

Finance Policy and Procedures Handbook

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1. Introduction

101. The purpose of this handbook is to ensure that Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust (the Trust) maintains and develops systems of financial control which conform to the requirements both of propriety and of good financial management. It is essential that these systems operate properly to meet the requirements of the Trust's funding agreement and the Education Funding Agency (EFA) Academies Financial Handbook.

102. The Trust must comply with the principles of financial control which are outlined in the EFA Academies Financial Handbook published by the DfE. This handbook expands on these principles and provides detailed information on the Trust's accounting systems and procedures. It is vital that the handbook is read and understood by the Trust Directors, Associates and staff involved with finance.

103. This handbook covers the following finance-related policies and statement, which can be found in Appendix D:

1. Fixed Asset & Depreciation Policy
2. Investment and Reserves Policy
3. Charging and Remissions Policy
4. Charge Card Policy
5. Gifts and Hospitality Policy
6. Staff Expenses Policy
7. Whistleblowing Policy.
8. Fraud Policy and Procedures
9. Best Value Statement.

104. Adherence to the principles, procedures and policies contained in this handbook is mandatory for all Trust staff.

105. This handbook is designed to be consistent with:

- EFA Academies Financial Handbook
- The Trust's Articles of Association / Constitution
- The Master and Supplemental Funding Agreements
- HM Treasury's "Regularity, Propriety and Value for Money".

106. This handbook also contains the following appendices:

- Appendix A Scheme of Delegation
- Appendix B Financial Authorisation Levels
- Appendix C Purchasing and Tendering Policy
- Appendix D Finance Policies

2. Organisation

201. The Trust has defined the responsibilities of each person involved in the administration of Trust finances to avoid the duplication or omission of functions and to provide a framework of accountability for Directors and staff. The financial reporting structure is illustrated below:

The Board of Directors

202. The Board of Directors (the Board) has wide responsibilities under statute, regulations and the funding agreement. Principally, it is responsible for ensuring that the Trust's funds are used only in accordance with the law, its Articles of Association, its Funding Agreement and this handbook. The Board has wide discretion over its use of the Trust's funds, which it **must** discharge reasonably and in a way that commands broad public support. It is responsible for the proper stewardship of those funds, including regularity and propriety, and for ensuring economy, efficiency and effectiveness in their use – the three key elements of value for money.

203. There are two subcommittees of the Board, the Finance and Resource Committee (FRC) and the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). Directors of the Board make up these Committees and are advised by the CEO and Finance Director.

The Finance & Resource Committee

204. The FRC is a subcommittee of the Board and is authorised to investigate any activity within its Terms of Reference or that is specifically delegated to it by the Board. It is authorised to request any information it requires from any employee, external audit, internal audit or other assurance provider.

205. The FRC is authorised to obtain any outside legal or independent professional advice it considers necessary, normally in consultation with the Accounting Officer and/or the Board. However, the FRC may not incur expenditure in excess of £10,000 without the prior approval of the Board.

206. The FRC is responsible for detailed consideration as to the best means of fulfilling the Trust's responsibility to ensure sound management of its finances and resources, including proper planning, monitoring and probity.

207. The FRC is responsible for scrutinising the Trust's budgets and finance procedures by:

- assisting in the promotion of the highest standards of propriety in the use of public funds and encouraging proper accountability for the use of those funds;
- improving the quality of financial reporting by reviewing internal and external financial statements on behalf of the Board; and
- promoting a climate of financial discipline and control which will help to reduce the potential for financial mismanagement.

208. The FRC will report its findings to the Board as a critical element of the Trust's reporting requirements.

The Audit and Risk Committee

209. The ARC is a subcommittee of the Board and is authorised to investigate any activity within its Terms of Reference or that is specifically delegated to it by the Board. It is authorised to request any information it requires from any employee, external audit, internal audit or other assurance provider.

210. The role of the ARC is:

1. To recommend to the Board of Directors the appointment or reappointment of Auditors.
2. To review with the external auditors the findings of their work, including any major issues that arose during the course of an audit which have subsequently been resolved and those issues that have been left unresolved; key accounting and audit judgements; levels of errors identified during the audit; obtaining explanations from management and, where necessary, the external auditors, as to why certain errors might remain unadjusted.
3. To review and monitor the content of the external auditors' management letter, in order to assess whether it is based on a good understanding of the Trust's business and establish whether recommendations have been acted upon and, if not, the reasons why they have not been acted upon.
4. The ARC's work must focus on providing assurances to the Board that all risks are being adequately identified and managed. In particular, reviewing the risks to internal financial control at the Trust and agreeing a programme of work to address and provide assurance on those risks.
5. To review the Trust's risk management process to assess business risks and the implementation of risk management strategies. In particular, ensuring the process involves identifying the types of risks the Trust faces, scoring and prioritising those risks in terms of their potential operational and financial impact, assessing the likelihood their occurrence and identifying means of mitigating the risks.

211. The ARC will make appropriate comments and recommendations on such matters to the Board of Directors for ratification.

