission Number (PAN). The agreed PAN for the year 2012/2013 is 54 students in Year 7, 81 in Year 8, and 81 in Year 9, rising in 2013/14 to 108 students per year.

Where the number of applications for admission is greater than the Published Admission Number, applications will be considered against the criteria set out below (referred to in this document as the "**Oversubscription Criteria**"). After the admission of students with statements of Special Educational Needs where the School is named on the statement, the Oversubscription Criteria will be applied in the following order:

1. "Looked after" children (i.e. those in local authority care or who are being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services functions), or children previously "looked after" but who have since become subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order as defined in relevant legislation.
2. Children with a sibling attending the School at the time of application (defined for those purposes as children living as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers and sisters).
3. Other children by distance from the School, with priority for admission given to children who live nearest to the School as the crow flies. Distances will be measured from the main entrance of the child's home to the main entrance of the School.

Random allocation will be used as a tie-break in category "3" above to decide who has highest priority for admission if the distance between two children's homes and the School is the same.

The School will maintain a waiting list, which will operate until the final term of the School year in any year in which the School is oversubscribed. If a place becomes available, it will be offered to children on the waiting list in accordance with the Oversubscription Criteria. Places will not be offered based on the date on which names were placed on the list. Waiting lists will not be held for school places for mid-year applications. Decisions will be subject to an appeals procedure.

Where places are available the School will consider mid-year applications. Where mid-year applications are received resulting in oversubscription, the Oversubscription Criteria will apply. Decisions will be subject to an appeals procedure.

### Inspection

The School will be subject to the same inspection framework as maintained schools and will therefore be inspected by Ofsted.

### Staffing

#### The teaching staff

It is anticipated that the teaching staff will be structured as follows:

- The School will have a leadership team comprising a Headteacher and two Deputy Heads, one with responsibility for academic matters and one with responsibility for pastoral matters. The Academic Deputy Head will act as the line manager for those members of teaching staff with teaching and learning leadership responsibilities (referred to in this document as "**subject leaders**"). The Pastoral Deputy Head will be the line manager for those with pastoral responsibilities (see below).
- There will be a Head of Year 7 and a Head of Lower School (Years 8 and 9) who will be appointed from the start. The Head of Year 7 will be the line manager of four Year 7 tutors with particular responsibility for marketing, liaison with primary schools, and the induction of new cohort of students each year. The Head of Lower School will be the line manager of eight tutors, each with mixed Years 8 and 9 form groups. S/he will have particular responsibility for the guidance of students through the GCSE options process.
- A Head of Upper School (Years 10 and 11) will subsequently be appointed as students move into those year groups. In due course, s/he will act as the line manager for eight tutors, each with mixed Years 10 and 11 form groups. S/he will have particular responsibility for careers, further education and training guidance.
- Subject leaders will also be appointed from the School's inception. There will be two grades of subject leader. The subject leaders in English, mathematics, the science subjects and Special Educational Needs will be offered the grade of TLR1. The subject leaders in modern languages, humanities, and the physical and creative curricula will be offered the grade of TLR2.
- A SENCO will be appointed from the School's inception. The SENCO will have Qualified Teacher Status and be appropriately qualified in SEN matters. It is expected that s/he will manage a team of two higher level teaching assistants, six learning assistants (with additional qualifications), and three other learning assistants (or more, depending on the number of students with Statements of SEN).
- Over time, the number of teaching and teaching support staff will grow as student numbers increase. It is anticipated that the School will have approximately twenty full time equivalent teaching and teaching support staff in the school year 2012/2013, rising to forty in the School year 2018/2019.

It is envisaged that some of the "enrichment period" subjects, e.g. Latin, may be staffed in a variety of ways. Part-time staff may be brought in from Woodbridge School, or through distance learning via the Schools' learning platforms.

### The non-teaching staff

It is anticipated that non-teaching staff will include a business manager, supported by an administrative team, together with a caretaker, cleaning staff and catering personnel. Some of these personnel may be shared with other schools supported or operated by the Foundation.

In particular:

- there will be a business manager who will be responsible for the non-teaching staff based locally
- the duties of administrative staff will include activities such as registration and attendance
- the caretaker will be responsible for site security
- it is anticipated that a number of support functions, such as finance, grounds management, building maintenance and human resources management will be provided by the Foundation at cost.

