

Proposal to Federate Consultation document

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Consultation period

Monday 19th May 2025 – Monday 7th July 2025

Dear Parents and Carers

Over recent months, the Governing Body of Friday Bridge Primary School and the Governing Body of Townley Primary School have been exploring the option of entering a formal partnership called a Federation. This work has been led by a small working group formed of representatives from both Governing Bodies and Local Authority Officers. This has involved asking challenging questions of each other and the Local Authority to gain the best possible understanding of the context of each school and what Federation would involve. Additionally, the Local Authority has carried out Due Diligence checks on both schools which were reviewed by the working group and no major concerns were raised.

The unanimous conclusion we have reached is that Federation would bring positive long-term benefits to both schools.

Importantly, Federation is not an amalgamation. Both schools would retain their individual and unique identities but be led and managed by an Executive Headteacher and one Governing Body that would have strategic oversight of both schools.

Included in this document is the information for the full statutory consultation process which will commence on Monday 19th May and last for six school weeks. This process is outlined in the consultation document which gives greater detail of the proposal to enter into a Federation effective from 1st September 2025, including meetings at the respective schools, where you will be able to share your views and ask further questions. Questions and comments during the consultation period can also be submitted by returning the online form.

We believe this to be a very exciting proposal for the future of children's education in both schools, and we hope that you share our enthusiasm.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Rudge, Sonia Harwood, Paul Simpson, Simon Lind, Donna Suttle

The joint working group

JOINT CONSULTATION BY
Friday Bridge Primary School and Townley Primary School
ON FORMING A FEDERATION

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This document is intended for the parents/carers and staff of Friday Bridge Primary School, Townley Primary School, their union representatives, and the wider community.

Consultees are encouraged to submit their comments either online or via the response form at the end of this document by noon (12:00) on 7th July 2025.

Context

Friday Bridge Primary School aims for: Learning Together: Working as One. To Aspire; Believe; Progress; Succeed;

The school, much smaller than the average rural primary school, is located in the village of Friday Bridge and also serves nearby villages such as Coldham. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes, R, Yr 1/Yr2, Yr 3/Yr4 and Yr 5/Yr 6. The percentage of children with Special Educational Needs/Disabilities (SEND) is well above average at 36% and average for those with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) at 3.4%.

Friday Bridge Primary School has had significant change and turbulence in leadership and staffing in the past two terms. The long-term absence of the Headteacher, and the subsequent

resignations of the Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher and Special Educational Needs/Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) has resulted in Interim Headteachers and interim leadership solutions being put in place. The current Interim Headteachers and leaders have been able to provide stability to the whole school community and are working on school priorities at pace. 75% of the teaching staff are new to the school and/or early in their careers.

Townley School and Nursery - Probitas Verus Honos - Honesty Truth Respect

Townley is also a much smaller than the average rural primary school, located in the village of Christchurch, serving nearby villages of Tipps End and Euximoor. The school benefits from an established and experienced staff. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes, N1/N2/R, Yr 1/Yr2, Yr 3/Yr4 and Yr 5/Yr 6. The percentage of children with SEND is well above average at 56% and significantly above average for those with EHCPs at 20%. There is also a ten place Enhanced Resource Base for children in Key Stage 2, with a primary need of Social Emotional and Mental Health difficulties.

Due Diligence

As part of this process, the Local Authority has been responsible for completing due diligence reports on Friday Bridge Primary School and Townley School and Nursery. Visits were conducted to both schools on the 26th March 2025 and a detailed report completed. The separate reports for both schools have been reviewed by the Federation working party and no concerns were raised.

What will a Federation look like?

Federation name

It is proposed that the new Federation would be called Fenland Schools Federation or Willow Marsh Federation. We welcome the involvement of stakeholders, staff, parents/carers and children in reaching the final decision as part of the consultation process. Both Friday Bridge Primary School and Townley Primary School would retain their current school names.

Governance

One Governing Body would be responsible for overseeing both schools. Their responsibilities would be the same as they are now, although broadened, to ensure sufficient knowledge and expertise across the full age range.

On the date the Federation would take effect, the existing Governing Bodies would be dissolved, and the new Governing Body would be formed. This could contain members of the existing Governing Bodies, or those who are new to the role. Expressions of interest would be invited and considered but for existing governors, there is no expectation that there is automatic transfer. We will be seeking nominations from the parent body and staff from both schools for the two parent governor vacancies and the staff governor vacancy.