The Chief Executive Officer

212. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the Accounting Officer with responsibilities as described in HM Treasury's "Regularity, Propriety and Value for Money". The Accounting Officer has personal responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which he/she is answerable. It must be ensured that, in considering proposals relating to the expenditure or income for which they have responsibility, all relevant financial considerations are taken into account and full regard is given to any issues of propriety or regularity.

213. The main financial responsibilities of the CEO are detailed in the Scheme of Delegation in Appendix A and include:

- development of the annual budget;
- development of medium-term financial planning;
- regular monitoring of actual expenditure and income against budget;
- ensuring the annual accounts are produced in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 1985 and the DfE guidance issued to academies;
- ensuring that the regular reports provided to the Board are timely and accurate;
- authorising orders and the award of contracts within the approval limits shown in Appendices A and B;
- authorising payments within the approval limits shown in Appendix B;
- authorising changes to the Trust's organisation structures.

Head of Academy (Headteacher)

214. Within the framework of the Trust's Development Plan, the Head of each Academy has overall executive responsibility for the Academy's financial activities, including:

- adherence to the Trust's Finance Policy and Procedure's Handbook and the EFA Academies Financial Handbook;
- approving new staff appointments within the authorised Academy organisation structures, except for any senior staff posts which the CEO has final approval of appointment;
- authorising orders and the award of contracts within the approval limits shown in Appendices A and B;
- authorising payments within the approval limits shown in Appendix B;
- ensuring the delivery of the Academy annual budget as approved by the Board;
- monitoring the regular budget reports with the Finance Manager and acting on overspends or risk.

The Finance Director

215. The Finance Director works in close collaboration with the CEO, through whom he or she is responsible to the Board.

The main responsibilities of the Finance Director are:

- management of the Trust's financial position at a strategic and operational level within the framework for financial control determined by the Board;
- maintenance of effective systems of internal control;
- ensuring that the annual accounts are properly presented and adequately supported by the underlying books and records of each Academy;
- preparation of budgets and medium-term financial plans;
- ensuring returns to the EFA and other funding agencies are completed correctly and on time;
- ensuring returns to statutory agencies are completed;
- cash flow and treasury management including managing investments;
- the functional management of Academy Finance Managers (under a matrix management approach with Academy Line Managers);
- authorising orders and the award of contracts within the approval limits shown in Appendices A and B;
- authorising payments within the approval limits shown in Appendices A and B.

The Finance Manager

216. It is envisaged that each Academy will have a Finance Manager, or a person who undertakes that role, albeit with a different job title.

217. The Finance Managers work in close collaboration with the Finance Director. The main responsibilities of the Finance Manager are:

- adherence to the Trust's Finance Policy and Procedure's Handbook and the EFA Academies Financial Handbook;
- day to day management of financial issues;
- preparation and completion of monthly management accounts and month-end procedures;
- authorising orders and the award of contracts within the approval limits shown in Appendix B;
- authorising payments within the approval limits shown in Appendix B; and
- ensuring that financial controls are working effectively at Academy level.

Internal Auditors

218. The Internal Auditors are appointed by the Board (through the ARC and provide Directors with independent oversight of the financial affairs. The main duties of the Internal Auditors are to provide the Board with independent assurance that:

- the financial responsibilities of the Board are being properly discharged;
- resources are being managed in an efficient, economical and effective manner;
- sound systems of internal financial control are being maintained and financial considerations are fully taken into account when reaching decisions; and
- risks are identified and appropriate actions put in place.

219. The ARC will appoint internal auditors to undertake a regular programme of reviews to ensure that financial transactions have been properly processed and that controls are operating effectively. A report of the findings from each visit will be provided to the ARC for review.

Other Staff

220. Other members of staff, primarily senior leadership staff and budget holders, will have some financial responsibilities, and these are detailed in the following sections of this policy.

221. All staff are responsible for the security of Academy property, for avoiding loss or damage, for ensuring economy and efficiency in the use of resources and for conformity with the requirements of the Trust's Finance Policies and Procedures.

Register of Interests

222. It is important for anyone involved in spending public money to demonstrate that they do not benefit personally from the decisions they make. To avoid any misunderstanding that might arise, all of the Trust's Directors, Associates, senior leadership

staff and budget holders are required to declare any financial interests they have in companies or individuals from whom the Trust may purchase goods or services. The register is open to public inspection.

223. The register should include all business interests such as directorships, shareholdings or other appointments of influence within a business or organisation which may have dealings with the Trust. The disclosures should also include the business interests of relatives such as a parent or spouse or business partner where influence could be exerted over a Director or a member of staff by that person.

224. The existence of a register of business interests does not detract from the duties of Directors and staff to declare interests whenever relevant to matters being discussed by the Board or a Committee. Where an interest has been declared, Directors and staff should not attend that part of the meeting.

Document Retention

225. Documents are retained for the following periods of time:

- Finance records – current year plus preceding 6 years
- Supply cover insurance – current year plus preceding 6 years
- Payroll and travel records – current year plus preceding 6 years
- Personnel records – 6 years after an employee has left
- All student files until the student reaches the age of 21

3. Accounting System

301. The Trust uses PS Financial Systems (PSF) within all of its Academies. All financial transactions of the Trust must be recorded in this system.

