

WK Academies Team

National Contacts:

Welcome

At Wilkins Kennedy Chartered Accountants and Business Advisers, we have successfully worked with the academies sector for several years under the traditional Academies Programme, which launched in 2000, and we continue to work with the original academies, as well as the newer academies who converted following the implementation of the Academies Act 2010.

Standing out from our competitors, our specialist academy team has wide knowledge of this niche sector through years of experience servicing the education and charity sector throughout the UK, and we recognise that every academy is unique and has different requirements.

We offer a wide range of services to suit all needs, from initial conversion advice to ongoing audit and accounts, tax, outsourcing, payroll and business advisory services.

Our popular seminars and update materials mean we are committed to supporting you as an Academy long term, maintaining your profitability and keeping you on the right track after conversion.

wkacademies@wilkinskennedy.com

**Get the advice and support
you need to succeed from the
Academies team at Wilkins
Kennedy**

Introduction

Academy conversion has given over 1000 UK schools the opportunity to have freedom from local authority control, the ability to set their own pay and conditions for staff, have more control over the curriculum, combat underfunding issues, choose independent contract suppliers and school dates.

The Wilkins Kennedy dedicated Academies team has vast background experience within both the education and not for profit sector. Having won a prestigious award for our top Charity Expertise by Charity Finance Magazine, our extensive experience within these specialist sectors enables us to service our academy clients using a relevant and broad knowledge base.

Our clients include primary and secondary schools, as well as sponsored academies and newer converter academies, which have all benefitted from attending our regular Academy seminars and events around the South East. Our events offer updates for staff and governors on the latest sector issues including new legislation, operations, funding and VAT changes, all of which affect potential converters and existing academies.

Wilkins Kennedy provides a full range of accountancy and business advisory services from setting up and converting to ongoing accounting and business advisory support. Our services include: audit and accounting, direct tax and VAT compliance, outsourced services, risk management, governance and strategic planning.

Michelle Wilkes FCA

Partner

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Michelle is a partner in the firm's Not-for-Profit Group and is Head of the Academies Group. She has extensive experience working closely with not for profit organisations and their management teams providing audit and compliance advice as well as specialist advice on governance, risk, strategic and policy issues.

Over the past 20 years Michelle has advised a wide variety of not for profit organisations, including: international charities, academies and independent schools, professional bodies and membership organisations, as well as fundraising and grant funded charities. More recently, Michelle has advised schools on the conversion to academy status and beyond.

Michelle contributes to the firm's Not for Profit and Academies ebrieffs on matters affecting the sector and provides training courses and workshops on technical issues. She contributes articles to the sector press and is involved with a number of initiatives for the charity and not for profit sector in the Kent area and nationally.

Andy Dawbarn

VAT Partner

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Andy is VAT partner for Wilkins Kennedy, leading the direction and delivery of VAT and other indirect tax advisory services to domestic and international clients across the firm.

Andy is CTA qualified and manages a varied portfolio, including clients in property and financial services, corporate finance, charity and not-for-profit sectors. His role includes advising on indirect tax services, new legislation and operational compliance.

Andy has experience working with not for profit organisations and the academies sector, and has wide knowledge of the methods available to these organisations to reclaim VAT.

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• KENNEDY**

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS
& BUSINESS ADVISERS

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Regional Contacts

Top Tips for converters

- Choose an effective academy liaison representative from the organisation who will head up the academic conversion process team.
- Do extensive background research – is Academy status right for us? Before the organisation sets off on the conversion process, consult as many sources as possible.
- Consult an academies financial expert from the outset to ascertain how the conversion would take place and to outline the required financial and reporting legal responsibilities.
- Be time conscious: Speak to your financial expert about timing: the application process should be made in plenty of time for the beginning of the academic year – don't leave it too late!
- Involve your staff and senior governors at the earliest opportunity – keeping people informed is vital: send out information and arrange an open discussion question and answer meeting with the staff along with a financial expert to iron out any queries.
- Work with your financial expert to iron out processes including sponsorship funding and grant issues before commencing the application.
- Ensure you understand the full financial implications of becoming an academy and are aware of the additional financial liabilities the academy will incur which previously were either paid for by the local education authority or were not relevant.

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Talk to us.



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