It is envisaged that initially there will be approximately nine full time equivalent non-teaching staff, rising to eighteen by the school year 2018/2019.

### Recruitment

In all cases a job description and person specification detailing the competencies required for the role will be created. The grade of the role for the purposes of allocating pay and benefits to the role will be considered. In the case of all staff, an appropriate amount of time will be allowed for induction training and team building exercises. Both teaching and non-teaching staff will be recruited on the understanding that they will need to be employed at least a month before the start of the first term. The leadership team will be employed to enable them to start (funds allowing) at least six weeks in advance of term starting.

### Site and premises

#### General

It is intended that the School will occupy the site currently occupied by Saxmundham Middle School, which will close in July 2012 as part of the Schools Organisation Review for Suffolk. The address of the site is: Seaman Avenue, Saxmundham, Suffolk, IP17 1DZ. The current freeholder of the site is Suffolk County Council. The Council has confirmed that it does not have a requirement for the site after July 2012. The process of securing the site is being conducted by the Department for Education and Partnership for Schools (the Government's delivery agent for capital investment programmes for schools).

The site is close to Saxmundham town centre and is readily accessible for children from the local area (see above).

The premises were originally built in the 1950s as a home for a secondary modern school. This heritage means that the premises were built to accommodate students up to the age of fifteen and that the School has classrooms and communal areas designed for children older than those currently at middle school.

In the Trust's view, the premises are suitable and in fair condition and meet the educational vision of the School. The premises are sufficient to accommodate in the region of 350 students. Outside space, including a sports field and tennis courts is adequate. Overall, the site is 4.29 hectares (42900 m<sup>2</sup>). The precise location of the proposed site is identified below.



Proposed site for Saxmundham Free School

The Trust considers that the condition and suitability of the existing buildings on the site are broadly fit for purpose but refurbishment and an element of new build will be required to provide facilities for the long term operation of the School. It is envisaged that the increase in student numbers over time, together with teaching the higher year GCSE groups, will necessitate a number of changes, and reconfiguration will be needed to provide the internal classroom areas necessary to deliver the curriculum.

The site has the advantage of having space available to extend the existing buildings, or to provide facilities in temporary accommodation for the short term.

#### Disabled access

The premises at the proposed site for the School are fully adapted to ensure accessibility for disabled students, benefiting from a lift for access to the upper floors of the building, two wheelchair accessible toilets, one of which is of sufficient size and already fitted with the necessary drainage to be converted into a disabled access shower and changing facility.

## Transport to school

The proposed site for the School is easily accessible by a variety of means:

### By Foot/cycle

The proposed site is located to the south west of Saxmundham and is readily accessible for parents and children who are able to walk/cycle to/from homes in the town. Cycle racks are provided on site for users to store cycles securely.

### Car

The proposed site has a large area directly in front of the main entrance to the building which serves as a “drop off” zone for parents who wish to drive their children to/from school.

### Bus

The proposed site is well serviced by school and public bus services. The site is accessed by a looped one way entrance and exit driveway. This provides coaches and buses with a turning circle and drop off area within the School’s grounds, giving ready access to the main entrance and reception area.

### Rail (Saxmundham Station)

Saxmundham railway station is approximately a ten minute walk from the proposed site. From the north, a regular rail service is available from Lowestoft. From the south, a regular rail service is available from Woodbridge.

### Free Home to School Transport

For those students who qualify for free home to school transport provided by the local authority the Trust is committed to exploring affordable and viable means of transporting students to and from the School with Suffolk County Council. However, Suffolk County Council's Home to School Transport Policy is currently under review and the new policy will not be in place until 2013/14. The Trust is therefore working with the Council to find a workable temporary policy.

### School website

Finally, please note that a website for the School has been set up at: <http://www.saxmundhamfreeschool.org.uk/> which all consultees are invited to visit. The website provides information about the nature of the School, explains how to express an interest for a place at the School for September 2012, and provides answers to some Frequently Asked Questions so far.

## **Should there be a Saxmundham Free School?**

### Some arguments in favour of the School

The Trust has made it its business to engage with and listen to the views of parents, including in relation to the desirability of a school such as Saxmundham Free School. The goal of establishing a Free School in Saxmundham has been communicated through a broad range of media including social networking, the Internet, SMS text, local newspapers, radio and television. A public meeting has been held and an informal drop-in centre established in one of the shops in the High Street, giving people, including those who struggle to read printed materials, the chance to question, pledge support and be updated about the campaign. The Trust has also carried out a good deal of research and analysis into issues including need, demand, and standards.

