



LEGAL SERVICES FOR ACADEMIES

A passion for education

harrison clark
rickerbys
SOLICITORS



A PASSION FOR PEOPLE

Our passion for people is at the heart of everything we do. It's the engine that keeps us ticking and inspires us to do our best. We're not satisfied unless we're making a real difference to peoples' lives, and we'll keep working hard to ensure we achieve the best outcome possible.

FROM FORMATION TO THRIVING

It's easy to see why our legal services for schools are award winning. We are nationally recognised education law experts and have a strong track record. Prompt, practical and great value for money, we support academies up and down the country. With more than 250 academy conversions under our belt, our knowledge and experience is second-to-none, and we'll be with you throughout your journey whenever you need us.

We support schools establishing and expanding multi-academy trusts and have significant experience acting for Church of England schools. We can advise on every step of formation and growth including the most appropriate governance structures, compliance with charity and company law, and negotiating with the Department for Education and local authority; and we'll continue as your trusted advisor as your academy thrives.

EducationInvestor
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Legal advisors - to
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The
**LEGAL
500**
UNITED KINGDOM

CHAMBERS
AND PARTNERS

HERE FOR YOU WHEN YOU NEED US





GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR PEOPLE

Dealing with matters involving people can be incredibly time consuming, but getting your contracts and policies, and day-to-day people management right pays dividends.

Our CIPD qualified HR professionals can offer practical advice and support on your employment matters, whether you need a quick 'sense-check' or are dealing with something more complex. When it comes to immigration we can help you navigate the ever-changing rules. We can assist in sponsoring overseas workers to come and work in the UK, including extending or varying visas for existing workers.

We hope that issues involving teaching and support staff don't reach court but if they do, our employment solicitors are able to defend you in tribunals. In fact we've achieved a successful outcome in 98% of the 100+ employment claims we've handled for clients over the last three years.

PROTECTING YOUR PUPILS

We can assist with a wide range of pastoral issues including: bullying, searches, use of reasonable force, special educational needs, discrimination, and safeguarding. We have years of experience handling the most sensitive issues for schools and are able to advise on protecting your reputation should matters reach the media.

It's critical that your academy has appropriate admission arrangements and policies. We can advise on the use of over-subscription criteria, handling admission appeals and supporting challenges to the Schools Adjudicator. Should it come to exclusions, we can support you to prepare for independent review panels. A robust complaints policy is also crucial – we can provide draft documentation and support you with handling complaints including those referred to the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

“We prevailed with our SEN challenge to the local authority’s decision to name our school in an Education, Health and Care plan, Harrison Clark Rickerbys’ letter was clearly impactful. I have highly recommended you to another Headteacher and Governors who are looking for independent legal advice.”

Ginny Rhodes,
Executive Headteacher,
The Circle Trust

GETTING IT RIGHT

In a heavily regulated sector being compliant is critical. To help you 'get it right' our legal services cover everything you'd expect including:



Auditing, reviewing and re-drafting policies such as attendance, charging, educational visits, medical support, exclusions, special educational needs and safeguarding



Ensuring compliance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 through a package of support including data audit, privacy notices and drafting policies on data protection and taking and using images of children



Advising on Freedom of Information requests and supporting schools facing enforcement action by the Information Commissioner's Office



Advising on compliance with your Articles of Association, Funding Agreement, Academies Financial Handbook, anti-bribery and corruption laws



Handling investigations and defending people facing formal regulatory investigations and prosecutions by, for example, the Health and Safety Executive



Applying for licences for school events



Acquiring or selling land including school playing fields and dealing with rights of way and boundary disputes



Provision of company secretarial services, giving you clear guidance and practical support to ensure you meet your statutory reporting and record keeping obligations.



Picking your way through the complexities of law relating to academies is always time consuming and problematic. We worked with Harrison Clark Rickerbys on our original academisation and then more recently on significant changes to our academy – increasing the age range and capacity. Nothing is ever straightforward in this life and having the security of the team at Harrison Clark Rickerbys certainly ensured that the process progressed with purpose and speed. Emma Swann was on hand at every stage to guide and support the work we had to do and cajole the necessary authorities to ensure that our project was always moving forward. We had a very tight time schedule for this project and it has only been realised because of the support from Emma and her team.

Andrew Henstridge,
Executive Headteacher,
St Catherine's Catholic Primary School &
St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Swindon



COMMERCIALLY MINDED

Many academy leaders are finding they need to become more commercially aware in the running of their schools. Our specialist commercial team can work with you to establish trading subsidiaries for the delivery of non-core activities that generate income whilst minimising risks. We can also support you with negotiating and agreeing commercial contracts including terms and conditions for the purchase or supply of goods and services such as catering and IT.

We can help you navigate your way through the system of rules and regulations governing procurement, minimising the risk of challenge and potential claims. We can help resolve disputes or enforce contractual terms if things go wrong. We can also help you protect your intellectual property rights, including registering domain names.



“The team at Harrison Clark Rickerbys have been highly professional and have gone above and beyond what we expected to make this happen within the tight timescale with efficiency and attention to detail. Their work ethics and team effort really impressed us. We look forward to working with them in the future.”

Jay Liu,
Thetford Grammar School

IN YOUR CORNER

HELPING YOU GROW

Whether the growth of your academy is on UK soil or involves an international element, we're here to advise and connect you to the people and organisations that can help.

Our dedicated real estate solicitors can help with planning applications, construction and development. We have experience of working on property projects large and small, ranging from thousands of pounds to an £80million new school build.

If you are considering making a significant change to your academy such as expanding your age-range or opening a satellite school we can support you through the consultation and application process and put in place the correct legal documentation to reflect the changes.



COLLABORATIVE THINKING

In a connected world it's no doubt that our schools are becoming increasingly international and if your academy has aspirations for cross-border growth, we can help. We've advised leading state schools on establishing collaborative arrangements abroad including ventures that will lead to the creation of a new international school. Our team only connects you to people we know and trust across our global network of people we've personally known for decades.



A PASSION FOR EDUCATION

If you're looking for a legal partner that has been advising schools since the inception of the academy programme, talk to us. We've worked with Church of England Diocesan Boards of Education and Diocesan multi academy trusts, in addition to leading Catholic and grammar schools, umbrella trusts and collaborative structures. With our Head of Academies on the Department for Education academies working group, we're always close to the action.

Our open dialogue about fees, our client care programme and added value briefing notes and seminars for schools is all part of what we do because of our genuine passion for education.

Talk to us



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