

**Free Schools - Proposal Form**

The Proposal Form asks you for details on the educational aims and objectives, parental demand and premises of the proposed Free School. It also asks questions about the suitability of the provider(s) involved. All new Free Schools will be opened with the same legal status as Academies, in a binding agreement with the Secretary of State.

Please note, all information provided in this form will be published on the Department for Education website.

**INITIAL DETAILS**

**Name** (Please specify if you are the nominated representative of an organisation that wishes to set up a Free School)

██████████ - Nominated by my organisation to act in this matter

**Name of your organisation**

Nationwide Independent College of Higher Education

**Address** (of organisation or individual)

NICHE Yorkshire, ██████████, Mexborough, South Yorkshire ██████████

**Email Contact** ██████████

**Telephone Number**

██████████ or ██████████

**Are you an existing independent school wanting to convert to a Free School?**

No

**If yes, please provide your 6-digit school unique reference number (URN)**

**If no, please confirm the nature of your organisation** (educational group / charity / business / parent group etc)  
Educational Group - Private College of Further & Higher Education

**Please confirm whether your organisation is incorporated** i.e. set up as a Company which is registered at Companies House. If so, please provide the Company Registration Number, Company Address and details of the Directors and Secretary. If not, please indicate the approximate date by which it will be incorporated.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes, our organisation is incorporated</b>  Company Registration Number: 7143537  Company Address: Reg Office: [REDACTED], London [REDACTED]  Details of Directors and Secretary: [REDACTED] [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Essex [REDACTED]
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>No, our organisation is not yet incorporated</b>  Approximate date by which it will be incorporated: We are currently preparing to establish a new Company Limited by Guarantee, 'Three Valleys Independent Academy', which will assume control of the proposed operation. It will have several Directors, initially [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. As a not-for-profit organisation, this will facilitate the operation of the Charitable Trust required.

**In which Local Authority area will the school be based?** If you are near to a LA boundary, please include name of neighbouring LA(s)

Local Authority Rotherham MBC  Neighbouring LAs Doncaster MBC and Barnsley MBC
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**Is your Local Authority aware of your intention to set up a Free School?**

**Yes**

(If Y please give details of your discussions with them so far)  
As we hope to serve communities that sit within the three adjacent local authority area that comprise the Manvers area, we have approached all three LA's. The results of this so far are:  
Rotherham MBC - Written response: opposed to development  
Barnsley MBC - No Response  
Doncaster MBC - Invitation to open discussions with Senior Education

Officers (invitation from Elected Mayor), but considerable public opposition from Doncaster Labour Party

In addition to our attempts to engage with the Local Authorities mentioned we have discussed our proposal with [REDACTED], [REDACTED], who was broadly supportive of our aims.

**SUITABILITY OF PROVIDER**

The Secretary of State will consider each proposal on its merits, and take into account all matters relevant to that proposal. Generally, he would expect that all proposals will comply with all aspects of the rigorous suitability and vetting tests throughout the application process, including due diligence and CRB checks and will reject any proposers who advocate violence, intolerance, hatred or whose ideology runs counter to the UK's democratic values.

Do any of the following apply to the organisation (or any consortium member), or to (any of) its director(s)/partners/proprietor(s) or individual applicants (select Y/N):	
Is in a state of bankruptcy, insolvency, compulsory winding up, receivership, composition with creditors (including any Individual Voluntary Arrangement), or subject to an Administration Order or any legal proceedings concerning their solvency?	No
Has been convicted of a criminal offence?	No
Is involved in any illegal activities?	No
Has not fulfilled obligations related to payment of taxes?	No
Is guilty of serious misrepresentation in supplying information?	No
Is not in possession of relevant licences or membership of an appropriate organisation where required by law?	No
Is barred from certain work with children as a result of being:	
[a] included in the list of those barred from Regulated Activity with children, kept by the Independent Safeguarding Authority? Or	No
[b] included in the list kept under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1999(4) (list of those considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children)? Or	No
[c] subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 (5) (or any other disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction)? Or	No