System Access

302. Entry to the PSF accounting system is password restricted and the Finance Director is responsible for implementing a system which ensures that passwords are changed in line with the data protection policy.

303. Access to the component parts of the system can also be restricted and the Finance Director is responsible for setting access levels for all members of staff using the system.

Backup Procedures

304. The Finance Director is responsible for ensuring that there are effective backup procedures for the system.

305. Regular backups to disk are taken of the accounting system at the end of each day and duplicated to tape which is stored off the main site. This backup data is then stored for three weeks. Data is backed up onto tape monthly and kept for a year in a fireproof safe. Ad hoc backups can be run as and when required.

306. Annual test carried out to reinstate data to ensure the back-up procedure is working effectively and all appropriate data is stored.

307. The Finance Director should also prepare a disaster recovery plan in the event of loss of accounting facilities or financial data. This should link in with the annual assessment made by Directors of the major risks to which the Trust/each Academy is exposed and the systems that have been put in place to mitigate those risks.

Transaction Processing

308. All transactions inputted into the accounting system must be authorised in accordance with the procedures specified in this manual.

309. All journal entries are documented on the journal input document and authorised by the finance lead and filed.

310. Bank transactions are inputted by Finance Manager and approved by the Head of Academy monthly through the Bank Reconciliation and reviewed by the Finance Director.

Transaction Reports

311. The Finance Director reviews the following system reports to ensure that only regular transactions are posted to the accounting system:

- the monthly audit trail reports;
- master file amendment reports for the payroll, purchase ledger and sales ledger;

- management accounts summarising expenditure and income against budget at budget-holder level.

Reconciliations of Balance Sheet Accounts

312. The Finance Managers are responsible for ensuring the following reconciliations are performed routinely, and that any reconciling or balancing amounts are cleared:

- sales ledger control account monthly;
- purchase ledger control account monthly;
- payroll control account monthly;
- other control accounts;
- all suspense accounts (none) monthly;
- accruals and prepayments monthly;
- bank balance per the nominal ledger monthly within 5 working days of the bank statement.

4. Financial Planning

401. The Trust and each Academy prepare both medium-term and short-term financial plans.

402. The medium-term financial plan is prepared as part of the Trust and Academy development planning process. The Development Plan indicates how the Trust's educational and other objectives are going to be achieved within the expected level of resources over the next three years.

403. The Development Plan provides the framework for the annual budget. The budget is a detailed statement of the expected resources available to the Academy and the planned use of those resources for the following year.

404. The development planning process and the budgetary process are described in more detail below.

Development Plan

405. The Development Plan is concerned with the future aims and objectives of the Academy and how they are to be achieved, which includes matching the Trust's objectives and targets to the resources expected to be available. Plans should be kept relatively simple and flexible. They are the "big picture" within which more detailed plans may be integrated.

406. The form and content of the Development Plan are matters for the Trust to decide but due regard should be given to the matters included within the guidance to academies and any annual guidance issued by the DfE.

407. Each year the CEO will propose a planning cycle and timetable to the Board which allows for:

- a review of past activities, aims and objectives - "did we get it right?"
- definition or redefinition of aims and objectives - "are the aims still relevant?"
- development of the plan and associated budgets - "how do we go forward?"
- implementation, monitoring and review of the plan - "who needs to do what by when to make the plan work and keep it on course" and feedback into the next planning cycle - "what worked successfully and how can we improve?"

408. The timetable will specify the deadlines for the completion of each of the key stages described above. Lead responsibility for the completion of each of the stages will be assigned by the CEO.

409. The completed Development Plan will include detailed objectives for the coming academic year and outline objectives for the following two years. The plan should also include the estimated resource costs, both capital and revenue, associated with each objective and the success criteria against which achievement can be measured.

410. For each objective the lead responsibility for ensuring progress is made towards the objective will be assigned to a member of the Academy. The assigned member should monitor performance against the defined success criteria throughout the year and report to the senior management team on a quarterly basis. The Academy Leadership Team will report to the Academy Association if there is a significant divergence from the agreed plan and will recommend an appropriate course of action.

Annual Budget

411. The Finance Director is responsible for preparing and obtaining approval for the annual budget. The budget must be approved by the CEO, Finance and Resource Committee and finally the Board.

412. The budget forecast must be submitted to the DfE by the specified date each year, and the Finance Director is responsible for establishing a timetable which allows sufficient time for the approval process and ensures that the submission date is met.

413. The annual budget will reflect the best estimate of the resources available to the Academy for the forthcoming year and will detail how those resources are to be utilised. There should be a clear link between the Development Plan objectives and the budgeted utilisation of resources.

414. The budgetary planning process will incorporate the following elements:

- forecasts of the likely number of students to estimate the amount of DfE grant receivable;
- review of other income sources available to the Academy to assess likely level of receipts;
- review of past performance against budgets to promote an understanding of the Academy cost base;
- identification of potential efficiency savings; and
- review of the main expenditure headings in light of the Development Plan objectives and the expected variations in cost, e.g. pay increases, inflation and other anticipated changes.

