



Maritime
Academy
Trust

Guide to Maritime for Parents & Carers



How your school works as part of Maritime Academy Trust

Hello to all of our families in our schools, and to those who may be thinking about sending your child to one of our schools. We want to make sure that you know what it means to have your child in a Maritime school, what makes us different, and what we believe is possible for children. We want to be able to work closely with our staff, children, and families to spark something great in our schools, together.

Your school is part of Maritime. We are an educational charity with the core purpose of advancing education for the public benefit. Our mission is to empower our schools with the means to drive ever greater and more enjoyable outcomes for students. We do this through the support we provide to our schools, the innovative collaborative practices we have developed, and an entrepreneurial curriculum that builds leadership and life skills into children.

Maritime is overseen by a Board of Trustees and is run by our Chief Executive, Nick Osborne, who is supported by a central team across a variety of service areas. We are funded directly by the government and are directly accountable to Parliament, the Department for Education, the Education and Skills Funding Agency, and Ofsted.

Your school is run by your headteacher with the strategic support of local academy councils (LAC). At the start of each school year, your headteacher works with the LAC to set the strategic direction of the school and create a school development plan that identifies key priorities and shows how the school will address these areas for development. Councillors support and challenge the headteacher on progress against the school development plan throughout the year. All of the day-to-day decisions are made by the headteacher.

Maritime works with your school in three different capacities:

- 1) To support the school in as many ways as we can
- 2) To act as a safety net to help with checks and balances
- 3) To create opportunities to help the school improve

We want to take as many distractions as possible away from the leaders in your child's school so that they can focus on the most important aspect of the school - teaching & learning for your child!



Our Values

We created Maritime around an idea - that education should be meaningful, that children should love learning, and that everyone who works with us should feel they make an impact.



We believe in preparing children for a future we can't even imagine yet - through the life skills in our entrepreneurial curriculum: critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, character, citizenship, and communication. This is how they'll be able to adapt in an ever-changing world. Children celebrate their learning through their Big Outcomes.

We work together across our Trust in the spirit of our Maritime Mindset: collaboration, adaptability, honesty & trust, humour & positivity, humility, and creativity & innovation.



Each of our schools is different, but they do share 3 main things:

- A belief in a curriculum that is engaging for children and challenges them to develop skills as well as knowledge
- An expectation of outstanding behaviour in school so that children feel safe and are in an environment which helps them learn to the best of their ability
- A strong belief in collaboration, looking to learn from each other and also willing to support others when they are in need



Collaboration

Collaboration is very important to us in Maritime schools. By learning from others, schools are able to innovate for the children in their classrooms in ways that really improve teaching and learning. Some of the ways our schools work together:

Staff Development

We have an extensive professional training programme available for all staff in our schools. We have brilliant staff across the schools who run these sessions and help to spread good practice and share ideas. We do this for everyone from teaching assistants to executive heads.

Teacher Exchanges

We offer short-term teacher exchanges which give our teachers the opportunity to 'team teach' with other teachers in Maritime. This gives all of the teachers the chance to learn from their colleagues in other settings and see what it's like outside their own classroom.

Network Meetings

Our staff participate in regular network meetings with their counterparts in the other schools and share practice. This includes teachers, support staff, office staff, premises staff and more. This has also led to staff working together to find ways to be more efficient and save money for the schools with cheaper contracts etc.

Shared Staff

Every now and then a school may end up temporarily short-staffed or something unexpected may happen that leaves a school needing extra support. On a number of occasions, the schools have pulled together to support each other and not leave anybody struggling on their own.

Leadership Team

The headteachers in our schools form the leadership team for Maritime. So if there is a new Trust-wide policy on education or a new approach that the schools will be trialling in the schools, these are developed by the headteachers themselves. We work closely with our headteachers to make sure that they are part of solutions.

How we Support Our Schools

We have grown over the past few years in order to enable us to provide more support for each school. It has been through this growth that we have been able to build capacity to target specialist support for your child's school.

Educational Partnerships Lead

Maritime Trust has a team of educationalists in charge of guiding heads and supporting school development. The Education Director oversees this team. The team include an Early Years Specialist, Curriculum and Assessment specialists, a Special Educational Needs Leader, a community engagement lead and a computing champion. The Team work together in three key areas:

IMPACT: Checking on the quality of provision in schools. Working with leaders to reflect and improve practice to ensure every child gets the best education we can offer.

IMPROVE: The needs of a school will depend on the support the Education and Research Team will offer. This can range from offering support themselves; utilising the skills of other staff from across the Trust; modelling learning; asking challenging but supportive questions or assessment and curriculum support. All Maritime heads are an extension of the Education and Research Team and all work together frequently to share best practice and drive change within our schools. Sharing best practice is what helps the continuous journey of improvement - we believe that we should be sharing knowledge and creating knowledge.



DEVELOP: This means we expect our schools to use research and educational evidence to inform decision making. Linked into this is a range of professional development opportunities for all staff that the Trust is able to offer free of charge.

We aim to be a Trust with a self sustained improvement structure - ensuring we do all we can to create the best teachers and best leaders of the future to give your children the best learning possible.



Estates Lead

Our Estates Lead ensures that all of the schools are compliant with Health & Safety requirements. He regularly audits the schools and works with the managers of the premises together to solve problems across the Trust. This is especially helpful when schools have sickness or building emergencies. For example, when there have been maintenance emergencies that could have resulted in a school closing temporarily, he has been able to work with schools to help ensure that they are able to stay open. He also works with the schools to access money to improve the conditions on the buildings. We have recently been able to successfully bid for over £700,000 pounds worth of capital money for building works, money that schools wouldn't have had access to if they weren't part of a Trust.