<p>[d] disqualified from working with children under sections 28, 29 or 29A of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000(6)?</p> <p>For further information on [a], [b], [c] and [d], please contact the CRB <a href="http://www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk">www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk</a>.</p>	No
<p>Is disqualified from registration under Part 10A of the Children Act 1989(7) for child minding or providing day care?</p>	No
<p>Is disqualified from registration under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006(8)?</p>	No
<p>Is a member, or has been a member in the past, of a proscribed organisation?</p>	No
<p>If the answer to any of these questions is “Yes” please give details below:</p>	

**EDUCATIONAL AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

**Briefly outline your reasons for wanting to set up a Free School. Max 200 words.**

We believe that we can provide a significant and progressive educational experience for pupils and students. In the first instance, this submission covers the establishment of 11-18 provision. However, the school will ultimately provide an excellent education from pre-school to postgraduate higher education.

We believe this can and should be possible in an environment which combines academic excellence with the highest moral and social values embedded within a meaningful faith-sensitive institution. The whole of this area is currently blighted by some of the worst deprivation in the UK - carrying some of the most damning scores on the MDI Scales. A short drive through these communities reveals a picture of depression - closed and shuttered shops and public houses, run-down buildings, and large numbers of unemployed people of all age groups. The area has high levels of crime, and significant problems of substance misuse. Currently, all three districts stand in the worst quintile for education in the most current Child Wellbeing Index, and it is our contention that this can be addressed quickly and positively as a result of our proposals being implemented.

Most of the existing schools in the area have had consistent issues arising from OFSTED reports, and the quality of provision is the source of disquiet amongst many parents (as evidenced during our survey of students and parents in the area). We believe that the establishment of a world-class 11-18 Independent Academy in this area will create a remarkable synthesis of academic experience, excellence, and passion in such a way as to generate the basis of a socially and individually transforming educational journey for the young people of the area.

**Please set out the Free School's aims and objectives.** You should also describe:

- the teaching methods that will be used and whether the Free School will follow a particular philosophy (eg Montessori);
- the outline of the Free School's proposed curriculum, including any religious ethos;
- how the Free School will improve pupil learning and ensure strong discipline;

Max 2000 words.

Three Valleys Independent Academy, [REDACTED], South Yorkshire

#### Mission Statement:

To create world class opportunities for the communities of the Rother, Dearne, and Don Valleys by creating a lifelong passion for learning, a common ethos and a common series of experiences as an entitlement.

More specifically:

- Common policies and an ethos of expectation.
- Each student entitled to a range of experiences from 11-18
- Opportunities for lifelong learning in our schools and community centres.
- Partnerships with industry, Further and Higher Education, and other organisations that will provide opportunities for training, development, enterprise, sport and culture in the greater Manvers community.
- Building upon the dual specialisms of the Three Valleys Independent Academy.

#### Aims & Objectives

##### Aims:

- To recognise and encourage talents of all kinds and to ensure that students see learning as part of a lifelong process and leave The Academy as well prepared as possible for the next stage in their lives.
- To develop The Academy as a caring, harmonious community able to identify and satisfy the educational and pastoral needs of each child.
- To develop learning environment in which enjoyment is experienced and whose members have a positive approach to life.

##### Objectives:

To ensure that all students develop those skills necessary to become qualified, literate, numerate and valued members of society and to help students:

- appreciate what it means to be a member of a community (local, national, global)
- weigh evidence, form opinions and express themselves orally as well as in writing
- extend their level of performance in as many areas of study as possible and to the highest degree
- understand something about the world of work and the major influences on society, particularly the implications of the role of creativity and cultural expression.
- appreciate beauty in both the natural world and in the Arts.
- understand the complexity of human behaviour, and explore the knowledge and skills available to enhance and improve individual, familial, and social relationships

- understand what challenges and opportunities are available when they leave The Academy
- have some understanding of moral and spiritual values and be sensitive to the needs of others by demonstrating concern for them and for the community and society at large
- have the opportunity for developing imagination, physical skills and taking part in creative activities and the constructive enjoyment of leisure.

