

Trust Growth

Weald of Kent Grammar School

Frequently Asked Questions
for GLT Staff, Parents and Students



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From the Chief Executive Officer and Chair of Trust Board

We are delighted to share this information about the Girls' Learning Trust's consideration of welcoming Weald of Kent Grammar School into our community.

As a Trust, our focus has always been clear: to transform lives through girls' education. Every decision we make — from how we develop our schools to how we allocate resources — is guided by what will best serve our students, staff, and the wider communities we work with.

The potential addition of Weald of Kent is a natural and exciting step in our journey. It represents a meeting of values and vision: two organisations with a shared belief in the power of girls' education to shape confident, compassionate, and ambitious young women. Weald's ethos, academic strength, and commitment to student wellbeing align closely with our own, and together we can extend the benefits of collaboration, expertise, and opportunity even further.

We want to reassure our staff, students, and families that the Girls' Learning Trust's identity, values, and priorities will remain unchanged. Our schools will continue to thrive as distinctive communities — each with its own character and leadership — supported by a shared framework that promotes excellence, wellbeing, and inclusion.

This FAQ document sets out what the proposed development means in practice: what will stay the same, what will grow stronger, and how we will ensure the process is thoughtful, transparent, and rooted in our Trust's purpose.

Thank you for taking the time to read it and for your continued commitment to our shared mission.

With best wishes



Dr Thomas Flynn
Chief Executive Officer



Emily Tofield
Chair of Trust Board

1. Why is the Girls' Learning Trust considering welcoming another school?

The Girls' Learning Trust is exploring the opportunity for Weald of Kent Grammar School to join our Trust as part of our commitment to long-term sustainability and to extending the benefits of girls' education more widely.

Across the education sector, local authority support for schools has significantly reduced over the past decade, with key services such as school improvement, governance advice, HR, finance, and health and safety often limited or outsourced. This has increased the demands placed on individual schools, making it more difficult for them to sustain high standards and strategic capacity on their own.

By joining a strong, values-led and financially secure Trust dedicated solely to girls' education, schools gain access to a more stable and specialist support model. This includes shared professional expertise, strategic collaboration, and access to collective resources — enabling schools to focus on what matters most: the quality of education and the wellbeing of students.

The decision to welcome a new school is guided by a single question that underpins all our growth decisions **“On a long-term and sustained basis, are students better off in our Trust?”**

If the answer is yes — for both the school joining and the schools already within the Trust — then it is the right step for our community.

2. Why Weald of Kent Grammar School?

Weald of Kent Grammar School is a high-performing, values-driven girls' school that shares the Girls' Learning Trust's belief in the power of girls' education to transform lives. It is a happy, purposeful, and academically ambitious community, built around a commitment to developing the whole student — intellectually, emotionally, and personally.

Under the leadership of Headteacher Richard Booth (a former Headteacher at Wallington High School for Girls), the school has made impressive progress in recent years. Its latest Ofsted inspection (October 2024) judged the school Good in all areas, recognising its strong culture of care, high academic standards, and clear ethos centred on confidence, curiosity, and compassion. Inspectors praised the calm, purposeful learning environment and noted that “pupils value the school's caring and nurturing ethos” and that behaviour across both sites is consistently excellent.

Weald's educational approach aligns closely with our Trust's mission to deliver a holistic and transformative education. Its curriculum is coherently planned, academically rigorous, and enriched by extensive opportunities for co-curricular learning — from robotics and trampolining to leadership programmes and academic competitions. Lessons are taught by passionate subject specialists, and teaching is consistently of a high quality, with students achieving results among the best nationally.

The school's ethos mirrors the Trust's values of integrity, collaboration, and reflection, underpinned by its own core principles of curiosity, courage, and compassion. Its strong pastoral system — with individual tutors, Heads of Year, and a dedicated student services team — ensures that students are nurtured and supported to thrive.

Strategically, Weald represents a natural and thoughtful next step for the Trust's development. Located within a practical travel radius of our existing schools, it would allow meaningful collaboration and professional exchange without compromising local identity or accessibility.

