

# A Partnership Offer

We are a family of schools working to ensure children and young people with complex health needs can continue to learn, achieve and thrive. Our current schools operate across Greater London and Surrey, delivering high-quality, ambitious education tailored to learners who are unable to access mainstream settings for a period. We are committed to a personalised education that ensures learners succeed with us and, where appropriate, can reintegrate successfully into home schools.

## Our Schools

### Maudsley & Bethlem Hospital School:

works across a psychiatric intensive care unit, adolescent inpatient wards, and an eating disorder service. The school offers highly personalised teaching tailored to short and sometimes unpredictable admissions. With a broad, ambitious curriculum and a strong focus on reintegration, the school has been rated *Outstanding* by Ofsted continuously since 2011.



### St Peter's Centre:

is a community-based provision for young people with significant social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs. Many pupils arrive after long periods out of mainstream education, often with high levels of anxiety or trauma. There is a robust focus on learning and wellbeing. Ofsted rated the school *Good* in 2022, praising the blend of high-quality care and academic rigour



### King's College Hospital School:

provides education across seven wards, including those supporting children with cancer, respiratory and blood disorders, brain and spinal injuries, liver conditions, and post-surgical recovery. This is the newest school within Goldfinch and officially opened in September 2025. Children and young people may stay for a single day or for over a year, requiring highly flexible approaches.



We measure success in many ways: from exam results to attendance, from reintegration rates to the stability and confidence young people gain during periods of acute difficulty. The strength of Goldfinch lies in its diversity: each school works with distinct cohorts, and each has well-established systems or emerging frameworks to capture progress and outcomes in ways that make sense for its unique context.

Our schools benefit from a high-quality Trust Board, committed Local Governing Bodies, and an excellent central team supporting the development of learning and the management of resources.



You will see that our current schools are not comparable in the traditional sense. Each has its own focus and context: psychiatric, SEMH, and medical. These differences provide the foundation of the unique value of Goldfinch. Together, they form a health needs-led education model that covers a spectrum of circumstances, ensuring that no young person's education is left behind because of illness or mental health need.



The vision for our multi-academy trust is for *every child and young person with medical and mental health needs thriving in their education and developing the capacity to enjoy school as a curious learner*. To achieve this, we have established clear trust-wide approaches, at the heart of which lies the agency and responsibility of experts in each school to make informed decisions about the curriculum, pedagogy and learning approaches most suitable for their pupils.



Schools in Goldfinch benefit from safeguarding and SEND oversight rooted in specialist practice, expert curriculum guidance tailored to complex settings, and outstanding business support functions.

Collaboration across Goldfinch enables us to build an ambitious, creative and aspirational provision that is underpinned by care and challenge, preparing learners for reintegration to their home school.

To find out more about The Goldfinch Trust, our schools and our work, please visit our website at [www.goldfinchtrust.uk](http://www.goldfinchtrust.uk).

We are keen to meet with new potential partners. If you are interested in benefitting from our expertise, or you are considering joining a specialist and ambitious trust, please contact us to arrange a discussion with our CEO, Maarten Crommelin.

### The Goldfinch Trust

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# A Guide to Joining Our Trust

Joining a multi-academy trust is an important strategic decision for any school. For maintained schools considering joining The Goldfinch Trust, the process is structured, transparent and supported throughout.

Academy conversion typically involves several stages: applying to become an academy, joining a trust, transferring responsibilities from the local authority and formally opening as an academy. For schools joining an existing trust such as Goldfinch, the journey normally follows the steps outlined below.

Throughout the process, The Goldfinch Trust works in partnership with the school's leaders and governing body, providing guidance, coordination and practical support to ensure that the transition is smooth and well managed.

## Typical Timeline

While each school's journey will differ slightly, the conversion process typically takes **between 6 and 12 months** from the governing body's decision to the official conversion date. A simplified timeline might look like this:

Month	Stage
1-2	Exploration and governing body discussions
2-3	Formal decision and application submitted
3-6	Due diligence and consultation
4-8	Legal and staffing processes
8-12	Final preparations and conversion

Experience suggests that a straightforward process can be completed in 6 months; where schools wish to explore options in more detail this could take the process towards 12 months; complicated circumstances such as a PFI contract mean that the process could be significantly longer.

Schools joining The Goldfinch Trust will benefit from the support and guidance of key professionals to ensure the process is completed effectively and smoothly.

# The Conversion Journey

## 1. Initial discussion and exploration

The process normally begins with a conversation between the school and The Goldfinch Trust. This allows school leaders and governors to explore whether there is a strong strategic and educational fit.