Having listened to the views of stakeholders, the Trust firmly believes that there is an established need and demand for a school of the standard of the proposed School.

### Need

The population of Saxmundham has doubled in the last twenty years. It is about to become home to another housing development and a second supermarket is under construction. These developments, as well as plans for a new reactor at the nearby Sizewell Nuclear Power Station, will see the town's population continue to increase. Yet when the town's middle school closes in 2012, there will be no centre for education for children over the age of eleven.

Saxmundham has been a convenient centre for new house building, but has lacked the increased provision of community services. There is no community centre, no youth club and unless action is taken, there will be no secondary education provision. The Saxmundham Middle School building currently provides the only accommodation for after school clubs, community activities and learning currently available.

Currently the choice of a local senior school within the local schools pyramid is limited to one - Leiston High School, which is 5.5 miles from the centre of Saxmundham. Many parents have already expressed intense dissatisfaction with that school as an option for their child's eleven to sixteen education. The Trust believes that high transport costs to Framlingham and Woodbridge put senior schools in these towns (Thomas Mills High School and Farlingaye High School) out of reach for many in the community. It believes that a Free School in Saxmundham will enhance educational choice, particularly for financially disadvantaged families who cannot afford to transport their children to schools outside the local pyramid. Many children will be able to walk or bicycle to the School, as they currently do to Saxmundham Middle School.

The Trust therefore believes there is a real need for the sort of school proposed.

### Demand

The proposed School has strong support from parents and the community. There is a demonstrable demand for places at the proposed School and, as at 14 December 2011 Suffolk County Council had received at least 104 expressions of interest in places at the School beginning in September 2012. Significant support has been received from the wider community via a Facebook page, drop-in centre, by email and face-to-face communication. As of 14 May 2011, the proposed School's Facebook page had received over 33,000 unique site visits since inception in October 2010 with 228

supporters/followers, and the School's website has enjoyed over 1,050 unique visits since its launch in September 2011. Parents who have pledged support and provided expressions of interest are within a reasonable and realistic travelling distance of the proposed School.

In the Trust's view, the demand is for a senior school in the community. There is already a good primary school in the town. For sixth form education there is a wide diversity of choice, perhaps at one of the larger high schools in Suffolk, or at one of the specialist colleges in Ipswich or Lowestoft. Others may begin work, apprenticeship training or choose to pursue a vocational course locally. The proposed School will provide a firm educational foundation for both, to ensure that each student can move on with strong educational foundations.

#### Educational standards

Consistent dissatisfaction with existing provision, and a strong demand for choice of schooling emerged from the Trust's engagement with parents. In the ways described in this document, the School will provide a first class education for eleven to sixteen year olds whose parents want the choice of a school with a more traditional curriculum and higher GCSE outcomes than offered by current providers.

#### Some specific impact issues

The Trust believes strongly in the strength of its proposal, but appreciates that others may have concerns, perhaps in relation to the impact of the proposed Free School on existing schools and educational institutions in the area, and within the community at large. The Trust's own views on some specific impact issues can be summarised as follows:

#### Impact on Feeder (Primary) Schools

- The proposed School will amount to an additional high school with which feeder schools will have to liaise in terms of children's transition from primary to secondary education.
- The proposed School will have close proximity to several local primary schools (Saxmundham, Benhall, Kelsale and Snape) allowing potentially closer ties and sharing opportunities between the respective schools.
- Primary schools may be able to benefit from sharing the proposed School's facilities (e.g. when catering for older children in Years 5 and 6 requiring access to larger sports facilities and school halls).

