



Date Monday 23 May 2022

Dear Stakeholder

**Consultation for the Federation of the Governing Boards
of Aylsham Learning Federation (John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School,
Bure Valley School and Aylsham High School) and Colby Primary School**

We are pleased to recommend this proposal to federate the governing boards of **Aylsham Learning Federation (ALF) and Colby Primary School (CPS)**.

Both governing boards believe that federation across schools will sustain and continue to improve the education for children in the schools and will protect and strengthen educational provision in this part of Norfolk. The schools are close enough geographically to allow sharing of resources, specialist expertise and good practice through collaboration at all levels - children, staff and governors. Strong families of schools are seen as the best way to be able to ensure the best possible provision for all pupils and families in our communities and this is our reason for recommending it.

The accompanying consultation paper outlines what we as governors believe are the benefits of federation. We welcome your views and feel it is important that you as stakeholders play a part in shaping the future of education in our area. The schools have arranged a series of informal drop-in sessions for people to find out more and ask relevant questions of the governing boards of ALF and CPS. You can attend any of these sessions, which will take place as follows:

Thursday 9 June 2022, 2:30-3:30 pm at John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School
Thursday 9 June 2022, 6:30-7:30 pm at Aylsham High School
Tuesday 14 June 2022, 3:00-4:00 pm at Colby Primary School
Thursday 16 June 2022, 6:30-7:30 pm at Colby Primary School

Separate dates and times will be arranged for staff to attend an informal drop-in at each school.

If you wish to comment on this consultation, please send your response in writing to 'clerk of governors' via any of the school offices. Letters should be clearly marked 'Federation Consultation' and sent in a sealed envelope. These should be received at the schools no later than by 9 am on Tuesday 12 July 2022. All responses should be signed (anonymous responses will not be considered) and will remain confidential to

the clerk who will report to the governing boards. You can alternatively access our electronic version of the form here: <https://forms.gle/34ASkGhtDN5iQhcP9>

Federation is considered by the governing boards as a way of securing the future of our schools. This is not a bid to merge or amalgamate the schools and we would like to reassure our families, pupils and staff that each school will continue to maintain their individual identities, as they have up to now.

Yours faithfully



Jenny Youngs
Chair of Governors
Aylsham Learning Federation



Jill Steward
Chair of Governors
Colby Primary School

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Consultation start date: Monday 23 May 2022

Consultation end date: Tuesday 12 July 2022

The Federation of the Governing Boards of Aylsham Learning Federation (ALF- John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School, Bure Valley School and Aylsham High School) and Colby Primary School (CPS)

The governing boards of the above schools have resolved to seek federation through a shared, strategic vision of each school's future.

Our vision

We celebrate the unique qualities and characteristics that each school brings to the federation. All schools have common aims and values, together with a mission to serve all the families and children who attend the schools. All schools are committed to the long-term success of education in the Aylsham cluster.

What does federation mean?

Federation means the formation of one governing board, with representation from all schools. Each school will remain a Local Authority (LA) school legally separate whilst retaining their individual characteristics and ethos. Federation works on the basis that all schools have their own particular strengths and advantages whether it is facilities, staff or resources.

Why form a federation?

The governing boards of our schools wish to sustain and continue to improve education for children in the schools and to protect educational provision.

Governing boards are required to consider and plan for the strategic direction of the school. The governors at Colby have been working with the LA to consider, in part, ways of strengthening management and governance since March 2021 and have concluded that the proposal to join ALF would add capacity and benefit Colby Primary school in the longer term.

A growing number of federations are already running very successfully in Norfolk and the LA is actively encouraging schools to consider the benefits of this kind of formal partnership. The Aylsham Learning Federation is Colby's closest and very successful federation and the Colby governing board recognised that joining ALF would strengthen governance at the school and would support our staff to work collaboratively across the schools in the federation as well as schools in the wider Aylsham Cluster Trust. The Colby governing board recently set up a working party to explore the future options for the school and its sustainability and has accepted the recommendation to enter into consultation to join the Aylsham Learning Federation.

Colby governing board believes that working more closely as part of the federation will benefit the children, staff and wider communities of all the schools. Many of the children who attend Colby go on to attend Aylsham High School and being part of the federation will support the education journey of individual children. Colby's experienced staff will be encouraged to join in the CPD opportunities available, our senior leaders will be able to work with the senior leaders across ALF, and ALF supports access to Masters in Teaching and Learning, and access to the National Professional Qualifications suite of qualifications.

Federation offers an abundance of opportunities to support further growth at Colby Primary School. The Business and Community team at ALF has a very well qualified finance team that manages the federated budget. The team oversees premises, maintenance, HR, data, CPD and IT, and negotiates central contracts; all of this will lead to savings from joint purchasing. This oversight of the business element of school life means that the senior leadership team in each school is free of some of the daily responsibilities and can concentrate on teaching and learning.

Whilst there is an Executive Headteacher across the federation, each leader has autonomy to lead their individual schools and this will be the case for Colby. In this way, the unique character of Colby will be preserved. The vision and ethos at Colby mesh very well with the co-operative values of the federation. Colby will bring its ethos of “Everyone Learns, Everyone Leads and Everyone Matters” into the federation and will share its expertise in pupil leadership enabling children to be accountable, to look after each other and to feel valued. Colby has a great reputation for its Eco work which has been recognised in the Norwich and Norfolk Eco Awards on several occasions and it is intended that this work will continue.