The Budget Cycle

415. The budget cycle is as follows:

- Autumn term (Sept – Dec)
 - Implementation of current budget plan
 - Monitoring expenditure (continuous/monthly)
 - Reconciliation and closure of previous financial year
 - Release of year-end adjustments when realised in financial year
- Spring term (Jan – Mar)
 - Monitoring and reviewing of year's budget
 - Revise budget where appropriate
 - Completion of forecast outturn
 - Pre-planning for forthcoming financial year
 - Review and validate EFA General Annual Grant statement to Census

- Summer term (Apr – Aug)
 - Planning for the forthcoming financial year;
 - Confirm and cost staffing structure with HR;
 - Preparation and submission of financial budget plan;
 - Update 3-year budget plan;
 - Review of current year's budget.

All requirements of the EFA, in particular relating to carry forward of unspent funds, will be taken into account in preparing and submitting the budget.

Balancing the Budget

416. Comparison of estimated income and expenditure will identify any potential surplus or shortfall in funding. If shortfalls are identified, opportunities to increase income should be explored and expenditure headings will need to be reviewed for areas where cuts can be made. This may entail prioritising tasks and deferring projects until more funding is available. Plans and budgets will need to be revised until income and expenditure are in balance. If a potential surplus is identified, this may be held back as a contingency or alternatively allocated to areas of need.

Finalising the Budget

417. Once the different options and scenarios have been considered, a draft budget should be prepared by the Finance Director for approval by the CEO, the Finance and Resource Committee and the Board. The budget should be communicated to all staff with responsibility for budget headings so that everyone is aware of the overall budgetary constraints.

418. The budget should be accompanied by a statement of assumptions and hierarchy of priorities so that if circumstances change, it is easier for all concerned to take remedial action. The budget should be seen as a working document which may need revising throughout the year as circumstances change.

Monitoring and Review

419. Monthly and termly reports will be prepared by the Finance Manager, supported by the Finance Director. The reports will detail actual income and expenditure against budget at a summary level for the:

- Head of Academy
- Academy Association
- CEO
- Finance and Resource Committee
- Board of Directors

420. Any potential overspend against the annual budget must in the first instance be discussed with the Finance Director. The accounting system will not allow purchase orders to be made against an overspent budget without the approval of the Finance Director.

421. The monitoring process should be effective and timely in highlighting variances in the budget so that differences can be investigated and action taken where appropriate. If a budget overspend is forecast, it may be appropriate to vire money from another budget or from the contingency. All budget virements must be authorised as shown in Appendices A and B.

5. HR & Payroll

501. The main financial elements of HR and the Payroll System are:

- staff appointments and organisational changes;
- payroll administration;
- payments; and
- travel and substance claims

Staff Appointments and Organisational Changes

502. As part of the annual budget process, the Board will approve a staff budget for the Trust and Academies.

503. All permanent/fixed-term posts not in the structure and/or budget (including temporary and agency cover for these posts) can only be recruited to following completion and approval of the 'Recruitment Business Case - To Recruit to Newly Created Posts' form by the CEO, who must ensure that adequate budgetary provision exists. This form should be completed at the HR & Finance Meeting.

504. All permanent/fixed-term posts already in the structure and budget as well as temporary agency cover for these posts can only be recruited to following completion and approval of the 'Recruitment Business Case - To Recruit To Current Posts And Temporary Agency Cover' form by the Head of Academy, who must ensure that adequate budgetary provision exists. This form should be completed at the HR & Finance Meeting.

505. The position of Head of Academy will be appointed by the Directors and CEO. The CEO will also approve all appointments to the Academy Senior Leadership Team.

Payroll Administration and Payments

506. Payroll is currently outsourced and the approval of the Finance and Resource Committee is needed to change any such arrangements.

507. The Trust has a Pay Policy, and all changes to pay must be consistent with this. Any variations to the Pay Policy require Directors' approval.

508. The monthly payroll must be reviewed and checked by the Academy HR lead to ensure gross pay is correct and any requested changes actioned. When completed, the monthly payroll is approved by the Head of Academy for payment and subsequently reviewed by the Finance Manager prior to payments being made.

509. Overall responsibility for the operation of the Payroll Provider rests with the HR function within each Academy, who also ensure that the Payroll Provider is informed of any relevant changes in order to ensure accurate payment of salaries, i.e. new starters and leavers, change of personal details, change of terms and conditions to employment, tax code changes and any absence or sickness.

510. Severance payments up to £50,000 must be approved by the CEO. Severance payments over £50,000 require Directors' and EFA approval.

Payments

511. All salary payments to staff are made by BACS by the Payroll Provider. Finance Managers are responsible for the payment of the Payroll Provider.

512. The calculation of gross to net pay is delegated to the Payroll Provider; the Academy HR lead will carry out monthly checks to ensure that the payroll system is operating correctly.

513. After the payroll has been processed, the nominal ledger will be updated by the Finance Manager. Postings will be made to the payroll control account and to individual cost centres and ledger codes in the accounting system. The Finance Manager should review the payroll control accounts each month to ensure they have been reconciled.