#### Impact on Existing Secondary Schools

- The proposed School is likely to result in fewer students for existing secondary schools in Suffolk, with consequential funding implications
- However, the expected growth in the local population (see above) may neutralise such detrimental affects
- The proposed School may ease the burden on schools such as the Thomas Mills High School and Farlingaye High School caused by oversubscription
- Both the proposed School and other secondary schools will have the potential to mutually benefit from sharing resources

### Impact on existing Further Education/Higher Education Institutions

- The impact is likely to be minimal as the School will not have a sixth form
- The proposed School's focus on academic excellence will most likely produce a greater number of students who will choose to study academic based A-levels at ages sixteen to eighteen, providing greater demand for places at local FE/HE institutions
- The high quality of the proposed School education will better equip students to perform well at A-level, enhancing the results and performance of schools providing those courses

### Impact on other activities carried out by the Foundation

- At the time of writing it is proposed that the Foundation should support a small number of other Free Schools in Suffolk
- Both the School, the other Free Schools (if they proceed) and other schools associated with the Foundation are likely to benefit from sharing resources and staff of a quality that might otherwise be beyond the economic ability of a single school to procure
- All schools associated with the Foundation are expected to benefit through pooling students and resources to run joint events
- The Governors of the Foundation are satisfied that their commitment to the School will not adversely affect their current operations and will deliver positive outcomes for the Foundation as a whole.

### Impact on the wider community

- The proposed School may create additional career opportunities and/or an enhanced career paths for teachers by making available a greater breadth and depth of teaching jobs
- The establishment of the School may result in an increased contribution to the local economy from professional families moving into the area (e.g. teachers and parents of children attending the School)
- The School will increase economic opportunities for local businesses to supply services and products to it
- The School may result in an increased spend in the town's economy resulting from students' presence in the town especially during retail business opening hours.

## **Some issues raised so far**

Certain themes have emerged from responses to consultation to date. In this section, the Trust identifies some questions which have arisen, and provides responses.

Sufficient places for all current students in secondary education in Suffolk already exist, so is there really a need for the School?

The Trust understands that the county does not have a capacity issue. Its bid to open a Free School was based on providing opportunity and choice and was supported by a group of local parents and other members of the community.

It has been suggested that funding Free Schools will have a negative impact on the funding for established schools, is that the case?

Any financial impact on established schools as a result of the Government's general policy to fund Free Schools, including the proposed School at Saxmundham is a matter for the Government to consider. The School intends to work in partnership with other schools, including, where appropriate, by sharing resources.

What is the provision for transport to and from the School?

It is proposed that the School should occupy the site currently used by Saxmundham Middle School, at Seaman Avenue, Saxmundham, Suffolk, IP17 1DZ. The proposed site for the School is readily accessible by foot and bike. For those who wish to drive their children to school, the site has a "drop off" zone directly in front of the main entrance. There are also local bus and train services. In the case of those students who qualify for free home to school transport provided by Suffolk County Council, the Council's Home to School Transport Policy is under review. With the creation of Academies and Free Schools in the County, the Council is currently considering how the transport policy can reflect the individual requirements of schools. However, the Trust is working with Suffolk County Council to find a workable temporary policy until its new policy is in place in 2013/14.

Free Schools are permitted to employ unqualified teachers. Will the Trust be recruiting unqualified teachers to work at the School?

The Trust is focused on the best educational outcome for a student and will recruit staff that it feels are able to achieve that aim. The Trust currently has no plans to recruit unqualified teaching staff. However, on the rare occasions that members of teaching staff are appointed who do not have formal QTS (Qualified Teacher Status), the Trust will support them to achieve this.

Will the School provide any vocational training?

The Trust believes that a sound academic foundation is essential for all students. The School will not directly deliver any vocational courses, but the Trust recognises that this is an appropriate pathway for some students. It believes that, to offer students choice and opportunity for vocational education post sixteen, it is important to all students to have a solid grasp of English and mathematics even if GCSEs are not appropriate for them.

## **What we would like to know**

The Trust would now like to hear your views on any aspect of the proposed School over a formal consultation period.

As noted at the beginning of this document, before the School opens, it will be necessary for the Secretary of State for Education to enter into what are known as “Academy arrangements” (a contract between the Secretary of State and the Trust under which the Trust agrees to establish, maintain and run the School and the Secretary of State agrees to provide funding for it). The Trust would like to know **whether, in the view of the consultees, those "Academy arrangements" should be entered into, and the reasons for your views.** Among the issues of interest to the Trust is what the impact of establishing the School would be likely to be on maintained schools, Academies and institutions within the further education sector in the Suffolk area.

The Trust recognises that no document describing a proposed school can include every matter which any consultee might wish to know about. To that end, consultees are invited to ask questions of the Trust through the indicated means (see “How to Respond”, above). The Trust will endeavour to make available answers to Frequently Asked Questions during the course of the consultation period.

