



South York
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

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13th December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

SYMAT and SBMAT Merger

As many of you will know, we have been discussing a potential merger between South York and South Bank MATs. Our discussions have been productive and it was clear we have a shared set of values and a shared appreciation for countless brilliant things our schools do on a daily basis.

However, I am writing to let you all know that we have decided to end our merger discussions, although we look forward to continuing to cooperate closely with SBMAT in the coming months and years.

Throughout the public consultation that we conducted over the past two months, a clear theme from all our communities was the importance of maintain a balance between church and community interests in the proposed merged Trust. All Trustees and Directors of both Trusts felt that the current structure and governing documents that SYMAT operates under struck that balance well.

South York MAT was conceived as a mixed MAT, incorporating both secular schools (Fulford) and church primaries, and prior to the consultation period, the Diocese of York informed the Chair of SYMAT that the Articles governing the Trust would need to be updated to reflect changes to the national "Church Majority Model Articles". Both Trusts agreed to arrange for a legal assessment of these changes to compare the existing SYMAT articles with the proposed updates. This assessment was finalised during the consultation period, and indicated that, if adopted, the proposed changes would alter the balance and nature of South York (and hence the new MAT) in a way that the majority of Trustees from both Trusts felt would be unacceptable to secular schools. This assessment was shared with the Diocese of York Education Trust (DYET) towards the end of November.

SYMAT Trustees from the working group met with Diocesan representatives at the end of November and although solutions to some of the proposals were identified, several issues remained outstanding.

Respecting the wishes of our communities - which were communicated clearly during the public consultation - was critically important to both sets of Trustees and so earlier this month the Trustees of South Bank decided to conclude discussions on merger, and remain as a standalone Trust.

The trustees of South York MAT will be considering the way forward in the light of this decision at their next meeting on December 16th. Both Trusts however, have agreed to continue to work in close collaboration, reflecting the shared values and shared approach that have been a key part of the merger discussion so far.

We both look forward to continuing to work together, and with other schools and Trusts within York as we continue to support the fantastic work done in all our schools and the brilliant achievements of the children and young people that we have the privilege of supporting.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Dolben
Chair of SYMAT Board

Be Aspirational ~ Be Collaborative ~ Be Inclusive ~ Be Responsible