Travel and Subsistence Claims

514. Travel costs in excess of the normal home-to-work journey will be reimbursed for training and other business purposes. This will be equivalent to the cost of public transport or a mileage allowance (at the max rate approved by HMRC without incurring a tax liability – currently 45p per mile), whichever is the lower.

515. All expenses claims will be checked by the Finance Office at each Academy and authorised by the Line Manager and the Head of Academy.

516. For business involving overnight accommodation, costs will be reimbursed on the completion of the appropriate claim form and presentation of receipts for claims made. Every effort will be made to ensure value for money is achieved.

517. Further details and procedures are outlined in the Staff Expenses Policy in Appendix D.

6. Purchasing

601. The Trust wants to achieve the best value for money from all our purchases. This means they want to get what they need at the correct quality, quantity and time, at the best price possible. A large proportion of their purchases will be paid for with public funds and they need to maintain the integrity of these funds by following the general principles of:

- **Probity** - it must be demonstrable that there is no corruption or private gain involved in the contractual relationships of the Trust/Academy;
- **Accountability** -the Trust/Academy is publicly accountable for its expenditure and the conduct of its affairs;
- **Fairness** - all those dealt with by the Academy are dealt with on a fair and equitable basis;
- **Value for Money** - the Academy/Trust shall aim for:
 - Economy, minimising cost and having regard to appropriate quality;
 - Efficiency, an appropriate relationship between outputs and costs;
 - Effectiveness, the achievement of the intended outputs.

Routine Purchasing

602. Budget holders will be informed of the budget available to them at the start of the academic year. It is the responsibility of the budget holder to manage the budget, working with the Finance Manager, and to ensure that any expenditure is consistent with the objectives of the Academy. A printout detailing actual expenditure against budget will be supplied to each budget holder every half-term and budget holders are encouraged to keep their own records of orders placed but not paid for.

603. Appropriate authorisation limits are reviewed annually and approved by the Board (see Appendix B).

604. It is necessary to take the principles of best value into account at all times, although this is not necessarily the lowest cost. An explanation will need to be provided when the lowest cost quotation or tender is not accepted.

605. Procurement procedures are outlined in Appendix C.

Forms of Tenders

606. Details of forms of tenders and how to run a tender process are included in Appendix C.

E-procurement

607. Occasionally, the charge card is used to purchase items, where it is not possible to order through normal procedures. Any department wishing to make a purchase on the charge card must complete an official order form in the usual manner. This must be signed by the budget holder and countersigned by the charge card holder, usually the Head of Academy.

Purchasing Cards

608. A procedure for the authorisation of expenditure using purchasing cards is identified in Appendix B.

609. The current policy is shown in Appendix D.

Contracts

610. All contracts need CEO or Finance Director prior approval before being agreed.

7. Income

701. The main sources of income for the Trust are grants from the DfE. The receipt of these sums is monitored directly by the Finance Director, who is responsible for ensuring that all grants due to the Trust are collected.

702. The Academy also obtains grants and income from:

- local authorities for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Looked After Children (LAC) students;
- students, mainly for educational visits and catering;
- the public, mainly for the hire of Academy facilities.

Educational Visits

703. Each Academy has a specific procedure for educational visits. A designated staff member must be appointed for each educational visit and take responsibility for the collection of sums due. The appointment must be approved by the Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC).

704. The designated staff member will be responsible for estimating the costs, ensuring the cash is collected, and reporting any risks or issues to the EVC and Finance Manager.

705. Students should make payments via the online system ParentPay, cheque or cash.

706. A reconciliation will be completed by the Academy Finance Team when all income and expenditure is received. Any surplus greater than 5% of income received may be redistributed to parents. If the Academy decides to subsidise the educational visit the amount of subsidy must be approved by the relevant budget holder and EVC in advance of the booking being made.

Lettings of Academy Facilities

707. The letting and hire of Academy facilities will be conducted in line with the Lettings Policy for each Academy, which includes a scale of charges that is reviewed annually.

Custody

708. Monies collected should be held securely in the Academy Finance Office safe and should be banked and reconciled promptly. Official, Academy receipts should be issued for all cash received to safeguard staff and students.

Bad Debts

709. Debtor reports are reviewed each month and monies due chased. Those that have not been paid within 30 days of an invoice being issued are contacted by telephone or letter.

710. If the debt remains unrecoverable after 6 months, or if it becomes clear that the debt will not be repaid, the Finance Manager will submit a report to the Finance Director for approval to write it off. The following write-off limits apply:

- Up to £1,000 – Approval by the CEO, reporting to the FRC
- Over £1,000 – Approval by the FRC, reporting to the Board of Directors

VAT 126 Form

711. The Finance Manager will complete a VAT reconciliation each month and submit it to the Finance Director for submission to HRMC for reimbursement.

712. The Finance Director is responsible for submitting the Trust's VAT 126 form to HRMC each month for the reimbursement of VAT incurred.