If approved, Weald of Kent would become the fourth school in the Girls' Learning Trust, bringing:

- A distinctive grammar school perspective from another (but closely linked) geographical area, that complements our existing mix of selective and comprehensive schools.
- Additional subject expertise, leadership capacity, and curriculum innovation.
- More opportunities for staff collaboration and student enrichment across our network.

Above all, Weald's values, ethos, and vision align powerfully with our own. Both organisations place girls at the centre of their mission — empowering them to thrive academically and personally, to lead with integrity, and to shape the future with confidence and compassion.

3. Will anything change about the Trust's name, identity, or character?

No. The Girls' Learning Trust will continue to operate under its existing name and identity. Our purpose, values, and educational focus will remain exactly the same — to transform lives through girls' education. We will continue to:

- Deliver girls-only education across all our schools (with mixed Sixth Form provision where this already exists).
- Uphold our shared values of integrity, collaboration, and reflection.
- Retain our current leadership and governance framework, including the Trust Board, Executive Leadership Team, and Local Governing Bodies.
- Preserve each school's autonomy and distinctive character, ensuring that local ethos, culture, and community relationships remain central to how every school operates.

What defines the Girls' Learning Trust will not change:

- A commitment to academic excellence, wellbeing, and inclusion.
- A belief that girls' education should be transformative and holistic, nurturing confidence, curiosity, and leadership.
- A culture of collaboration without uniformity, where schools share best practice and resources while retaining their individuality.

If approved, Weald of Kent would become part of the GLT— joining as a partner that strengthens and complements our existing community, not as a merger or rebrand.

4. How does this align with the Trust's strategy?

The Girls' Learning Trust's Strategy and Operating Model sets out a clear and ambitious vision for sustainable growth: one that strengthens our ability to deliver excellence in girls' education while maintaining the individuality and integrity of each school.

Our strategy defines seven core reasons for acting at Trust level, all designed to create stronger, more resilient schools. These include:

- Improving efficiency and reducing duplication of effort across schools.
- Delivering specialist support in key areas such as safeguarding, finance, estates, IT, and governance.
- Strengthening resilience in areas of operational and strategic risk.

- Building capacity for long-term leadership development and talent retention.
- Ensuring that resources and expertise are shared where they make the biggest difference.
- Embedding a culture of professional collaboration across all schools.
- Sustaining the long-term financial and educational health of the Trust.

Welcoming another school — in this case, Weald of Kent Grammar School — directly supports these aims. Growth is not about size for its own sake; it is about depth, quality, and sustainability. A fourth school would expand the Trust’s professional network, create new leadership pathways, and enable collective solutions to shared challenges, such as recruitment, estates investment, and student wellbeing.

Any decision to grow the Trust is always guided by our three key tests, which ensure that expansion serves both educational and strategic interests:

- Can the Trust add educational value to the school?
- Can the school add educational value to the Trust?
- Can the Trust provide sustainable capacity and support for both?

Only when all three conditions are met — meaning that growth enhances opportunities for all students and strengthens the Trust as a whole — do we move forward.

In short, the consideration of Weald of Kent joining the Girls’ Learning Trust is not a departure from our strategy, but a natural expression of it: a carefully planned step that supports our mission to transform lives through girls’ education.

5. What are the benefits for current students and staff and in the Trust?

Welcoming Weald of Kent Grammar School into the Girls’ Learning Trust would strengthen our collective capacity, deepen professional collaboration, and create new opportunities for both students and staff across all schools. The Trust’s approach to growth is guided by one simple principle: any change must *enhance what already works and extend opportunities for everyone* within the GLT community.

For students:

Joining with another successful girls’ school expands the range of academic, cultural, and enrichment opportunities available across the Trust. Students would benefit from:

- More joint enrichment and leadership activities, including academic competitions, STEM challenges, arts events, and leadership conferences.
- A wider network of peers across four schools, strengthening student voice, collaboration, and cross-school leadership programmes.
- Broader curriculum expertise, with shared subject development, visiting speakers, and new opportunities for collaborative projects.
- Enhanced co-curricular provision, including shared societies, trips, and exchange visits that promote curiosity, confidence, and connection.