## **Appendix 1: Consultation Timetable**

<b>Consultation document published</b>	<b>21 December 2011</b>
<b>Public consultation event</b>	<b>19 January 2012</b>
<b>Last date for consultation responses</b>	<b>8 February 2012 (by 1700hrs)</b>

## **Appendix 2: Admissions Policy**

### Saxmundham Free School

#### Admission Policy

##### Requirements for the Admission of students to Saxmundham Free School

#### **General**

1. This annex may be amended in writing at any time by agreement between the Secretary of State and the Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust.
2. The Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust will act in accordance with, and will ensure that, an Independent Appeal Panel is trained to act in accordance with all relevant provisions of the School Admissions Code and the School Admissions Appeals Code published by the Department of Education (“the Codes”) as they apply at any given time to maintained schools and with equalities law and the law on admissions as they apply to maintained schools. For this purpose reference in the Codes or legislation to “admission authorities” shall be deemed to be references to the governing body of the Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust.
3. Notwithstanding the generality of paragraph 2 of this annex, the Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust will take part in any mandatory Admissions Forum set up by the Local Authority (“LA”) in which they are situated and have regard to its advice; and will participate in the coordinated admission arrangements operated by the LA and the local Fair Access Protocol.
4. Notwithstanding any provision in this annex the Secretary of State may:
  - a) Direct the Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust to admit a named student to the Saxmundham Free School on application from an LA. This will include complying with a School Attendance Order<sup>1</sup>. Before doing so the Secretary of State will consult with the Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust.
  - b) Direct the Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust to admit a named student to the Saxmundham Free School if the Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust has failed to act in accordance with this annex or has otherwise failed to comply with applicable admissions and equalities legislation or the provisions of the Codes.
  - c) Direct the Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust to amend its admission arrangements where they fail to comply with the Schools Admissions Code or the Admission Appeals Code.

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<sup>1</sup> Local authorities are able to issue school attendance orders if a child is not attending school. These are legally binding upon parents. Such an order might, for instance, be appropriate where a child has a place at a Free School but his/her parents are refusing to send him/her to school. The order will require a parent to ensure his/her child attends a specified school.

5. The Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust shall ensure that parents and relevant children<sup>2</sup> will have the right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel if they are dissatisfied with an admission decision of the Trust. The Independent Appeal Panel will be independent of the Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust. The arrangements for appeals will comply with the School Admission Appeals Code published by the Department of Education as it applies to Academies and Free Schools. The determination of the appeal panel is binding on all parties.

### **Relevant Area**

6. Subject to paragraph 7, the meaning of “Relevant Area” for the purposes of consultation requirements in relation to admissions arrangements is that determined by the local authority for maintained schools in the area in accordance with the Education (Relevant Areas for Consultation on Admission Arrangements) Regulations 1999.
7. If the Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust does not consider the relevant area determined by the local authority for the maintained schools in the area to be appropriate, it must apply to the Secretary of State by 1 August for a determination of the appropriate relevant area for the Saxmundham Free School, setting out the reasons for this view. The Secretary of State will consult the Saxmundham Free School and the LA in which the school is situated in reaching a decision.

### **Requirements to admit students**

8. The Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust will:
  - a) Subject to its right of appeal to the Secretary of State in relation to a named student, admit all students with a statement of special educational needs naming the Saxmundham Free School;
  - b) Adopt admission oversubscription criteria that give highest priority to “looked after children”, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the School Admissions Code.

### **Oversubscription criteria, admission number, consultation, determination and objections**

9. The admission arrangements will include oversubscription criteria, and an admission number for each relevant age group<sup>3</sup>. The Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust will consult on its admission arrangements and determine them in line with the requirements within the School Admissions Code.
10. The Young People’s Learning Agency (YPLA) may consider objections on the Secretary of State’s behalf. The Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School trust will therefore make it clear, when determining the admission arrangements, that objections should be submitted to the YPLA.
11. A determination of an objection by the YPLA on behalf of the Secretary of State, or by the Secretary of State will be binding upon the Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust.

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Relevant children’ means children who are above the compulsory school age, or will be above compulsory school age by the time they start to receive education at the school.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Relevant age group’ means normal point of admission to the school, for example, Year 7.