8. Charging & Remissions

801. The Trust will ensure that educational opportunities provided by its Academies during Academy hours are available to all students regardless of ability to pay and that other activities are charged for in a fair and transparent way. No student will be excluded from essential curriculum activities because of their parents' inability to pay.

802. The separate Charging and Remissions Policy in Appendix D is designed to be consistent with the requirements relating to charging laid out in the Trust's and Academies' Funding Agreements.

803. Academies may charge for some optional activities which take place wholly or mainly outside Academy hours. Academies may invite voluntary contributions for these from parents. Parents who wish to discuss financial matters are able to do so in confidence with the Head of Academy. In all cases, where a charge is made, it will not exceed the costs of the provision.

9. Cash Management

Bank Accounts

901. The opening of all accounts must be authorised by the CEO and Finance Director, who must set out, in a formal memorandum, the arrangements covering the operation of accounts, including any transfers between accounts and cheque signing arrangements. The operation of systems such as Bankers Automatic Clearing System (BACS) and other means of electronic transfer of funds must also be subject to the same level of control.

Payments and Withdrawals

902. All BACS, cheques and other instruments must bear the signatures of two of the following authorised signatories as listed in Appendix B.

903. This provision applies to all accounts, public or private, operated by or on behalf of the Board and is detailed in the Trust bank mandate. Where an authorised signatory signs a BACS payment or cheque payroll that includes a personal reimbursement, the Finance Director needs to countersign the payroll. No authorised signatories should ever sign a cheque made payable to them personally.

Administration

904. All bank accounts must be reconciled monthly and checked by the Finance Manager, within five working days of the month end. The Head of Academy must approve the reconciliation each month. The Finance Director will periodically review the bank reconciliations

Petty Cash Accounts

905. The Academy maintains a maximum cash balance of £300. The cash is administered by the Finance Assistants with the approval of the Finance Manager and is kept in a locked box in the Finance Office safe.

906. The only deposits to petty cash should be from cheques cashed specifically for that purpose. The receipt should be recorded in the petty cash system with the date, amount and a reference, normally the cheque number, relating to the payment. All other cash receipts for whatever reason should be paid directly into the bank.

907. In the interests of security, petty cash payments will be limited to £30. Higher-value payments should be made by cheque or BACs directly from the main bank account as a cash book. VAT receipts are required for all claims for payment.

908. Finance Assistants are responsible for entering all transactions into the petty cash records and accounting system on a monthly basis. Monthly petty cash records are presented to and approved by the Finance Manager at each month end to ensure that the cash balance reconciles to supporting documentation.

Cash Flow Forecasts

909. The Finance Manager is responsible for preparing cash flow forecasts to ensure that the Academy has sufficient funds available to pay for day-to-day operations. If significant balances can be foreseen, steps should be taken to invest the extra funds. Similarly, plans should be made to transfer funds from another bank account or to re-profile GAG to cover potential cash shortages and reported to the Finance Director immediately.

Reserves

910. The Trust will build and maintain a revenue reserve fund to provide flexibility and certainty in forward planning.

911. All revenue reserves are controlled by the Board, including those transferred in upon conversion, and cannot be spent without the approval of the Board.

912. In accordance with EFA and charity accounting standards, the Board will maintain financial records which identify revenue reserves by an Academy.

913. The current policy is shown in Appendix D.

Investments

914. Investments must be made only in accordance with written procedures approved by the Finance and Resource Committee.

915. All investments must be recorded in sufficient detail as to identify the investment and to enable the current market value to be calculated. The information required will normally be the date of purchase, the cost and a description of the investment. Additional procedures may be required to ensure any income receivable from the investment is received.

916. The current policy is shown in Appendix D.

10. Fixed Assets

Asset Register

1001. All items purchased with a value over the Academy's capitalisation limit of £3,000 must be entered in an asset register. The asset register should include the following information:

1. Asset description
2. Asset number
3. Date of acquisition
4. Asset cost
5. Expected useful economic life
6. Depreciation
7. Current book value
8. Location
9. Name of member of staff responsible for the asset

1002. The asset register helps:

- ensure that staff take responsibility for the safe custody of assets;
- enable independent checks on the safe custody of assets, as a deterrent against theft or misuse;
- to manage the effective utilisation of assets and to plan for their replacement;
- the external auditors to draw conclusions on the annual accounts and the Academy's financial system; and
- to support insurance claims in the event of fire, theft, vandalism or other disasters.

1003. The current policy is shown in Appendix D.

Depreciation

1004. The Trust will depreciate fixed assets in line with recognised accounting standards, best practice and DfE guidelines. Depreciation on assets is as follows:-

ICT Equipment	33% straight line
Other ICT Equipment	10% straight line
Fixture & Fittings	20% straight line
Other Fixture & Fittings	10% straight line
Buildings	2% straight line
Leasehold Land and Buildings	Straight line over the life of the lease

1005. No depreciation is provided on freehold or leasehold land. Depreciation on assets in the course of construction is not charged until they are brought into use. The current policy is shown in Appendix D.

Security of Assets

1006. Stores and equipment must be secured by means of physical and other security devices. Only authorised staff may access the stores.

