



Department  
for Education

# **Free school presumption: Annex A**

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

## 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. Manchester City Council has identified the need to establish a new secondary school in East Manchester to open in September 2021.

Manchester’s population has continued to grow from our 2011 Census figure of 503,000, and our forecasts for population growth are estimating that by the mid-2020s the city of Manchester will have a population of circa 644,000. This population growth is driven by the continued, and forecasted continuation, of economic growth. It is within this context that ensuring a sufficient supply of high quality school places will remain a critical component of the Council’s work in improving outcomes for Manchester residents and delivering the ambitions outlined in our ten year plan for the city – “the Our Manchester Strategy”.

As a result of sustained population growth the Council has identified a forecast demand for additional secondary places in east Manchester. Large cohorts of primary age children are currently on roll at a Manchester primary school as identified in the school census. Furthermore, there has and will continue to be extensive residential growth in this area of the city which will result in the development of additional family homes.

The area of east Manchester includes the wards of Ancoats & Beswick, Clayton & Openshaw and Gorton & Abbey Hey. There is a long established trend of in year applications for places at both primary and secondary schools and pupil cohorts will increase in number throughout the academic year.

The October 2019 school census identified 3.96% of the pupil cohort in this area as having an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and 13.89% at SEND support level. The average for Manchester residents is 3.61% and 12.64% respectively. In terms of pupils eligible for Free School Meals, the area average is 34.96% compared with a city average of 28.24%. As with the majority of Manchester this area is ethnically diverse and pupil cohorts reflect this with representation from a number of different BAME groups.

The authority is therefore seeking proposals from appropriate sponsors 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:

John Francoli  
Lead for School Places  
Email: [school.organisation@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:school.organisation@manchester.gov.uk)

The process for accessing proposals will be as follows:

Stage	Date(s)	Action
Invitation to Sponsor	6 May - 1 July 2020	Proposers to submit bids over 8 week period
Assessment of Sponsors	2 July - 8 July 2020	The Local Authority will assess bids using the DfE model assessment criteria
Submission to RSC	10 July 2020	Recommendation of Local Authority preferred sponsor made
Sponsor Agreed	TBC	RSC on behalf of the Secretary of State to agree sponsor
Pre-Opening Phase	TBC	Successful sponsor to commence pre-opening
Temporary School Opens	September 2021	New school opens in temporary accommodation and admits first intake of year 7 pupils
Permanent School Opens	September 2023	School moves to the permanent build

Potential sponsors should complete the model application form located at the following web address.

<https://www.manchester.gov.uk/education/newsecondaryschool>

The Council will use the DfE model criteria for assessing applications concluding with a recommendation of preferred sponsor to the Regional Schools Commissioner.

The Regional School Commissioner (RSC) for Lancashire and West Yorkshire, 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 RSC 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:

John Francoli  
 Lead for School Places  
 Email: [school.organisation@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:school.organisation@manchester.gov.uk)

Please return your completed form to [school.organisation@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:school.organisation@manchester.gov.uk)

**NB:** the local authority led free school presumption is a different route to the DfE’s free school programme. Further information about how to establish a new school via the DfE’s free school programme route can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/opening-a-free-school>

## Section B - The School

The characteristics of the new school are expected to be as follows.

Opening Date	September 2021 in temporary accommodation moving to the permanent build in September 2023
Temporary Site	TBC
Permanent Site	Showcase Cinema, Hyde Road, Manchester, M12 5FA
School Size	1200 places / 240 per year group
School Growth	It is expected that the school will open in temporary accommodation and operate for a period of up to three years prior to occupation of the permanent build. Over the initial 2 years the school will operate a reduced PAN of 120 places per year group starting with a year 7 cohort. Upon moving to permanent accommodation the PAN will increase to 240 places per year group.
Type of School	Free School
Phase and Age Range	Secondary 11-16
Gender (boys/girls/mixed)	Mixed (co-educational)
Nursery Provision	No
Sixth Form Provision	No
SEN Provision	No
Community Use	The school will be expected to make available its facilities for community use
Admission Arrangements	The school will be required to follow Manchester’s policy for secondary school admissions
Transport Arrangements	Pupils will be encouraged to access the school via sustainable transport links and the proposed location supports this ambition. Certain pupils may be eligible for travel support as determined by the Council’s Free Travel