"Three Valleys Independent Academy will raise standards of achievement in Music and Performance, and in the Behavioural Sciences for students of all abilities and become a centre of excellence that shares its expertise, enthusiasm and excitement for learning."

Admissions Policy and Procedure:

Three Valleys Independent Academy - Admissions Policy 2011

The Admissions Policy

The Academy is committed to a policy of open access on a non-selective basis to all students without regard to ability, ethnic background, religious beliefs, previous levels of achievement, sexual orientation, or any other factor which could be discriminatory.

We operate on the basis of a secular policy statement which we define as '...the provision of a safe and neutral learning environment within which people of all faiths, any faith, and no faith can thrive', and we expect this standard to be extended to all staff, students, and visitors. We consider ourselves to be 'faith sensitive' rather than 'faith-based'.

If the number of preferences received for The Academy does not exceed the agreed Admission Number, all preferences will be met.

If we receive more applications than places available, places will be allocated in the following priority order:-

- a. Children with a statement of special educational needs, which names The Academy;
- b. (i) Children who live in The Academy's catchment area and who are in public care at the time of admission;  
(ii) Children attending The schools/academies within the Trust, should it develop;
- (iii) Children who live in The Academy's catchment area, who have brothers and sisters attending The Academy at the time of admission;
- (iv) Other children who live in The Academy's catchment area;



(v) Children who have brothers or sisters in attendance at The Academy;

(vi) Other children, with priority being given to those living nearest to The Academy.

This information is underpinned by a comprehensive set of guidelines that are consistent with current admissions legislation, including SEN provision, appeals, waiting lists and in year admissions

Admission numbers:

The Academy has an Admission Number (AN) for each "relevant age" group. The admission number for each year group is set with regard to the capacity assessment for The Academy taking into account the nature and type of school buildings and provides for an acceptable amount of space for each pupil.

Each year, The Trustees, School Executive Team, and Senior Management Group agree the appropriate AN. In the case of year of entry, a child may not normally be refused admission to a school on the grounds of prejudice to efficient education or the efficient use of resources unless the number of applications for admission exceeds the admission number.

Catchment areas:

The Academy believes it is important that schools should serve their local communities. In seeking to serve the local communities surrounding us in each of the three adjacent Local Authority areas, we recognise our 'natural' catchment area as including the following communities:

Manvers, Wath-upon-Deerne, Swinton, Mexborough, Goldthorpe, Bolton-upon-Deerne, Thurnscoe, Denaby Main, and Conisborough (plus all the smaller village communities within that broad area). In the event of places being available after admissions from this area are complete, we are happy to extend our catchment to the wider community of South Yorkshire.

Whilst every effort is made to ensure that there will be a place for every applicant student in the catchment area, it cannot be guaranteed that this will always be the case.

Teaching Methods:

Curriculum:

The curriculum will follow existing national guidelines, and will be designed to enable students to pursue different courses depending on their aptitudes, interests, and career aspirations. In order to personalise learning each student will be allowed to progress at a rate that best suits them, with guidance being

provided on the choice of appropriate courses.

Our core curriculum will be:

English  
Mathematics  
Science  
Modern Foreign Language  
Music

and additional curriculum (with options), will include:

Art  
Technology  
ICT  
Social & Behavioural Sciences  
Physical Education & Sport  
Drama  
History  
Geography  
Citizenship & Careers

Vocational Curriculum:

Beginning in Year 10, students will be offered opportunities to pursue a range of Technical and Vocational Courses within our proposed Centre for Technical and Vocational Excellence, and/or within proposed collaborative arrangements with Dearne Valley College. This will encompass a wide range of traditional vocational courses reflecting the current and future needs of local industry and commerce.

SEN and Personal & Social Development Skills:

In partnership with our sister institution, Nationwide Independent College of Higher Education, we also provide a wide range of courses from the 'Preparation for Life' suite of courses validated and accredited by ABC Awards. These range from Entry Level 1 through to Full Level 3 and give opportunities to students opting for vocational routes to achieve at the highest of levels and in ways which allow them to contribute to their threshold scores.