1007. All of the items in the register should be permanently and visibly marked as the Academy's property and there should be a regular (at least annual) count by someone other than the person maintaining the register. Discrepancies between the physical count and the amount recorded in the register should be investigated promptly and, where significant, reported to the Finance Director and Audit and Risk Committee.

1008. Damaged or stolen Academy assets are also reported. Upon discovery of a theft or destruction, the individual/department must notify the Head of Academy and/or the police to obtain a crime number. The incident should be investigated promptly and, where significant, reported to the Finance Director and Audit and Risk Committee. Where it has been found that the individual has acted in a negligent way, disciplinary action may be taken.

1009. Inventories of Academy property should be kept up to date and reviewed regularly. Items which are used by the Academy but do not belong to it should be noted.

Disposals

1010. Items which are to be disposed of by sale or destruction must be authorised for disposal by the CEO and, where significant, should be sold following competitive tender. The Academy must seek the approval of the DfE in writing if it proposes to dispose of an asset for which a capital grant in excess of £20,000 was paid.

1011. Disposal of equipment to staff is not encouraged, as it may be more difficult to evidence the Academy obtained value for money in any sale or scrapping of equipment. In addition, there are complications with the disposal of computer equipment, as the Academy would need to ensure licences for software programmes have been legally transferred to the new owner.

1012. The Academy is expected to reinvest the proceeds from all asset sales for which a capital grant was paid in other Academy assets. If the sale proceeds are not reinvested, then the Academy must repay to the DfE a proportion of the sale proceeds.

1013. All disposals of land must be agreed in advance with the Secretary of State.

Loan of Assets

1014. Items of Academy property (excluding staff laptops, IT equipment, textbooks and other paper-based documents) must not be removed from Academy premises without the authority of the Head of Academy. A record of the loan must be recorded in a loan book and any asset/item/property booked back into the Academy when it is returned.

1015. If assets are on loan for extended periods or to a single member of staff on a regular basis the situation may give rise to a 'benefit-in-kind' for taxation purposes. Loans should therefore be kept under review and any potential benefits discussed with the Trust's auditors.

Leases

1016. The Trust is able to enter into operational leases as outlined in the Academies Financial Handbook.

1017. Finance leases are classed as borrowings and can only be entered into with the specific authority of the EFA.

1018. All leases must have prior approval by the CEO or Finance Director before being agreed.

11. Monitoring Outcomes & Review

1101. Outcomes will be monitored and reviewed by regular internal checks and scrutiny by senior management, including an annual review with Finance Managers and the Finance Director.

1102. The effectiveness of this policy and any associated procedures will also be monitored by the Finance and Resource Committee and the Audit and Risk Committee, supported by External Audit, including the Regularity Audit, and regular testing by Internal Audit. Audit results will be presented via regular written reports to the Audit and Risk Committee. Findings & recommendations will be used to revise this policy and associated procedures. This will be undertaken by referring any recommendations for changes to the Board.

1103. Key indicators of the success of this policy are:

- no inappropriate use of money;
- adherence to budgets;
- value for money being demonstrated;
- expenditure targeted on key priority areas;
- timely reports to the Board, DfE and others;
- up-to-date, accurate records.



Appendix A

Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust

Scheme of Delegation

September 2016



FAIRFAX MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Introduction

This Scheme of Delegation sets out the delegated powers between the Board of Directors, the Audit and Risk Committee, the Finance and Resource Committee and Academy Associations within the Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust.

The delegated powers are broken down into different levels in line with the Trust's principles of governance, leadership and operation. The delegated autonomy for individual Academies is aligned with the need for the Trust to fulfil its corporate responsibilities and accountabilities to the Department for Education (DfE), Education Funding Agency (EFA), Charities Commission, HMRC and Companies House.

The different levels of delegated power are listed below, but it should be noted that not every task requires all levels of delegated power to be defined:

- Approve (A)
- Recommend (R)
- Consult (C)
- Implement (I)

The Scheme of Delegation should be read in conjunction with the Terms of Reference for the relevant body; these are attached as appendices to this document.