These opportunities enrich students’ experiences while reinforcing the Trust’s mission to empower girls to thrive both in and beyond the classroom.

For staff:

Staff across the Trust already benefit from collaborative professional networks and access to high-quality training. With four schools, this professional community would grow even stronger. Key benefits include:

- Expanded subject and leadership networks, enabling teachers and leaders to exchange best practice, share resources, and innovate together.
- New career progression pathways, with opportunities for secondments, mentoring, and Trust-wide leadership roles.
- Continued focus on wellbeing and workload, supported by shared professional services and reduced administrative burden.

By growing our community, we strengthen the collective expertise that benefits every teacher and student.

For schools:

Growth enhances the Trust's resilience, efficiency, and ability to deliver high-quality education sustainably. Benefits include:

- Greater economies of scale, improving value for money in areas such as IT, estates, HR, and procurement.
- Increased operational and strategic resilience, through shared expertise in safeguarding, compliance, and risk management.
- A broader pool of professional insight, allowing schools to learn from one another's strengths while retaining their own character and autonomy.
- Access to more specialist support, ensuring each school can focus its time and energy on teaching and learning.

6. Will students have opportunities to collaborate across schools?

Yes. One of the main advantages of being part of the Girls' Learning Trust is that students are able to learn, collaborate, and lead beyond their own school community. We already deliver cross-Trust initiatives such as leadership conferences, STEM partnerships, and subject-specific projects.

If Weald of Kent joins the Trust, students will gain access to even wider opportunities, including:

- Joint enrichment days, exchange visits, and shared societies.
- Cross-school competitions in areas such as sport, debating, and the arts.
- Leadership and mentoring networks connecting Sixth Form students across all schools.

These experiences help students broaden their perspectives, develop confidence, and feel part of a connected community of girls' schools working together to empower their success.

7. What does this mean for governance and decision-making?

Each school within the Girls' Learning Trust will continue to have its own Local Governing Body (LGB), maintaining strong local accountability and community connection. The structure is formally codified within the Trust's Governance Framework and Education Development and Assurance (EDA) Framework, which together establish a clear model of autonomy with alignment — empowering each

school to retain its distinctive character while working within a shared system of Trust-wide expectations and standards.

Each LGB will continue to include:

- Elected parent and staff governors.
- Local community representatives.
- A close working partnership with the school's leadership team.

The LGB's key responsibilities are to:

- Support and challenge the Headteacher in driving educational excellence.
- Monitor safeguarding, wellbeing, and student outcomes.
- Represent the views of parents, staff, and the local community.
- Contribute to Trust governance through formal reporting and collaboration mechanisms.

At Trust level, the Trust Board has overall legal, financial, and strategic responsibility for all schools. It ensures that every school thrives and that decisions are consistent with the Trust's charitable purpose. The Chair of each LGB becomes a member of the Trust Board, ensuring that local voices directly inform Trust-wide planning and oversight.

The governance structure also enables collaboration across schools — for example, through joint governance forums and LGB representation on the Trust's Finance Committee — ensuring that local insight and professional expertise shape both strategic and operational decisions across the Trust.

8. Will support services in the Trust change?

Yes, but in a planned and positive way. The development of our support services has been strategic and deliberate, with the Executive Leadership Team and Shared Professional Services (SPS) preparing for potential growth for the past 18 months.

The Trust's Shared Professional Services model covering finance, HR, IT, estates, governance, compliance, and data will remain identical in structure and leadership, continuing to be overseen by the same members of the Executive Leadership Team. This ensures continuity, stability, and the same high standard of service that schools currently experience.