Discussions usually focus on:

- shared values and educational vision
- how collaboration within the trust operates
- the benefits of partnership for pupils and staff
- the likely process and timeline for joining the trust

### Goldfinch role

The trust usually leads these early discussions, sharing information about its vision, structure and partnership model, and answering questions from leaders and governors.

## 2. Governing body consideration

If early discussions are positive, the governing body considers the proposal formally.

Governors will want to understand:

- the educational rationale for joining the trust
- the benefits for pupils and staff
- the implications for governance and leadership
- the practical steps involved in conversion

This stage often involves more than one governing body discussion to ensure governors have the information they need to make a well-informed decision.

### Goldfinch role

The trust can provide information, attend meetings if helpful and answer questions about the implications of joining a multi-academy trust.

## 3. Formal governing body decision

When governors are satisfied that the school should proceed, the governing body holds a formal meeting to vote on whether to begin the academy conversion process; many schools hold an **extraordinary governing body meeting** for this decision.

This resolution provides the formal authority for the school to proceed with conversion.

### Goldfinch role

The trust may provide guidance on the process and support the school in preparing for the next stages, but the decision itself rests with the governing body.

#### 4. Application for academy conversion

Following the governing body's decision, the school submits the relevant application to the Department for Education.

Once submitted, the school formally enters the academy conversion process.

##### **Goldfinch role**

The trust supports the school in preparing the application and liaising with the Department for Education to ensure that the process proceeds efficiently.

#### 5. Working with the Department for Education and Local Authority

During the conversion process, the school works with the **Department for Education**, usually through the Regional Director's office and a designated project lead.

The school also continues to work closely with the **local authority**, which remains involved in important practical matters such as land and buildings arrangements, contracts, pensions, staffing and financial transfer arrangements.

##### **Goldfinch role**

The trust works alongside the school to coordinate communication with the DfE and the local authority and to help manage the practical aspects of conversion.

#### 6. Due diligence

Due diligence is a key stage where the trust and the school review important aspects of the school's operation to ensure that the transition will be smooth. Due diligence helps develop a shared understanding of the school's strengths, context and priorities.

Areas typically reviewed include:

- teaching and learning
- safeguarding and inclusion
- leadership and governance
- staffing and HR
- finance and contracts
- estates, land and premises
- policies and compliance

##### **Goldfinch role**

The trust coordinates this process and works collaboratively with the school to review information and address any issues that need to be resolved before conversion.

## 7. Stakeholder consultation

The school will normally consult with stakeholders about the proposal to join the trust.

Stakeholders may include:

- staff
- parents and carers
- pupils
- partner organisations
- the wider school community

Consultation allows the governing body to hear views and demonstrate that decisions are being made openly and thoughtfully.

### Goldfinch role

The trust can support the school in planning consultation activities and providing information that helps explain the proposed partnership.

## 8. Legal and transfer arrangements

Alongside consultation and due diligence, legal work progresses to ensure the school can convert successfully.

This stage typically includes:

- establishing the legal arrangements for the school joining the trust
- reviewing land and buildings arrangements
- transferring assets and contracts
- preparing transfer documentation
- finalising the funding agreement with the Department for Education

Although much of this work takes place behind the scenes, it is essential to ensuring a secure transition.

### Goldfinch role

The trust works with legal advisers and the school to coordinate this process and ensure all required documentation is completed.

## 9. Staff consultation and TUPE

A key stage concerns staff.

When a maintained school converts to academy status, staff normally transfer to the academy trust under the **Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE)**.

This means:

- staff transfer to the trust as their new employer
- continuity of service is preserved
- existing terms and conditions are protected at the point of transfer

The process usually includes consultation with recognised trade unions and meetings with staff to explain the transition.

### Goldfinch role

The trust works with the school and local authority to ensure that the consultation process is conducted correctly and that all employment requirements are met.

## 10. Final preparation for conversion

As the conversion date approaches, attention turns to ensuring that everything is ready.

This includes confirming that:

- legal documentation is complete
- governance arrangements are in place
- financial systems are operational
- staffing arrangements are finalised
- operational systems are prepared

Stakeholders are also kept informed so that everyone understands when the conversion will take place.

### Goldfinch role

The trust coordinates final preparation with the school to ensure all elements of the process are completed successfully.

## 11. Opening as a Goldfinch Trust school

On the agreed conversion date, the school formally opens as an academy within **The Goldfinch Trust**.

From that point:

- the trust becomes the employer of staff
- the trust board assumes strategic responsibility
- the school continues to operate with strong local leadership and governance

The school becomes part of a partnership of schools committed to ensuring that children and young people with complex health needs can continue to learn, achieve and thrive.