	Policy
Character/Ethos of school	The school will not have a religious character or ethos.
Equalities Impact Analysis	See Section G
Site Ownership	The site is owned freehold by Manchester City Council and will be leased to the Operator

## 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 ethos supported by an engaging broad and balanced curriculum relevant to all learners which engenders a love of learning and includes opportunities for learners to develop social and cultural capital.
- An absolute commitment to ethos and values of inclusive education for all Manchester's children including those vulnerable to social exclusion, those in care, those with SEN and those newly arrived in the City requiring a school place.
- A strong commitment to work in partnership with Manchester City Council and its partners to deliver the City's ambitions for its children and young people.
- A track record of strong and sustainable leadership with the capacity and resources to deliver the vision for the school.
- Ambition to achieve the very best outcomes for all learners which exceed national averages and expectations underpinned by evidence of a strong track record of leading a highly performing school.
- Experience of providing good or outstanding secondary school provision within an urban context.
- Excellent provision which meets the needs of children with a range of additional and Special Educational Needs.
- Plans for high levels of engagement with the local community and parents during the pre-opening period and post opening.
- A commitment to the provision of a nurturing school community with strong pastoral support which ensures that young people have the opportunity to develop self belief, self management, resilience and understand what it means to be a good citizen.
- Commitment to ensuring the future progression of young people into employment, further education or training through the development of key life skills, digital skills, strong links with businesses, industry and further and higher education and the delivery of high quality Careers, information Advice and Guidance.

- Evidence of a strong and robust approach to safeguarding all young people and a willingness to commit to integrated working with Children's services, Voluntary and Community Sector and other agencies to secure family support around children and young people;
- Evidence of effective and collaborative partnerships with other schools and a willingness to develop and contribute to school to school partnership working and a commitment to fair access to school for all pupils as governed by the Admissions Code of Practice and Manchester's Fair Access Protocols.
- A willingness to be a member of the Manchester Schools' Alliance.
- A commitment to the highest possible standards of environmental sustainability including physical infrastructure e.g. energy use and integration of sustainability into the curriculum (formal and informal) and the life of the school community.

## 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 relevant to the school community. This could include a curriculum table and pupil build up chart.
- Strategies for measuring pupil performance effectively and setting aspirational targets.
- Strategies for recognition of all types of achievement.
- 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.
- A plan for attracting, recruiting and retaining high quality staff including staff development.
- Evidence of how 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: pastoral support; 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).
- The school's plan for ensuring young people are equipped with life skills, digital skills

and have access to high quality careers advice and guidance and the world of work.

- The school's plan for ensuring young people have opportunities and experiences which develop their cultural capital.
- The school's plan for ensuring all young people are safeguarded.
- The school's plan for ensuring equality of opportunity and that individual's within the school community with protected characteristics do not suffer any indirect or direct discrimination.
- The school's plan for community engagement and use of the building and facilities once fully open.
- The school's plan for high quality local governance with which oversees the delivery of the school's vision and strategy and effectively holds school leaders to account.

## **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 would be able to open the school by September 2021 with a reduced PAN in temporary accommodation.
- 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 including a diagram of the proposed structures.
- Governance arrangements including local governance and relationship to Trust arrangements.

## **Section F - Funding and Costs**

The costs for construction of the school will be met from the Local Authority's Basic Need capital allocation.

The land which will be occupied by the school is council freehold and an academy lease will be provided to the operator at nil consideration.

The DfE currently provides £25,000 for legal expenses to the successful sponsor.

The Council will provide (subject to Schools Forum approval) a post opening grant as follows:

### **Element A**

The first element (resources) is paid each year that the school builds up to capacity for each new pupil *expected* to be on roll and is not revisited to reflect actual pupil numbers. Funding will be paid at £500 for each new mainstream pupil in the secondary phase.

### **Element B**

The second element (leadership) is paid annually based on the number of year groups that the school will ultimately have that do not yet have pupils. The amount paid to mainstream schools with pupils aged 5 to 15 each year depends on how many year groups are empty, and is set out in the following table.

<b>Empty Cohorts</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
Secondary	£125,000	£93,500	£62,500	£31,000	£312,000

## **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.

The Council's impact assessment on existing educational provision along with the equalities impact assessment can be requested by contacting:

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Lead for School Places  
Email: [school.organisation@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:school.organisation@manchester.gov.uk)