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Dear Parents/Carers

As you will know from the news, education in this country is changing. The government is promoting an academisation agenda that allows greater freedoms for schools. The government believes such a policy gives governors and headteachers greater opportunities to provide an excellent education for children.

Over 60 per cent of all secondary schools in England are now academies and more than 20 per cent of primary schools have also converted to academy status and this number is growing rapidly.

Some schools are converting to academy status and then joining forces with like-minded schools so as to gain greater freedom to choose how we use our funding and resources, design our curriculum and make choices that will directly benefit our children and the wider community. In addition, by joining together with other like-minded schools to form a Multi Academy Trust or MAT, each school can benefit from being stronger together whilst retaining its own leadership and day to day decision making.

You will be aware that in the East Riding, a number of schools have already become academies and some have already formed Multi Academy Trusts with other schools. At Riston the governors and staff team have been considering the options available for the school, observing what is happening and trying to work out what is the best way forward.

Following a governors' meeting in July, we are today launching a consultation period to explore the possibility of converting to academy status. This does not mean to say we will become an academy, it is simply to commit to exploring the options and seeing if this move is right for us – our staff, our children and our community.

To do nothing would be an option, but in these changing times, with less support from the local authority because of cost savings imposed from central government, it is not perhaps a realistic option if we want to continue to look at ways to improve our school.

During this consultation period, senior staff and governors will arrange formal meetings and drop-in events to discuss the principle of becoming an academy with parents, carers and staff. There will be every opportunity for everyone's views to be heard and questions answered, before governors make the final decision. There is a lot of work to do and we will keep you informed at every stage.

Should we decide to academise, we are looking at joining forces with Ebor Academy Trust, originally a York-based Multi Academy Trust which now has an East Riding and The Humber Hub, along with hubs in Selby, York and on the Yorkshire Coast. In early, informal talks with Ebor, we have discovered they share our values and ethos and we believe their policy of putting the child at the centre of everything that they do and aspire to do makes them potentially, an ideal partner. Should we decide to academise and join them, they would handle core business activities such as payroll, HR and site management, leaving teaching and learning – our real passions – to us. Academisation would not stop us working with our local schools and we would continue to work closely with our feeder secondary, church benefice school group and the Hornsea cluster schools.

We know that the prospect of change can be worrying for many people but we want to reassure you that no decision will be taken before governors are completely satisfied they are in possession of all the information they need, including considering feedback from this comprehensive consultation with all our stakeholders. We welcome your views, comments and contributions about supporting the best way forward for our school.

An information sheet is attached with more details and a timeline of consultation activities, together with some frequently asked questions and answers. We have uploaded a magazine from Ebor on to our website that will help you understand more about the organisation that we may eventually join and why they appear such a good “fit” for Riston. You will find all documents about the consultation on our school website in the parent information section. Any further questions and answers, as they come up, will be posted online.

We do hope you are able to attend at least one of our consultation events.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Hall
Headteacher

Mr David Stork
Chair of Governors