



Department
for Education

Free school presumption: Annex A

**Model specification template for local
authorities seeking proposals to establish
a new school**

NB: Wherever there are square brackets the local authority should insert / edit the text as required. Delete this text once read.

Section A - Introduction

Under section 6A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the 'free school presumption') where a local authority identifies the need to establish a new school it must, in the first instance, seek proposals to establish an academy. *[insert name of local authority]* has identified the need to establish a new *[insert type/phase of school]* in *[insert area]* to open in *[insert month, year]*.

[Insert evidence of need. This should include:

- *Reasons the new school is required (e.g. due to a new housing development)*
- *Profile of the area, for example, data about FSM, BME, SEND, KS2 outcomes.*

The authority is therefore seeking proposals from appropriate academy trusts to open this new school. This school would be deemed a free school. Proposers should complete the Free School Presumption application form and return it to *[insert local authority contact details]*.

[Insert description of process. This should include:

- *Indicative timelines for the project*
- *Opening and closing dates for submission of proposals (we recommend at least 6 – 8 weeks, but if the timescale allows 12-14 weeks may be more appropriate)*
- *Details of when and how the local authority intends to assess the bids and when the local authority intends to provide this information to the Department for Education (DfE)*
- *How to apply (including a link to the application form)*
- *Process the local authority will follow when assessing proposals]*.

The Regional Director (RD) for *[insert region]*, on behalf of the Secretary of State, will consider the local authority assessments and recommendations before deciding which proposer is in the best position to take forward the new school. The Regional Director will inform the local authority and the successful proposer of its decision, and the local authority will inform any unsuccessful proposers.

If you would like further information or wish to discuss your application, please contact *[insert local authority contact details]*

Please return your completed form to *[insert e-mail or postal address]*

NB: the local authority led free school presumption route is a different route to the DfE's central free school programme. Further information about the DfE's central free school programme can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/opening-a-free-school>

Section B - The School

[Insert key information about the school, including:

- *Opening date*
- *Site / location (including any maps)/ postcode*
- *Pupil capacity*
- *Planned initial PANs, number of forms of entry on opening and expected rate of growth*
- *Proposed admission arrangements, including catchment area if applicable*
- *Type of school*
- *Phase of education and age range*
- *Gender (boys/girls/mixed)*
- *Nursery provision*
- *Sixth form provision*
- *SEN provision*
- *Community use / shared facilities*
- *Transport arrangements*
- *Character/Ethos of school*
- *Equalities impact analysis*
- *Details of the site/ building, including details of ownership]*

[Edit / expand as necessary]

Section C - Vision

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Annex C of the free school presumption guidance.

As a minimum, please ensure you include the following:

- A strong educational vision and a curriculum delivery plan based on high standards of attainment for each key stage
- Plans for appropriate engagement with the local community and parents during the pre-opening period and any on-going engagement
- Excellent support facilities to meet the needs of all children, including looked after children, those with Special Educational Needs, etc
- A commitment to excellent outcomes and high quality of teaching and learning

[Edit / expand as necessary]

Section D - Education Plan

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Annex C of the free school presumption guidance.

As a minimum please ensure you include the following:

- An ambitious, broad and balanced, deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake. This could include a curriculum table and pupil build up chart
- Strategies for measuring pupil performance effectively and setting challenging targets
- A staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels; with a focus on outstanding teaching (including strategies for effective performance management). This could also include an organogram and staff build up chart
- The needs of all children are fully provided for and how the school will be fully inclusive
- Details of enrichment and extended services, for example, breakfast clubs, sports clubs, homework clubs and music/art clubs
- The school's approach to: PHSE; the Prevent Duty; safeguarding and welfare; and promoting fundamental British values (democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs)

[Edit / expand as necessary]

Section E - Capacity and Capability

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Annex C of the free school presumption guidance.

As a minimum please ensure you include the following:

- The resources you would draw on and/or deploy to support the development of the new free school by the opening date
- Clear evidence that you have the range of skills and abilities necessary to set up and then run a school effectively, including: managing school finances; leadership; project management; marketing; human resources; safeguarding; and health and safety
- How the school would be organised and what the governance arrangements would look like, including a diagram of the proposed structures

[Edit / expand as necessary]

Section F - Funding and Costs

[Insert key information about:

- *An estimate of how much the school will cost to build and where the funding will be coming from, i.e. local authority, Section 106 or mixture*
- *The ownership of the land, transfer of lease, etc.*
- *Details about capital and revenue funding – how much will be available for start-up costs [state that the DfE currently provides £25,000 for legal expenses to the successful trust]*
- *Details of pre-opening funding to be provided by the local authority*

[Edit / expand as necessary]

Section G - Impact and Equalities Assessments

As prescribed by section 9 of the Academies Act 2010 and section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the local authority must assess the potential impact of any new school on existing educational provision in the area. The local authority must also consider whether the new school would impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

[Insert details and findings of impact / equalities assessment]