

Romero Conversion and Due Diligence Process Summary

- Diocesan officers have provided initial areas of focus for due diligence, this is available on the Salford Diocesan website as part of the academy’s strategy. Alongside this Romero Catholic Academy Trust (RCAT) will follow a number of due diligence steps.
- Due diligence begins at the point a school submits a Stage One application to the Diocesan Department for Education. This is a two-way process. The following steps are taken:

A) Stage 1- Timescale is around 4-6 weeks		
Area	Who this will involve and what it may look like.	Who is responsible for this?
1.Initial meetings	<p>The CEO will likely seek to meet the Headteacher once a Stage One application is submitted. This first conversation is to set the scene, and then clarify the next steps.</p> <p>This may result in a meeting with some or all Governors to begin to clarify what then needs to be done.</p> <p>These meetings then allow RCAT staff to complete due diligence within their areas of expertise, and this is done with the Headteacher and other school leaders.</p>	At the point RCAT is made aware of a Stage One application submission, the CEO will contact the Headteacher.
2.School Consultation	<p>At the point a school submits a Stage One application they are duty bound to carry out consultation with stake holders. This should include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents/carers of pupils at the school • for secondary, parents/carers of pupils in years 5 and 6 of any primary schools in the area • for primary, parents/carers of pupils offered a place at the school for the next academic year • staff working at the school and any staff due to be employed at the school from the next academic year • for secondary, pupils at the school • other local Catholic schools 	<p>This is the responsibility of the Governing Body.</p> <p>The CEO will be able to advise on how this process can be managed and provide administration support from the Central Team</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • other local schools • local clergy • the Local Authority <p>This consultation can be in the form of meetings and or surveys.</p> <p>Consultation should be completed prior to the Stage Two, application</p> <p>It is important that staff are involved and aware of this consultation process.</p>	<p>Communication is sent by the school. RCAT will attend and support consultation meetings with staff, parents and stakeholders</p>
3.Trust Due Diligence processes	<p>After a Stage One application has been submitted, the CEO will work with the Headteacher to arrange appropriate times for due diligence meetings/information collection to take place.</p> <p>RCAT will seek information including the following areas;</p> <p>Pupil numbers and forecasts Staff employment details any HR issues Financial information and data School estate data School current and historic standards data School contracts and SLAs School leases School digital and ICT data School asset list School supplier list</p> <p>This process may involve desktop exercises and site visits. All of these will be arranged in conjunction with school leaders.</p>	<p>This is the responsibility of RCAT, but there will need to be meetings facilitated by school leaders to allow this process to be carried out.</p> <p>Once this process has been completed RCAT will provide a short due diligence summary for the Trustees and RCAT Directors</p>
4.Due Diligence Review	<p>RCAT will complete a review meeting of all aspects of the due diligence process. This will generate a next steps document which will be shared with school leaders.</p>	<p>This will be completed by RCAT.</p>
B) Stage 2 Approval Process		
Area	Who this will involve and what it may look like.	Who is responsible for this?
1.Governors Meeting	<p>The Stage One process allows both schools and RCAT to understand each other’s context and review appropriate information so that a Governing Body is able to make an informed decision.</p> <p>A Full Governing Body meeting is needed to approve a Stage Two application to join RCAT, and the completion of the Stage Two application form,</p>	<p>The school is responsible for leading this meeting.</p> <p>The school is responsible for completing the Stage Two application form, RCAT</p>

		will support this process as needed.
2.Trustee meeting and approval	When the Stage Two application form has been sent to the Diocesan Office for Education, the request to convert will be discussed at the next Diocesan Trustees meeting,	The school will be informed once the Trustees have/have not given their approval.
3.DfE Converter Application form	For schools that wish to join a Trust voluntarily they are required to fill in the DfE application form. The link to this is here; https://apply-convert-academy.service.gov.uk/ <i>It is suggested that the school begin to complete this form as part of the Stage Two process, but only submit the form once Trustees have given approval.</i>	This form must be filled in by the school, with the support of RCAT. <i>Schools will need to have their DfE sign in and email address in order to access this service.</i>
C) Advisory Board Approval Process		
Area	Who this will involve and what it may look like.	Who is responsible for this?
1.Advisory Board discussion	At the point a school submits the DfE Converter application form, it will be shared with the appropriate region. At this point the regional link will then contact the Trust Leader to ask for relevant information about the school and the Trust's capacity to ensure it continues to improve. The Advisory Board process can take a number of months.	RCAT will be first point of contact in this process.
2. Advisory Board approval	At this point the Advisory Board approves an application they will let the Trust and school leaders know. It is at this stage that the school contacts Brown Jacobson to inform them they wish to engage them as part of the conversion process. A DfE project manager is then appointed, and the mechanics of the conversion process then begin. This includes; TUPE consultations Land registry and work on transfer of land and buildings	RCAT and School Leaders will then begin the process of formal conversion together.
3. Conversion date	As part of the project plan a conversion date will be agreed upon. This then becomes the focus of the monthly project meetings that will take place.	School Leaders/RCAT /DfE project lead/LA/Diocese

Timelines

The table below gives indicative timescales so that all stakeholders can understand the process. There is no flexibility with DfE dates. As can be seen, there is a two-month lag between completing a converter form, and then having the school appear on an advisory board agenda.

These dates are marginally different for the 2022/23 academic year, but the principles here will remain the same.

Diocesan Trustees will likely begin meeting more regularly to support this process.

Stage 2 consent application submitted to diocese	Stage 2 Consent considered at Trustees Schools Committee	Deadline for voluntary converter application to DfE	Agenda published on Gov.uk	Advisory Board Meeting	Earliest conversion date
6 September	15 September	1 October	26 November	16 December	1 May
		11 November	6 January	27 January	1 June
3 November	9 November	10 December	4 February	24 February	1 July
		7 January	4 March	24 March	1 Sept/Oct
28 December	11 January	4 February	2 April	21 April	1 October
		4 March	30 April	19 May	1 November
22 February	8 March	6 April	28 May	16 June	1 December
		3 May	28 June	14 July	1 Jan/1 Feb
		No August Advisory Board meeting			
27 April	10 May	29 June	24 August	14 September	1 March
		11 August	29 September	20 October	1 April/1 May
22 June	5 July	1 September	27 October	17 November	1 June