



Raising the bar

Our legal services for academy trusts

What we do for clients

We have worked on academy projects since the inception of the academy programme. This means Eversheds Sutherland has the right experience to provide you with a comprehensive one-stop-shop for all of your legal needs, whether it be in relation to academy projects, governance, HR, student, commercial, regulatory, real estate or litigation work.

Our services are delivered by a dedicated multi-disciplinary team of lawyers whose work is focused on the academy sector. We work with academies, multi-academy trusts, free schools, studio schools and UTCs and sponsor institutions.

We pride ourselves on being straightforward and accountable for the services we deliver.

How we can support your academy

Academy projects

Whether converting an existing school, adding a school to a MAT, re-brokering, acting as a sponsor or establishing a free school, studio school or a UTC we are able to provide you with legal support. Our experience includes incorporation of an academy company, real estate including PFI and PSBP, negotiating and settling of key documents (e.g. funding agreement, commercial transfer agreement), transfer of staff, and pensions advice.

Academy Governance

Eversheds Sutherland has created a unique fixed cost service for business managers, clerks, company secretaries, directors and members. This helpline gives 24- hour access via phone or email to our team of governance professionals. It covers any query in relation to:

- the memorandum and articles of association
- funding agreements
- the Academies Financial Handbook
- the Governors' Handbook
- charity law
- schemes of delegation
- roles of directors and members
- statutory registers and Companies House returns
- relationships between sponsors and academy trusts
- conduct of board and general meetings
- collaboration arrangements and service sharing

The helpline is accompanied by provision of an annotated copy of the DfE's model memorandum and articles, model policies (including a conflicts policy and a code of conduct for trustees) and access to a dedicated extranet.

Academy company administration

Our team assists academies with their ongoing compliance and statutory obligations under the Companies Act 2006, ensuring that all Companies House returns and statutory registers are correctly completed and filed by specified deadlines.

Litigation hotline

Eversheds Sutherland recognises that one of the main challenges faced by academies in getting the right legal advice is budgetary.

We also understand that instructing lawyers externally can involve 'red tape' that is often disproportionate when, quick, one-off pieces of advice are required. Sometimes you just want to pick up the phone and talk to litigation lawyers on an informal basis for a view on the issue you face. You would also like to send through documents by email for a high level review without having to consider the impact on your legal spend.

As we regularly assist clients with the following we are well placed to assist with:

- fraud/theft
- discrimination claims
- parental complaints
- employment disputes/litigation
- boardroom disputes
- allegations of malpractice
- misuse of social media
- corporate manslaughter/injuries at work
- disputes with funding bodies and regulators
- disputes with suppliers
- data protection breaches

Annual HR/student retainers

Our retainers allow you to secure comprehensive HR/ student support for your academy on a fixed fee basis. This would typically include:

- access to a helpline
- review of policies and procedures
- drafting/amending key correspondence
- access to webinars, electronic bulletins and updates
- in-house training sessions or legal advice surgeries.

These services can be tailored to meet specific needs of any academy no matter how big or small.

Key areas of advice

- multi-academy trust project work
- academy conversion/establishment
- establishing federations and other collaborative arrangements
- charity law
- procurement/outsourcing
- commercial contracts
- shared use agreements
- hiring agreements
- leases
- PFI/priority schools building scheme
- TUPE, reorganisations, mergers, industrial relations and investigations
- disciplinary, grievance, sickness absence and performance matters
- drafting/reviewing contracts and handbooks
- teachers' pay and conditions/NJC frameworks
- discrimination legislation and diversity
- Teachers' and Local Government pensions schemes
- severance and settlement agreements
- employment tribunal representation
- HR consultancy
- Schools Admissions Code
- exclusions
- judicial review applications
- discrimination cases/SENDIST proceedings
- child protection/vetting and barring
- immigration
- health and safety
- data protection/freedom of information

Approach to fees

For all instructions that you give us we will always provide an upfront fixed or capped fee that will not be departed from unless your instructions change.

What happens next?

For more information please contact:



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For a no obligation conversation on the services we can offer please contact one of the team. Please also visit our web page www.eversheds-sutherland.com/global/en/where/europe/uk/sectors/education/academies.page



What are people saying about us?

"Eversheds Sutherland offers substantial expertise in education law, including matters relating to pensions, admissions, data protection and freedom of information. The team counsels a range of education clients and has significant experience handling academy transfers and conversions. It is steeped in all facets of governance and regulatory compliance, as well as the full spectrum of contentious matters."

"Ben Wood frequently assists multi-academy trusts with academy conversions and employment issues. He is experienced in handling executive pay reviews, parental complaints and employment tribunal proceedings concerning discrimination claims."

"They're smart lawyers who understood the commercial aspects of any issue we raised."

"I am always confident in Eversheds' knowledge of our sector. We seek advice on a wide range of issues and there is always an expert available to give advice."

Chambers & Partners

"Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP has a track record of handling complex work for multi-academy trusts, free schools and UTCs, including the transfer of church schools into MATs and academy conversions."

"The people are intelligent, demonstrate high levels of moral integrity and humanity. They are also very emotional intelligent and able to deal effectively to a wide range of different, and often complex situations."

"The Education: Schools practice at Eversheds Sutherland is experienced, competent and responsive, with a broad base of knowledge in academisation, assets transfers, new building projects and DfE interaction."

Legal 500

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are part of a global legal practice, operating through various separate and
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the structure and a list of offices, please visit www.eversheds-sutherland.com
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