

## 4.6 Community engagement

In this section you should explain how your Free School will promote active contribution to modern British society and promote good community relations. You should demonstrate that you are aware of your school's responsibility to act in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Whilst completing this section you should answer the following questions:

- With which sections of the local community will your school build a relationship?
- What kinds of relationships will these be?
- How will you build these relations?

### ***Sections of the community***

Groups you should consider building a relationship with include:

- Parents – both of the children who will attend your schools and others;
- The LA;
- Businesses and business organisations;
- Charities;
- Other schools in the area;
- Colleges and universities;
- Faith groups and churches;
- Residents' groups; and
- The local MP.

There may be considerable cross-over between these groups, e.g. prospective parents may be local business leaders who can help your school to engage with different groups across the community.

### ***Types of relationship***

A good application will identify how its vision and ethos will drive specific types of relationship with different community groups. For example, a school that focuses on giving students tangible job-related skills may focus its engagement with local businesses, while a school that wanted to build cross-cultural understanding may have links to several different cultural organisations.

Consider the different levels of engagement and the type of relationship which your school will have with each of the groups you have identified. It may be useful to ask yourself if you want each particular group:

- to be aware of the Free School;
- to express their support for the Free School;
- to make a small contribution to the Free School, for example providing places for work experience students;
- to make a significant contribution to the Free School, for example providing/sharing facilities; or
- to form an active and involved partnership with the Free School.

## ***How to engage***

You should specify if you already have relationships with some of the groups you want to engage, and the nature of that relationship. Tips on engaging the LA can be found in the Introduction and engaging prospective parents is covered in Chapter 5. Engaging other groups should involve similar approaches. New Schools Network can give tailored advice to groups with specific questions on how to approach other organisations.

Every Free School proposal is different and you do not have to demonstrate relations to any particular community group. However, it will be important to show that you have considered this area. There is also significant cross-over with other sections; for example, in the section on demand demand you will have to explain how you have engaged with parent groups. This section is an opportunity for you to expand on the ways in which your school will serve its community. It is also a place for you to explain how you will enrich the experience of pupils at your school through links to others.

## ***Further information***

**Contact NSN** for tailored specialist advice: [info@newschoolsnetwork.org](mailto:info@newschoolsnetwork.org)

**The Equality Act 2010:** [http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality\\_act\\_2010.aspx](http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_act_2010.aspx)