As the Trust grows, different service areas will develop in ways that reflect their specific functions and priorities:

- Some areas, such as health and safety, will expand further to provide increased on-site support and capacity.
- Other services will become more efficient through scale, freeing up resources and allowing the Trust to reinvest savings back into school budgets.
- Core functions like finance, estates, IT, HR, and governance will continue to operate to the same standards and service levels that staff and leaders rely on today.

The guiding principle remains unchanged: to provide high-quality, consistent, and responsive support that enables schools to focus on students, teaching, and learning.

This growth represents not a structural overhaul but a strengthening of what already works — ensuring that as the Trust expands, every school continues to benefit from expert, efficient, and value-driven professional services.

9. Will there be changes to Trust-wide policies?

Broadly, no — there will be no changes for existing Girls' Learning Trust schools. All current Trust policies will remain in place and continue to apply exactly as they do now.

When a new school joins, there is always a planned and managed period of alignment to ensure that its policies, procedures, and systems are consistent with Trust standards. This process affects only the new school and does not alter the policies or practices already established across our existing schools.

For Weald of Kent, this would involve a phased review and alignment of key areas such as safeguarding, behaviour, HR, finance, and data protection, supported by the Trust's Shared Professional Services team. This ensures that all schools operate within a single, coherent framework — one that balances autonomy with alignment, as set out in the Trust's Governance Framework and Education Development & Assurance (EDA) Framework.

In short, Trust policies will remain unchanged for our current schools, while the integration process will bring the new school up to the same consistent, high standards over time.

10. Will admissions arrangements change for any of our schools?

No. All three schools in the Trust will continue to operate their existing published admissions arrangements, including the same oversubscription criteria, PAN, and processes for application, testing (where applicable), and appeal.

If Weald of Kent Grammar School joins the Girls' Learning Trust, it would also retain its own published admissions arrangements and admissions authority responsibilities in the same way it does now, operating within the statutory School Admissions Code and School Admission Appeals Code. Any changes to admissions arrangements for any school can only be made through the formal statutory process, including consultation where required, and would be published clearly in advance. In practical terms, this means:

- For Nonsuch High School for Girls and Wallington High School for Girls: admissions would remain all girls at all key stages and selective in the same way as now, with the same testing model and published arrangements.
- For Carshalton High School for Girls: admissions would remain comprehensive (non-selective) in the same way as now, with the same published criteria and processes.
- For Weald of Kent Grammar School (if it joins): admissions would remain selective in line with its published arrangements (rooted in the Kent system), including any established processes for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments for applicants who require them.

The Trust's role is to ensure strong compliance, transparency, and consistency in how statutory requirements are met — not to standardise admissions across schools. Each school's admissions remain rooted in its local context, legal duties, and published policy.

11. Is the Trust still focused on girls?

Yes. The Girls' Learning Trust remains unequivocally and deliberately focused on girls' education. That focus is not changing. Our purpose, strategy, and operating model are explicitly centred on transforming lives through girls' education. This commitment shapes:

- Our school structures, which remain girls-only (with a tolerance for limited mixed Sixth Form provision only where this already exists based on school viability).
- Our curriculum intent, designed to empower girls to achieve academic excellence and develop confidence, curiosity, and leadership.
- Our pastoral and wellbeing systems, which reflect the specific social, developmental, and emotional needs of girls and young women.
- Our professional development, which draws on research and best practice in girls' education and leadership.

If Weald of Kent Grammar School joins the Trust, it would strengthen — not dilute — this focus. It is itself a girls' school with a strong commitment to academic ambition, character development, and student wellbeing. Growth in this context means deepening our shared expertise in girls' education across a broader network of schools.

12. Are there plans for another comprehensive school?

Yes. Our long-term intention is that the Girls' Learning Trust should remain a balanced and principled mix of selective and non-selective girls' schools. We are not seeking to become a wholly selective Trust. Our identity is rooted in girls' education — not in a single admissions model. We believe there is strength in bringing together different types of high-performing girls' schools within one coherent, values-led framework.