Curriculum: Key Stages and National Examinations:

It is our intention to provide the curriculum outlined in the section above within the following KS Structure, and with the relevant national examinations indicated at each stage:

Years	KS	Examinations
7/8/9	3	E1 and L1 as appropriate
10/11	4	E2-3 & L2, GCSE
12/13	5	AS, A, NVQ, National Diploma, and Full L3



**What are your organisation's core areas of work / aims? Max 500 words.**

Nationwide Independent College of Education is a private provider of Further and Higher Education and its core activities are centred around the provision of accredited courses ranging from Entry Level 1 to Level 7. NICHE is a recognised provider and is registered as a UK RLP, also registered with DWP and SFA, and is developing collaborative arrangements with The University of Derby. NICHE also carries recognition with ABC Awards, NOCN and is completing similar arrangements with Edexcel and AQA.

The Proposed Academy will be a self-determining organisation that will form a part of the NICHE corporate structure insofar as there will be academic and operational partnerships and collaboration with the sister company, but The Academy will remain independent of all other corporate organisations.

However, agreement has been reached in principle to align with one or more Free Schools being proposed/developed, and this will lead to the formation of a joint Trust Group, currently having a working identity as 'South Yorkshire Schools Trust'.

**What capacity and capability do you have (or have access to) in order to deliver the educational vision set out above? Please indicate the resources, experience and expertise (educational and legal) that you have or have access to. Max 500 words.**

Given that the experiential background of the proposing group (NICHE) is predominantly drawn from Further and Higher Education, we have recognised the need to attract and recruit a number of talented and experienced senior staff from existing schools. We have already identified a 'Key Management Team', comprising a Principal (Headteacher), Deputy Principal, 2 assistant Principals and a Business Manager, and they have, in turn, begun to identify a number of staff at all levels who can be assigned asap to populate the proposed staffing structure. Ongoing discussions have already produced a possible Senior Leadership Structure which reflects the split of function and responsibility within the team. Naturally, the proposed postholders are anxious about being identified as they all currently hold senior posts in leading state schools, and all appointments will be subject to due process.

Principal:

Strategic Leadership  
Achievement  
Events  
OFSTED/SEF  
Quality Assurance

Line Management

Deputy Principal:

Strategic Leadership  
Achievement  
Timetable  
ICT  
Curriculum  
Data  
Calendar  
Exams  
Student Experience

Line Management

Assistant Principal 1:	Assistant Principal 2:
Strategic Leadership	Strategic Leadership
Achievement	Achievement
Safeguarding	Learning & Teaching
Behaviour	CPD
Attendance	Post 16
SEN	Specialist Subjects
Transition	Admissions
Pastoral Care	
Inclusion	
Line Management	Line Management

**Business Manager:**

Finance  
Human Resources  
Premises  
Income Generation  
Line Management

Whilst it is feasible to recruit a Headteacher/Principal and then let them appoint a team, we have made contingencies to appoint a Senior Leadership Team in one tranche to guarantee a smooth and successful opening in September 2011. This team will bring a proven track record, consisting of dynamic professionals with the skills and hunger to succeed.

The challenges facing any school whether established or not are considerable and, having the right people in key positions is crucial. The list below shows areas which must be addressed in any modern school: (this is non exhaustive)

Curriculum	Timetable	Behaviour	Attendance
Safeguarding	Pastoral Care	Calendar	Achievement
Admissions	Inclusion	SEN	OFSTED/SEF
Achievement	Transition	Finance	Human Resources
CPD	QA	ICT	Post 16
Exams	Events	Data	Specialist Subjects
Premises	Learning & Teaching		Income Generation

In addition, we bring a number of vastly experienced academics and educators, supported by business and community leaders from many areas of the community. They will collectively support the Academy Staff team at all levels, but particularly via The Board of Trustees, Executive Management Group, and Senior Management Team

**Do you have plans to work with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party organisation?** If so, please include their details below and set out the intended nature of that relationship (for example, a contract, co-sponsorship arrangement, informal partnership).