Aylsham Learning Federation governors were happy to be approached by Colby governing board colleagues to explore how they could support the Colby governing board in strengthening governance at Colby. Aylsham Learning Federation governors feel that there are huge potential mutual benefits to exploring working together for the long-term success of pupils and staff in our schools. Aylsham Learning Federation governors share the commitment of the Colby governing board to ensuring that Colby Primary School is able to retain its strong character and ethos whilst working within a wider family of schools.

We feel federation is the best way to achieve these goals.

The schools are in an excellent position to federate for the following reasons:

- All schools have a deep commitment to providing the very best quality of education for all children in the Aylsham area
- The schools and senior leaders have worked effectively together in the past as part of the Aylsham cluster of schools
- The schools are close enough to allow the sharing of resources and working together to develop provision
- Strong structures exist to help promote family learning and family support

Benefits of federation

- Ensures all schools are part of a strong family of schools and that there is strong and sustainable governance for all schools in the federation
- Strengthens the sustainability of all schools and ensures access to specialist business and project management expertise
- Provides access to strong management systems and processes for all schools such as finance, HR, policy management and data support.
- Avoids duplication of effort and resources and will allow more time to devote to the core business of teaching and learning
- Helps schools to continue to improve standards in teaching and learning
- Provides a structured way for all schools to collaborate
- Provides opportunities for staff, children and governors at each school to interact, learn from each other and share best practice

- Increases access for children teacher specialist expertise from each school
- Facilitates a varied and co-operative approach to staff development
- Facilitates the sharing of expertise around key areas of the curriculum and teaching and learning to help improve provision for all pupils
- Allows for the flexible and more efficient use of resources to achieve better value for money
- Leads to the more efficient use of leadership and management time to help focus on teaching and learning
- Extends the range of services and opportunities available to children and their families
- Facilitates a sharing of expertise around the use of pupil premium funding
- Provides access to resources and support offered by The Aylsham Cluster Trust (TACT) and TACT Families. This includes access to the Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) team, access for Colby Families to family learning events, access to a Parent Support Advisor, access for Colby families to adult learning opportunities.

Admissions

The admission arrangements for each school from September 2022 will remain in place.

Staffing

Federation in itself will not imply any change in each schools' current staffing teams. Staffing levels will continue to be determined by budgets and the changing needs of the schools over time. This is an ongoing responsibility of all governing boards. Federation has the potential to allow the employment of specialists and new staff across all schools.

The governing board

A new governing board will be formed as detailed below:

Name of the Federation: Aylsham Learning Federation

- 1 executive headteacher
- 1 elected staff governor
- 2 elected parent governors
- 1 local authority governor
- 4 trust governors representing The Aylsham Cluster Trust (one from each school, Colby being an associate member)
- 16 co-opted members

This would give the governing board a total of 25 members. The total number of staff governors will not exceed more than one third of the total number of governors.

It is the intention of the federation working party to have from the co-opted members:

- 1 head of Bure Valley School
- 1 head of John of Gaunt School
- 1 head of Colby Primary School
- A parent from each school that does not have an elected governor
- A staff member from each school that does not have an elected governor

Proposed date for the start of federation: 03 October 2022

How do I contribute?

We are keen to listen to the views of all stakeholders about this proposal. We would therefore be grateful if you would return the attached form by 9 am on Tuesday 12 July 2022. The governors of ALF and CPS will then consider the responses to the consultation.

How can I find out more?

The schools have arranged a series of informal drop in sessions for people to find out more and ask relevant questions of the governing boards of ALF and CPS. These sessions will take place as follows:

Thursday 9 June 2022, 2:30-3:30 pm at John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School

Thursday 9 June 2022, 6:30-7:30 pm at Aylsham High School

Tuesday 14 June 2022, 3:00 - 4:00 pm at Colby Primary School

Thursday 16 June 2022, 6:30-7:30 pm at Colby Primary School

Parents/carers/stakeholders are welcome to attend any of the sessions.

Separate dates and times will be arranged for staff to attend an informal drop-in at each school.

What do you think?

Please complete the response form and return it by 9 am on Tuesday 12 July 2022 to one of the following:

- Clerk of Governors, School Office, Aylsham High School (Aylsham Learning Federation)
- Clerk of Governors, School Office, Bure Valley School (Aylsham Learning Federation)
- Clerk of Governors, School Office, John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School (Aylsham Learning Federation)
- Clerk of Governors, School Office, Colby Primary School
- You can alternatively access our electronic version of the form here: <https://forms.gle/34ASkGhtDN5iQhcP9>

Remember, all responses should be signed (anonymous responses will not be considered) and will remain confidential to the clerk who will report to each governing board.

Do you support the proposal to federate Aylsham Learning Federation and Colby Primary School?

Yes

No

Please tick one box

Comments:

Name:

Address:

Sign:

Please tick one box that you feel most appropriately represents your interest in this matter:

parent/carer of a child at Aylsham High School

parent/carer of a child at Bure Valley Junior School

parent/carer of a child at John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School

parent/carer of a child at Colby Primary School

member of staff at Aylsham High School

member of staff at Bure Valley School

member of staff at John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School

member of staff at Colby Primary School

local resident

parent/carer of a child at another local school (please specify)

other (please specify)

This response form should be sent in a sealed envelope, clearly marked 'Federation Consultation' by 9 am on Tuesday 12 July 2022 addressed to one of the following:

- Clerk of Governors, School Office, Aylsham High School (Aylsham Learning Federation)
- Clerk of Governors, School Office, Bure Valley School (Aylsham Learning Federation)
- Clerk of Governors, School Office, John of Gaunt Infant and Nursery School (Aylsham Learning Federation)
- Clerk of Governors, School Office, Colby Primary School
- You can alternatively access our electronic version of the form here: <https://forms.gle/34ASkGhtDN5iQhcP9>

Thank you for your time