It is proposed that the new Governing Body would be made up of 9 members as detailed below.

- 1 Executive Headteacher
- 2 Parent governors
- 1 Staff governor
- 1 Local Authority appointed governor
- 4 Coopted governors

Staffing

Governors are keen to ensure that the Federation is staffed appropriately for its size, whilst also recognising that cost savings must be made to ensure that both schools are sustainable. For this reason, the schools would have one Executive Headteacher with responsibility for both schools supported by an Executive Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion) across both schools.

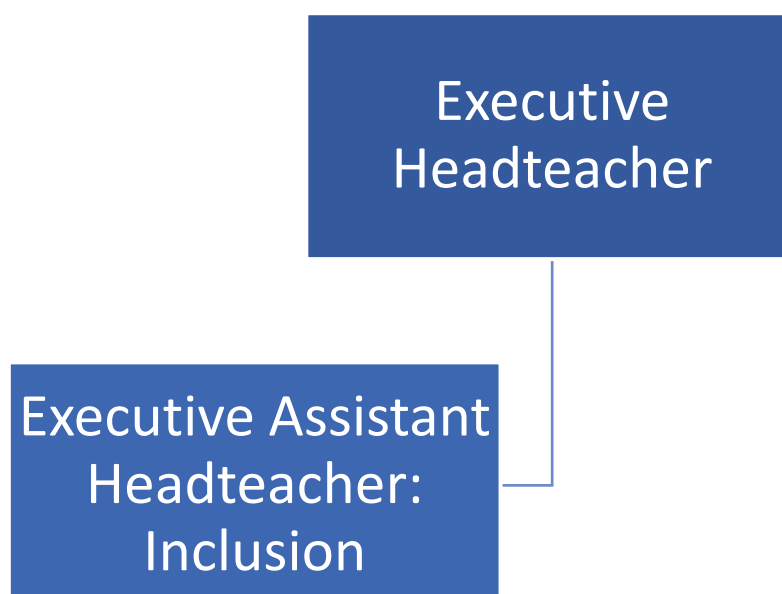
Other roles are expected to remain unchanged for now, although will form part of the larger, federated structure and the Executive Headteacher may wish to review staffing as the Federation evolves.

It is anticipated that future changes in the structure would be made by the Executive Headteacher when the leadership structure is fully established, and in consultation with staff who are affected. For senior staff, it is likely that some responsibilities may be shared across the two schools to ensure clear oversight, and smooth transitions.

As both schools are maintained and run by the local authority, TUPE would not apply and staff outside the leadership structure would see no contractual changes. New staff appointments would be made to the Federation.

Both Governing Bodies will have to consider the Federation consultation responses in full before making a final decision on whether to federate or not. If Governors decide not to continue with Federation the staffing changes will be withdrawn at that point and not implemented.

Proposed Leadership Staffing Structure



Admissions

There are no proposed changes to the admissions arrangements for the two schools.

An application for a school place should be submitted to Cambridgeshire County Council (the admissions authority).

[Apply for a school place - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

What would be the benefits of a federation?

Shared staffing, resources and contracts

Nationally, schools are underfunded which has attracted a lot of media attention in recent years. As there is a national funding formula, the primary school funding is based upon the number of pupils on roll. The local authority does not have the ability to provide additional funding where challenges present.

These challenges mean that there are benefits for both organisations in terms of economies of scale, and the ability to use their funding to share resources. This could be in terms of staffing, as suggested with one Executive Headteacher and one Executive Assistant Headteacher across the two schools, but also with contracts and equipment too.

In addition to this, all new staff will be employed across the Federation as opposed to working at a designated school. This will help to reduce the need for agency staff to cover sickness and provide more flexibility to support one another in times of need.

There are also additional opportunities for continued professional development and for subject leaders across the Federation. Greater opportunity for retention and promotion within school and increased staff motivation, engagement and fulfilment. This will also facilitate more positive outcomes for children at both settings.

Secure financial future

Federation Financial Modelling – Leadership Structure

Friday Bridge Current Leadership Structure:

Headteacher – Salary Range – L12 – L18

Proposed Total Cost using the median salary within the bands: £70,293

**The current leadership structure also contains a SENDCo which increases the leadership cost shown above.*

Townley Current Leadership Structure:

Headteacher – Salary Range – L12 – L18

Proposed Total Cost using the median salary within the bands: £70,293

**The current leadership structure also contains senior teachers and a SENDCo which significantly increases the leadership cost shown above.*

Total Combined Leadership Cost: £140,586 + Additional cost for SENDCos at both schools.