As evidenced in this proposal, we believe we have sufficient resources at our disposal to open a successful school in September 2011.

However, we believe that to enable the Academy to reach its full potential and provide the best possible outcomes for learners in the area, it is important to engage with other significant organisations in the community. To this end, we have established provisional agreement with a number of 3rd Parties in relation to several collaborative projects:

1. (Proposed) Central Academy Free School (Rotherham: We are working closely with this proposal team to explore the possibility of establishing a single Trust (South Yorkshire Schools Trust) in the future. This will enable us to develop efficiencies of scale in such areas as teacher cover, curriculum development, shared teaching, and staff/student exchange, and facilitate a cost-effective approach to procurement.
2. A further early proposal for the establishment of a Free School in North Lincolnshire, and possibly in Ollerton, has been shared with us, and an initial agreement to bring these two proposals into the proposed South Yorkshire Schools Trust, and help them develop and manage the proposed schools has been reached.
3. Dearne Valley College: Early exploratory discussions are ongoing with DVC in respect of possible collaboration in relation to Technical and Vocational courses, and with TVIA providing teaching to DVC in areas such as Music and Performance, and some wider academic areas of curriculum.
4. ██████████: We have begun to explore a collaborative project where The Academy and The Choir work together in providing music-based education to a large number of people with SLDD and Autism in Thurnscoe and the surrounding Dearne Towns. This will provide a number of community engagement opportunities for our students, and provide insights for those who may wish to explore music therapy as a possible career.
5. ██████████: Agreement has been reached with both of these organisations to develop music education and community engagement across the catchment area.
6. ██████████: Recent agreement has been concluded with the local Methodist Circuit to develop collaborative programmes and projects aimed at a number of youth-related issues throughout the community.

**Please name the key individuals / trustees involved in setting up the Free School** (if available). Please also indicate whether trustees have been chosen and their roles confirmed. Please provide details of employment of these individuals and any conflicts of interest you believe might arise.

The following individuals have been approached to serve as Trustees, and have indicated their willingness to do so:

[REDACTED] : [REDACTED] (Chair of Trustees)  
[REDACTED] : Barrister  
[REDACTED] : Leading Sports Personality  
[REDACTED] : Professional Musician and Watercolour Artist

[REDACTED] : [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] : [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] : [REDACTED]

In addition, an Advisory Board is being established in order to benefit from the collective experience of a number of prominent individuals, both local and national, who will bring a blend of experience from many sectors, e.g. business, industry, sport, entertainment, academia, the Law, and the Church.

An Executive Management Group is proposed, designed to work with and support The Principal and his/her team. This will comprise the directors of Three Valleys Independent Academy, at least one elected parent representative, and other influential individuals as required (perhaps even on an ad hoc/as needed basis). In the interests of efficiency, this group will not normally exceed a membership of 6.

The day-to-day responsibility for the operation of The Academy will be in the hands of The Principal and his/her Senior Leadership Team.

**EVIDENCE OF DEMAND**

**What evidence of local parental demand do you have?** For example, a petition or a declaration from interested parents or pupil number projections for the area. Max 200 words.

We have collected statements of support from over 100 parents throughout the area with children of the relevant age to attend the Academy in September 2011. The collection of evidence is ongoing, and we have received astonishingly high levels of support and encouragement from a wide range of individuals in all three LA area. We anticipate a final collection of over 1000 signatures. We have been heartened by the number of potential pupils who have also indicated their support.

We are in the process of segmenting our database to allow us to communicate directly with supporters within the community and parents with children who seek to attend the Academy in its formative years.

We are confident from the support expressed thus far that we will have sufficient demand to fill 120 places in our first year.

**What is the proposed capacity (number of pupils)?** Max 200 words.

We are planning to develop a capacity of 850 students - based on approximately 120 students in each year from year 7 - year 13.

