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Ms Helen Charlesworth-May  
Strategic Director Commissioning  
International House  
Canterbury Crescent  
London, SW9 7QE

30 September 2014

Dear Ms Charlesworth-May

### **New free school project in your local authority area**

As you are aware, we have been assessing the latest round of free school applications over the last few months. Our central interview team emailed you in July to let you know which applications in your area we had invited to interview. I am writing to inform you that the Secretary of State for Education has decided that the following application within your authority should proceed to the next stage of the process (pre-opening stage):

**Harris Lambeth Sixth Form Academy** – Planned to open in September 2016, a 16-18, non-faith, mainstream school.

### Next steps

The pre-opening stage is the period between the approval of the free school application and when the free school opens. During this phase, the free school proposer group will finalise plans, develop policies and undertake a statutory consultation.

One of the early tasks we ask proposer groups to complete is agreeing the admissions arrangements for their school. This is so that local authorities can include the relevant information in the composite prospectus, in line with their statutory duties to provide information about school choices in their area.

In addition to the requirement that free schools should be included in the composite prospectus, free schools will need to discuss with you whether they wish to be wholly, partly or not included at all in the local authority's co-ordinated admissions scheme in the first year of opening. They will need to work with you in order to ensure information about their school is available to

all parents at the time they are making decisions.

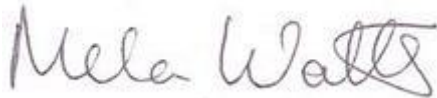
When the free school project has completed a range of tasks in the pre-opening stage, the academy trust will undertake its statutory consultation. This must happen before a funding agreement can be signed, but the timing will vary for each project, and it is for the trust to determine at what point to commence consultation. Section 10 of the Academies Act 2010 requires the academy trust to consult whomever it thinks appropriate on whether or not to enter into funding agreement arrangements with the Secretary of State. The academy trust will let you know when the consultation is taking place.

The Secretary of State also has a duty under Section 9 of the Academies Act 2010 to consider the impact that any new school may have on existing education institutions in the area in which the free school is proposed. As part of this consideration, we will write to you to ask for your views and any information you wish to provide about the free school project. Again, the timing of this will vary for each project but it is most likely to be after the academy trust has commenced its statutory consultation.

In the meantime, if the local authority wishes to make representations about this free school project, it can do so at any point.

I want to thank you for your support for this project.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mela Watts". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping tail on the 's'.

**Mela Watts CBE**  
Director  
Free Schools Group