## **Admission number(s)**

12. Saxmundham Free School has the following agreed admission number for the year 2012/2013:

- a) 54 for students in Year 7

The admission number will rise in 2013/14 to 108 students in Year 7 and will therefore remain the same subject to any changes approved or required by the Secretary of State.

13. Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust will consider all applications for places at the school. Where fewer than the published admission number(s) for the relevant year groups are received, Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust will offer places to all those who have applied.

## **Procedures where the school is oversubscribed**

14. Where the number of applications for admission is greater than the published admission number, applications will be considered against the criteria set out below. After the admission of students with statements of Special Educational Needs where Saxmundham Free School is named on the statement, the criteria will be applied in the order in which they are set out below:

1. A "looked after child" or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order<sup>4</sup>. A "looked after child" is a child who is;
  - a) in the care of a local authority, or
  - b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions ("looked after children" as defined in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).
2. Children with a sibling attending Saxmundham Free School at the time of application. A Sibling is defined in these arrangements as children who live as brother or sister in the same house, including natural brothers or sisters, adopted siblings, stepbrothers or sisters and foster brothers and sisters.
3. Other children by distance from Saxmundham Free School, with priority for admission given to children who live nearest to the school as the crow flies. Distances are measured from the main entrance of the child's home to the main entrance of the school.

Random allocation will be used as a tie-break in category '3' above to decide who has highest priority for admission if the distance between two children's homes and the school is the same.

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<sup>4</sup> An adoption order is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'residence order' is as an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

### **Operation of waiting lists**

15. Subject to any provisions regarding waiting lists in Suffolk County Council's coordinated scheme, Saxmundham Free School will operate a waiting list for each year group. Where in any year the school receives more applications for places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate until the final term of the school year. This will be maintained by the Suffolk County Council and it will be open to any parent to ask for his or her child's name to be placed on the waiting list, following an unsuccessful application.
16. A child's position on the waiting list will be determined solely in accordance with the over subscription criteria set out in paragraph 14. Where places become vacant they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the over subscription criteria.
17. The Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust will maintain and hold those names detailed on the waiting list up to the end of the term after the beginning of each school year.

### **Arrangements for admitting students to other year groups, including to replace any students who have left the school**

18. During 2012 local authorities will coordinate admissions for in-year applications and for applications for year groups other than the normal point(s) of entry. This will not affect Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust's right to determine which applicants have priority for admission.
19. Parents of gifted and talented children, or those who have experienced problems or missed part of a year, for example due to ill health, can seek places outside their normal age group. Decisions to admit or otherwise will be on the basis of the circumstances of each case. On receiving the decision, parents will be informed of their statutory right to appeal. This right of appeal does not apply if they are offered a place in another year group at the school.
20. Subject to any provisions in Suffolk County Council's coordinated admission arrangements relating to applications submitted for years other than the normal year of entry, the Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust will consider all such applications and if the year group applied for has a place available, admit the child unless one of the permitted reliefs apply. If more applications are received than there are places available, the over subscription criteria in paragraph 14 shall apply.

### **Arrangements for the admission of children of UK Service Personnel (UK Armed Forces)**

21. Subject to the over subscription criteria detailed in paragraph 14 above, for families of service personnel with a confirmed posting to the area, the Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust will:
  - A. allocate a place in advance, if accompanied by an official government letter which declares a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address for considering the application against their oversubscription criteria. This will include accepting a Unit postal address or quartering area address for a service child. The Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust will not refuse a service child a place because the family does not currently live in the area, or reserve blocks of places for these children.

- B. ensure that arrangements in their area support the Government's commitment to removing disadvantage for service children. Arrangements will be appropriate for the area and be described in the school's prospectus.

**Arrangements for admission of students as the school builds to its full capacity**

- 22. Saxmundham Free School will open on 1 September 2012 with a Published Admission Number relating solely to students in Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 as follows:
  - a) 54 for students in Year 7
  - b) 81 for students in Year 8
  - c) 81 for students in Year 9

**Right to Appeal**

- 23. The Seckford Foundation Saxmundham Free School Trust informs a parent of a decision to refuse their child a place at Saxmundham Free School for which they have applied, it must include the reason why admission was refused; information about the right to appeal; the deadline for lodging an appeal and the contact details for making an appeal. Parents will be informed that, if they wish to appeal, they must set out their grounds for their appeal in writing. The Saxmundham Free School Trust will not limit the grounds on which appeals can be made.