



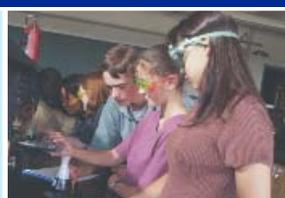
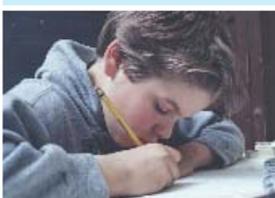
# Co-operative Schools

Information for Governors and School Leaders



**NASUWT**  
The Teachers' Union

The Schools  
Co-operative Society



The Schools Co-operative Society and the NASUWT are proud to be working together to promote co-operative solutions for schools.

Co-operative schools are committed to the highest standards of education for all children and young people and to ensuring high quality public services for their communities.

Co-operative schools are passionate about providing an environment where pupils can learn, develop and feel part of their school.

Around the world, educators are recognising the potential of co-operative solutions as an alternative to privatisation. Co-operative solutions are one of the fastest growing sectors in education.

Co-operative schools are founded on the principle of mutualism and they are not run for profit. Because of these values, co-operative solutions for schools are becoming very popular.

## **Legal status**

Many governing bodies and school leaders want to ensure that in a rapidly changing and uncertain environment, they can ensure that their schools remain a part of the local community and that the ethos of their school is preserved.

Co-operative schools have available a range of legal options to ensure that their values and principles are built into their structures and systems in perpetuity. By opting to become a legal co-operative entity, co-operative schools are ensuring that their values and principles will continue in perpetuity, irrespective of changes of personnel at the school.

By becoming either a co-operative trust school or co-operative academy, co-operative schools can ensure that:

- they will continue to serve the needs of their community by staying locally run;

- there will be long-term commitment to the school's co-operative ethos;
- all stakeholders, including parents, staff, pupils and members of the local community, will continue to have a say in what happens to their school.

## **Co-operative trust schools**

Co-operative trust schools embody co-operative values and principles and are committed to involving stakeholders (including parents/carers, learners, staff and the local community) in the governance of the school.

A co-operative trust school is a legal entity that operates on a self-governing basis. A co-operative trust may involve a single school. In other cases, a co-operative trust may include a partnership between a group of schools.

A trust school is a maintained school supported by a charitable foundation (often called the trust). Although there are various forms of trust model, a co-operative trust model has become very popular.

Co-operative trusts adopt a co-operative model for their structures and governance. This usually involves:

- adopting co-operative values and principles; and
- ensuring that the key stakeholders, such as parents, staff, learners and members of the local community, have a guaranteed 'say' in the affairs of the organisation.

A co-operative trust model involves people from the stakeholder groups becoming members of the 'educational co-operative' for the school or cluster of schools.

There are various forms of co-operative trust model:

- a single school co-operative trust;

- a cluster trust with several schools within the trust; and
- hybrid models involving academies and trusts.

Schools that form a cluster will retain their independence but gain advantages from working as part of a wider cluster. They also remain within the local authority family of schools.

Schools wanting to become a co-operative trust need to demonstrate a commitment to co-operative values and principles.

The Schools Co-operative Society can advise schools on how to become a co-operative trust.

## **Co-operative academies**

Schools that meet the criteria for conversion to academy status are able to select a co-operative academy model. This model has been created by the co-operative college and is approved by the Department for Education (DfE).

Schools that choose to adopt a co-operative model for conversion to academy status continue to apply co-operative values and principles in their work, and will also guarantee to provide a voice for key stakeholders in their school and local community (ie. parents/carers, staff and pupils).

Co-operative academies also benefit from being part of the co-operative family of schools through membership of the Schools Co-operative Society.

The Co-operative College offers a comprehensive package of services to support schools throughout the process of academy conversion.

If a school has already converted to academy status using the standard articles, it can still become a co-operative academy and thereby become part of the growing network of co-operative schools.

## **Reasons to co-operate**

### **Co-operative schools have co-operative values**

Collaboration, collegiality and co-operation are key to building successful schools and to fostering the best conditions for pupils to learn and achieve.

### **Co-operative schools are democratic schools**

Commitment to sound ethical principles is the bedrock of all co-operative schools. Co-operative schools recognise the value of involving all stakeholders – pupils, parents, staff and the local community – in building successful learning communities.

### **Co-operative schools embed co-operative learning**

Co-operative schools put their values into practice in everything that they do, including the curriculum.

### **Co-operative schools are inclusive schools**

Co-operative schools serve the local community and are dedicated to ensuring equality for all children. They encourage all stakeholders to have a say in the governance of their schools.

### **Co-operative schools are committed to high educational standards**

Co-operative values help schools secure high educational standards and opportunities for pupils to access a broad and balanced curriculum. Co-operative schools give pupils opportunities to develop a practical understanding of their role as citizens and how they can help build a fairer society.

### **Co-operative schools are the single fastest growing model of schools**

Co-operative schools are good schools, and more and more governing bodies and school leaders are recognising the potential of co-operative solutions for schools.

## **Further information**

For further information on how to become part of the network of co-operative schools, visit the Schools Co-operative Society website at:

[www.co-operativeschools.coop](http://www.co-operativeschools.coop).

Or the Co-operative College website at:

[www.co-op.ac.uk/schools](http://www.co-op.ac.uk/schools).

Or email: [schools@co-op.ac.uk](mailto:schools@co-op.ac.uk).

## **The Schools Co-operative Society**

The Schools Co-operative Society is the apex body of the educational co-operative sector set up to co-ordinate, support and give a voice to the hundreds of co-operative trusts and co-operative academies across the UK. The Schools Co-operative Society is a co-operative, owned and democratically run by its members.

Visit [www.co-operativeschools.coop](http://www.co-operativeschools.coop).

## **NASUWT – The Teachers’ Union**

The NASUWT is the largest union representing teachers and school leaders throughout the UK.

Visit [www.nasuwat.org.uk/cooperatives](http://www.nasuwat.org.uk/cooperatives).