It is important to recognise the very different local contexts in which our schools operate:

- Sutton is not a fully selective local authority. It operates a mixed secondary system, where a small number of grammar schools sit alongside comprehensive schools. Selective schools exist within a broader non-selective framework.
- Kent, by contrast, operates a county-wide selective system. Secondary education is structured around selection at 11 across the authority, creating a fundamentally different educational landscape.

If Weald of Kent joins the Trust, it would do so within the Kent selective system, just as our Sutton schools operate within their own local admissions landscape. The Trust does not change those local realities — nor does it seek to.

Looking ahead, if the Trust were to grow further over time, our intention would be to maintain a thoughtful balance between selective and non-selective provision, reflecting the diversity of the communities we serve.

13. How does growth affect Trust finances and resources?

Our financial model is collaborative, transparent, and proportionate. Unlike many multi-academy trusts, the Girls' Learning Trust does not operate a fixed "top slice" model. Instead, shared costs are apportioned fairly between schools based on their income and the actual services they receive. This ensures that every school contributes appropriately and benefits equitably.

Growth strengthens our collective financial resilience — enabling us to secure better value for money through economies of scale, negotiate more competitive contracts, and invest in specialist staff and systems that would be beyond the reach of individual schools. It also allows us to plan more strategically for capital projects, estates improvements, and innovation in teaching and learning.

At the same time, our size remains intentionally sustainable. We are large enough to gain the efficiencies and expertise of a Trust structure, but not so large that we lose our personal, school-centred approach or need to move to a top-slice funding model.

All financial decisions are subject to rigorous review by the Trust Board and Finance Committee, ensuring transparency, accountability, and long-term sustainability for every school within the Trust.

14. What role will staff and governors play during the transition?

The transition process will be collaborative and carefully managed, with most of the work led by members of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and the Shared Professional Services (SPS) teams. These groups will oversee due diligence, policy alignment, and operational planning to ensure a smooth and consistent integration.

If Weald of Kent joins, members of the Trust Leaders' Network will also be invited to take part — particularly in areas such as curriculum development, inclusion, pastoral care, and professional learning. Their input will help to ensure that educational alignment reflects the strengths and expertise of all our schools.

Trustees and members of Local Governing Bodies will be kept fully informed throughout the process.

This approach allows the transition to be professionally led and strategically coordinated, while ensuring that staff and leaders across the Trust play an active role in shaping how Weald of Kent becomes part of the Girls' Learning Trust community.

MYTH BUSTER

Myth 1: “Funding will be taken away from our school to pay for others.”

Truth: The Girls’ Learning Trust operates a fair and transparent financial model. There is no fixed ‘top slice’ — instead, each school contributes proportionately to shared services based on its income and the support it receives. Schools do not subsidise one another.

As the Trust grows, economies of scale actually strengthen financial resilience — helping all schools achieve better value for money, invest in new expertise, and retain more funds for teaching and learning.

Myth 2: “Support services will get worse once they’re shared with another school.”

Truth: Quite the opposite — shared services will grow in capacity and quality. The Trust has been planning for potential expansion for over 18 months, ensuring that all Shared Professional Services (SPS) areas are scalable and sustainable.

The model and leadership will remain exactly the same, led by the same Executive Team members. In fact, growth allows for additional investment in areas such as health and safety, estates, and IT, and will even return savings back into school budgets over time.

Myth 3: “There will be lots of disruption for students.”

Truth: Students will see very little immediate change in their daily experience. Lessons, staff, and routines will remain exactly the same, and each school will retain its unique character and leadership.

Over time, students will gain access to new opportunities — such as joint enrichment events, leadership programmes, and collaborations across schools — enhancing their experience rather than disrupting it.

Myth 4: “Our school will lose its autonomy or identity.”

Truth: Each school in the Girls’ Learning Trust retains its own identity, ethos, and leadership, operating with autonomy within alignment — a principle codified in the Trust’s Governance Framework and Education Development & Assurance (EDA) Framework.

Decisions about teaching, curriculum, and culture remain local, while schools benefit from shared strategic support, governance, and professional collaboration at Trust level.