Proposed Federation Leadership Structure:

Executive Headteacher – Salary Scale L15 – L21

Executive Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion) – Salary Scale L1 – L4

**This cost is inclusive of a SENDCo role being undertaken by the Executive Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion).*

Proposed Total Cost using the median salary within the bands: £126,702

Financial Modelling Conclusion:

The financial modelling shows a saving to school budgets if the proposed Federation goes ahead. Using the median salary bands the saving would be £13,884. This would be further increased by savings on the SENDCo roles, which would further increase the savings by a minimum of £5350.

The proposed Federation will also positively impact other budget areas. These may include staff professional development costs, buildings and site work. There are also potential savings to be made in areas of contracting and general economies of scale.

Governance

It is expected that there would be greater retention of Governors from a broader group of stakeholders which would lead to a stronger, and more knowledgeable, Governing Body.

Increased opportunities for Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Both schools have their strengths and areas of expertise. Combining these will therefore enhance the opportunities for the continued professional development of staff and will ensure a wider range of opportunities for those seeking to develop in their career.

What will happen next?

The consultation period will run between Monday 19th May 2025 – Monday 7th July 2025.

We would encourage you to submit your comments online via the survey link at the end of this document. However, if you would prefer, the school office will also provide printed forms upon request.

A drop-in event will also be held for members of the community to discuss the proposal with the Governing Body and ask any questions. There will be two independent sessions held in each setting.

Once the consultation period has closed, Governors will consider all comments and vote on whether to proceed. We will publish our decision and then write to relevant stakeholders.

Nature & Scope of Formal Consultation

Although the timing of the consultation is synchronised between the two schools, each consultation is discrete to each school. **As such, any written representations should be made to either the Clerk to the Governing Body of Friday Bridge Primary School or the Clerk to the Governing Body of Townley Primary School** and will be considered at this local level in order to maintain impartiality and reach a decision that is right for each school.

In both schools, the formal consultation will consist of:

- Publication of this proposal on the schools' websites.
- Electronic copies sent to all parents and carers outlining the consultation. (Hard copies can be requested from the relevant school office.)
- A scheduled parents' consultation evening in each school (as detailed below).
- A scheduled staff consultation meeting in each school (as detailed below).

School	Invited parties	Date and time
Friday Bridge Primary School	Staff and union representatives	15:00 – 16:00 Wednesday 4 th June
	Parents and Carers – Drop-in	16:00 – 18:00 Wednesday 4 th June
Townley Primary School	Staff and union representatives	15:00 – 16:00 Thursday 5 th June
	Parents and Carers - Drop-in	16:00 – 18:00 Thursday 5 th June

- Submission of this proposal to the Local Authority.
- Copy of this proposal document forwarded to all recognised teaching, support staff trade unions and trade union representatives given the opportunity to respond.
- Copy of this document along with a covering letter sent to the Secretary of State, local Members of Parliament and County Councillors within one week of opening consultation.

JOINT CONSULTATION BY
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ON FORMING A FEDERATION

Consultation Link - <https://forms.office.com/e/PZC0zSwdqt>

What is your relationship to Friday Bridge/Townley?

- Member of staff at Friday Bridge School
- Member of staff at Townley Primary School
- Parent/Carer of a Child at Friday Bridge School
- Parent/Carer of a Child at Townley Primary School
- Parent/Carer of a Younger Child (under two years of age)
- Parent/Carer of an Older Child (over 11 years of age)
- Professional Association / Trade Union
- Partner Organisation / Education Provider
- Other

If other, please specify

Which statement best reflects your views on the proposal for Friday Bridge Primary School and Townley Primary School to form a Federation effective from 1st September 2025?

- I agree with the proposed change.
- I do not have a strong view on the proposed change.
- I disagree with the proposed change.

As part of this consultation, we are asking for stakeholder views on the proposed Federation name. Which proposed name should be chosen for the new Federation?

- Fenland Schools Federation

Willow Marsh Federation

Please use the box below to make any comments about the proposal. We would also value any suggested changes to the model proposed, with the reasons why you feel such changes would be beneficial.

Thank you for your feedback