HR Team

We have a HR Team, led by our HR Director who support our schools with all aspects of people management, allowing our Headteachers to really focus on Teaching and Learning.

The team works with our schools to make sure we recruit the very best Teachers, Trainee Teachers and Support staff, ensuring that our schools have the right staff at the right time.

The team makes sure that schools have in place all of the policies and procedures that they need to ensure that they are fully compliant with statutory requirements, particularly in respect of safer recruitment.

Finance Team

Our Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Finance team works with the schools across the Trust to set budgets and to make sure we monitor all expenditure. The finance team places all orders and pays all invoices centrally. The team also supports the school administration teams with systems and processes like childcare vouchers.

Our CFO is responsible for making sure financial regulations are being followed. By ensuring we always look for best value in everyday purchases and larger contracts means there is always a focus on saving money. These savings enable us to have as many excellent staff as possible in your child's school.

Crisis Management

When a school has any issues, the leaders in the school have a valuable network on hand straight away and the collaborative approach of our headteachers ensures that they are all fully supported. This means situations are dealt with quickly and effectively, and that no one feels like they're on their own to figure things out.



Support across all of these areas is additional support that our schools wouldn't have had before joining Maritime. If the schools would have wanted these services they would have had to pay for them separately and they wouldn't have had dedicated people on hand to support them. If a headteacher needs support we now have people on-hand literally 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

Chief Operating Officer

Our Chief Operating Officer (COO) works with the schools to work on big projects and to support the other Directors in the Trust.

Our COO has recently finished a large piece of work ensuring that all of the schools' IT infrastructure is updated so that it is working at a level that the schools need. She is supporting the schools in helping them to be fully cloud-based, saving both time and money for all of the schools within the Trust. She is part of supporting our teacher recruitment campaign, supports the schools with governance, and is leading on the development of our new free school in Ebbsfleet Green.



FAQs

Who runs our schools?

Your headteacher runs your child's school just like they did before they joined Maritime. They are responsible for teaching and learning and the experience that your child gets every day.

Who decides on things like uniforms, homework etc?

These are local decisions and are made by the headteacher with the support of the Local Academy Council. They will make the decisions that they feel are in the best interests for their school. The schools in our Trust are not all the same and we wouldn't want them to be. They each retain their own identity and their own vision for what is possible for their school community, within the parameters of high expectations that Maritime has for what school can be.

Are Multi Academy Trusts just businesses that are out to make profits?

This is a common myth about academies. Multi Academy Trusts are charitable educational trusts. Schools are allocated money from the government just like they did before they joined a Trust. What we do in the central team is look at ways to best spend the ever-decreasing amounts of money that schools get. We do this by sharing staffing, centralising some back-office tasks, and negotiating contracts across the Trust. There are no profits or dividends. Any money saved is put right back into supporting our schools to thrive.



Who is accountable for the school?

Overall, our Board of Trustees is responsible for every school and that is why we have built up a central team to monitor what is happening, provide as much support as possible, and to ensure that there are safety checks in place. However, we strongly believe that each school should very much be a part of its local community and that our headteachers are best placed to make sure the needs of each community are being met.

What does Maritime do?

The Trust replaces the local authority and does a number of things behind the scenes to ensure that our schools are better supported than they were before joining Maritime. We encourage collaboration across our schools and our central team supports them in carrying out the day-to-day job.

What do I do if I'm not happy about something?

All schools have a complaints policy available on their website or from the school office. There is a set process to be followed which is essentially the same as it was when the schools were with the local authority prior to joining Maritime.

How are children with SEND (special educational needs) supported in Maritime schools?

In Maritime we are passionate about supporting children with SEND as best we can. One of our schools is a dedicated specialist school for primary aged children, one of our schools has achieved Flagship Status for Inclusion and three others have specialist provision for specific groups of children. Our new free school will also have specialist provision. We are proud to say that SEND is an area of real strength for us. We have specialists across the Trust who help to support each other in making sure that our SEND provision is exceptional. Our SEND team is already planning new ways to make it even stronger, including in areas such as mental health

I've seen bad things in the news about academies - is this something to be worried about?

There have been some bad stories out there about academies - situations which have led to major financial difficulties or severe drops in standards or other concerns. These instances are egregious and ultimately come down to poor leadership - not because it's an academy. The truth is that these same situations occur in a small minority of schools whether local authority maintained or academies. The reason that academies make the news is because the levels of transparency and accountability for academies is greater than for maintained schools: academy accounts are published annually online and any investigations or concerns into an academy are publicly published online by the Department for Education. This same information is not publicly available for local authority schools - which means it's much easier to do a news piece on academies.

We chose to operate as a trust because we know this is how we can build something different, in a way that provides better support for schools, making a genuine difference in the quality of education for children. We are always happy to explain the truth about how academy trusts work and why we are proud to be one.

Who decides what my children are taught?

Your headteacher develops your school's curriculum with the support of their Local Academy Council and teachers. Although academies technically do not have to follow the National Curriculum, they are still expected to teach a broad and balanced curriculum and this is an area that Ofsted looks at when they inspect a school. Maritime schools teach through an entrepreneurial curriculum in order to develop life skills and knowledge together - but what that looks like and how that's delivered in each school is up to them.



Keep informed



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