



Dear parents/carers,

## **An Update on the Embark Proposal**

The summer term has started well for us in school this week. I hope you and your families had a very good Easter break and this week has also gone well for you.

I wanted to provide you with a brief update on the proposal AGS governors continue to consider, which would see AGS joining Embark as one of four Derbyshire secondary schools to join this Trust in 2022-23. Any proposal such as this has to be considered by an Advisory Board, and the Regional Schools' Commissioner (who represents the DfE) has to give approval before the proposal can proceed beyond a certain point. You may remember that the Advisory Board first reviewed the proposal involving Anthony Gell School, Aldercar High School, Buxton Community School, Parkside Community School and the Embark Federation, at the start of the Spring term and triggered a programme of enhanced due diligence. This detailed due diligence included various practitioners with expertise and a great deal of experience visiting each of the schools and carrying out reviews on quality of education, safeguarding and pastoral care, buildings and site, finances and HR.

The Advisory Board met again on Wednesday and looked in detail at what the due diligence had concluded about AGS, Embark, and the other three secondaries. I met with the Regional Schools Commissioner on Wednesday evening, and she informed me that proposal had received unanimous support from the Board, and she was happy to give it her approval. She told me how impressed she was with the work which had been undertaken by Embark and the four secondaries and how the reports showed AGS to be a strong school. This means that the DfE have now issued what is called 'an academy order' for AGS and indicated a timeline they believe to be realistic if each school wishes to proceed to conversion. Although the detailed due diligence was hard work and took a lot of time, it proved to be very reassuring for us as a school, when a range of external experts gave us their seals of approval, and when the strength of the other three secondaries who are part of this proposal was also confirmed.

The Academy Orders also permit each school to start a period of formal consultation about the proposal. This type of consultation could not happen prior to the issuing of an Academy Order, but this has not stopped us from sharing important information and giving people a chance to ask questions and express opinions. The formal consultation would add to what we have done to date. Governors are still the only people who can decide whether or not a school becomes an academy, as long as the school is rated 'good' or better by Ofsted, and this remains the case even after an academy order is issued.

Our governors will continue to meet regularly in order to review progress and study information about Embark and future partnerships. Our governors are due to meet again next Wednesday, and they will decide whether to continue with the work being done around the Embark proposal. If governors opt to proceed, they will also decide when the formal consultation will start and end at AGS and how this formal consultation will be shaped to enable stakeholders to receive more information about the proposal, ask questions, and express a view.

I will write to you again with another update towards the end of next week.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm Kelly', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Malcolm Kelly**  
**Headteacher**