Initial education will be provided in The Lower School, comprising Years 7-9, and organised with six classes of 20 in each year (First, Second, and Third Forms)

Students will then progress to The Upper School, comprising fourth and fifth forms (Years 10 - 11), with six classes at each level.

Finally, Students will enter the highest Level, The University School, comprising Lower and Upper Sixth Forms (years 12-13). At this level the number and size of classes will be dictated largely by the patterns of student demand across the range of subjects. It is also possible that numbers will be affected by transfers in from other schools.



**What is the proposed age range of the Free School?** Please include details of planned pupil numbers in each year group.

Lower School:

Year 7 (First Form) - 120 Students in 6 classes

Year 8 (Second Form) - 120 Students in 6 classes

Year 9 (Third Form) - 120 Students in 6 classes

Upper School:

Year 10 (Fourth Form) - 120 Students in 6 classes

Year 11 (Fifth Form) - 120 Students in 6 classes

University School:

Year 12 (Lower Sixth Form) - 125 Students in 6 classes

Year 13 (Upper Sixth Form) - 125 Students in 6 classes

As a result of the close relationship we hope to develop with our Core Institution, Nationwide College of Further and Higher Education), we also envisage the provision of an appropriate mechanism for the introduction of vocational skills provision for suitable students in Years 10 -13.

**When do you hope the Free School will start operating** (for your first set of pupils)?

We plan to open in September 2011. As outlined above, the school will open with a first intake of 120-480 (depending on the pattern of possible transfers in at Years 8,9, & 12) and build to full capacity over a period of 3-4 years. A planned rise in admissions will allow all necessary capital works to be budgeted for and delivered on a needs basis removing any additional pressure on the limited capital budget available for Free Schools

## **PREMISES**

**What steps have you taken to identify a potential site?** Please include details of the geographical area the school seeks to serve; a list of any sites you have considered; and any discussions you have had to identify a suitable site. If known, please include the proposed location, premises and postcode of the Free School.

We have identified several suitable and available sites. The Principal site is [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Wath-upon-Dearne [REDACTED]. This is a purpose-built academic building of some 45,500 sq ft. Developed and owned by The University of Sheffield. We have negotiated acceptable terms with them, and subject to confirmation that we have been granted the opportunity to establish the Free School, The University has indicated that the campus is available to us.

A second site has also been identified, at [REDACTED] in Swinton. This will house two specialist centres for The Academy. Firstly, a 'Centre for Technical and Vocational Excellence', which will be combined with a 'Preparation For Life Study Centre'. Facilities will be provided for teaching, workshops, Social and Personal Skills development, and a range of staff and student facilities. In the event that this may prove impracticable, we have identified a range of suitable new buildings in the vicinity of [REDACTED], all part of the new manvers Development Area.

A Third Centre will be introduced in Mexborough in order to provide suitable facilities for music performance, music technology, and Recording Techniques.

Sports facilities are available at Mexborough School, where positive talks have been held with the Chair of Governors re possible partnership working, and at a newly constructed Sports Centre adjacent to Dearne High School at Goldthorpe. Indications are that these facilities will be available for hire as required.

**Further information**

Please note, all information provided on this form will be published on the Department for Education website. Information that you supply on this form may be shared with (a) the New Schools Network and (b) the Local Authority in which you wish to set up the Free School. Information about the New Schools Network can be found at <http://www.newschoolsnetwork.org>.

Submission of this form will be treated as consent, from both you and anyone else whose personal data is contained on this form, to the sharing of this information as set out above.

In addition, information that you provide on this form, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

**Next Steps**

Please email completed Proposal Form to  
[freeschools.registration@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:freeschools.registration@education.gsi.gov.uk)

You will hear back from a named official at the Department for Education within two weeks, who will offer you advice on how best to progress your application. The Secretary of State will make a judgement on the potential of the project based on criteria relating to educational aims and objectives, evidence of demand, potential premises, suitability of provider and any other relevant considerations to decide whether the proposed Free School project should move into stage 3, namely that of drawing up a business case and plan.