Task #	Key: Approve (A), Recommend (R), Consult (C), Implement (I)	Notes	CEO	BoD	Academy Association	Head of Academy
1.	Governance					
1.1	Trust Scheme of Delegation		R/I	A		
1.2	New Academies Joining the Trust		R	A		
1.3	Academy Association (AA) Terms of Reference		R	A	I	
1.4	Appointment of a Chair of the Trust Board	As per Articles		A		
1.5	Appointment (and removal) of a Chair of the AA	As per Articles	R	A		
1.6	Appointment (and removal) of a Vice Chair of the AA	As per AA ToR			A	
1.7	Appointment of Board Subcommittees			A		
1.8	Appointment (and removal) of a Clerk to the Trust Board		R	A		
1.9	Appointment (and removal) of a Clerk to the AA		R	A		
1.10	Calendar of Trust Board and AA Meetings		R	A		I
2.	Academy Performance, Curriculum and Teaching					
2.1	Academy Performance Targets		R	A		
2.2	Academy 1-Year Development Plan		C		A	R
2.3	Curriculum		A		C	I
2.4	Teaching & Learning Policy		C		A	R
2.5	Sex Education Policy		C		A	R
2.6	Religious Education policy		C		A	R
3.	Staff Policies and Pay					
3.1	Pay & Remuneration Policy		R	A		C/I
3.2	Job Role Salary & Grading		R	A		C
3.3	Changes to Employee Terms & Conditions or Collective Agreements		R	A		C
3.4	CEO Annual Pay Award			A		
3.5	Head of Academy Annual Pay Award		R	A		
3.6	Teachers' & Support Staff Pay Progression				A	R
3.7	Statutory Teacher and Support Staff Pay Award			A		
3.8	Central Office Staff Annual Pay Award		R	A		
3.9	Performance Management & Appraisal Review Policy		R	A		C/I
3.10	Disciplinary Policy		R	A		C/I
3.11	Grievance Policy		R	A		C/I
3.12	Capability Policy		R	A		C/I
3.13	Whistleblowing Policy		R	A		C/I
3.14	Restructuring & Redundancy Policy		R	A		C/I
3.15	Employee Health & Safety Policy		R	A		C/I
4.	Staff Management					
4.1	Academy Organisation Structure		A			R
4.2	Central Office Organisation Structure		R	A		
4.3	Staff Recruitment – Posts Included in the Current Structure & Budget	Including Temporary and Agency Cover				A/I
4.4	Staff Recruitment – Posts Not Included in the Current Structure and Budget	Including Temporary and Agency Cover	A			R/I
4.5	Head of Academy Appointment		A	C	C	
4.6	Deputy Head Appointment		A		C	R

Task #	Key: Approve (A), Recommend (R), Consult (C), Implement (I)	Notes	CEO	BoD	Academy Association	Head of Academy
4.7	Senior Leadership Appointment		A		C	R
4.8	Teaching and Support Staff Appointment					A
4.9	Suspension Procedures for the CEO		C	R/A /I		
4.10	Dismissal of the CEO		C	R/A /I		
4.11	Appeal of the CEO Against Dismissal		C	R/A /I		
4.12	Suspension Procedures for the Head of Academy and Central Office Employees		R/I	A		C
4.13	Dismissal of the Head of Academy		A/I			C
4.14	Appeal of the Head of Academy Against Dismissal	External		A/I		C
4.15	Suspension of Any Teaching or Support Staff	Excludes HoA	A			R/I
4.16	Dismissal of Any Teaching or Support Staff	Excludes HoA				A
4.17	Appeal of Any Teaching or Support Staff Against Dismissal	Excludes HoA	A/I			
5.	Financial Governance and Management					
5.1	Trust & Academy Financial Regulations (including key policies)		C/I	A		
5.2	Trust & Academy Financial Procedures		C/I	A		
5.3	Trust Procurement Policy		C/I	A		
5.4	Trust 3-Year Budget Plan		C/I	A		
5.5	Trust 1-Year Budget		C/I	A		
5.6	Trust Consolidated Financial Statements		C/I	A		
5.7	Trustees' Report		R/I	A		
5.8	Response to Auditor's Management Letter		I	A		
5.9	Academy 3-Year Budget Plan		R	A		C
5.10	Academy 1-Year Budget		C	A		C
5.11	Financial Returns to the EFA		A			
6.	Financial Authorisation					
6.1	Budgeted Expenditure (excluding contracts) up to £10,000	In Conjunction with the Budget Holder & Finance Manager				A
6.2	Budgeted Expenditure (excluding contracts) between £10,000-£30,000	In Conjunction with the Budget Holder, Finance Manager & HoA				A
6.3	Budgeted Expenditure (excluding contracts) over £30,000	In Conjunction with the Finance & Resource Committee	R	A		I
6.4	All Contracts		A			R
6.5	Disposals or Write-Off of Stock, Assets or Debts up to £1,000		A			R
6.6	Disposals or Write-Off of Stock, Assets or Debts over £1,000		C	A		R
6.7	All Settlements/Compensation Payments Up to £50,000 (AFH Limit)		R	A		C

Task #	Key: Approve (A), Recommend (R), Consult (C), Implement (I)	Notes	CEO	BoD	Academy Association	Head of Academy
6.8	Settlements/Compensation Payments Over £50,000	Secretary of State	R	A		C
6.9	Capital Projects		A			C
7.	Academy Policies and Procedures					
7.1	Academy Day				A	R/I
7.2	Term Time and Holidays		A			C/I
7.3	Inset Days		A			C
7.4	Academy (PAN)		C	A		R
7.5	Change of Age Range		R	A		C/I
7.6	Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy		C		A	R/I
7.7	Attendance Policy		C		A	R/I
7.8	Student Behaviour & Exclusions Policy		C		A	R/I
7.9	Fixed-Term Exclusion					A
7.10	Permanent Exclusion		C		A	R
7.11	Complaints Procedure		C		A	R
7.12	Admissions Policy		A			R/I
7.13	Academy Prospectus		A			R/I
7.14	Academy Website		A			R/I
7.15	Academy Logo & Branding		A			C/I
7.16	Academy Uniform		A			C/I
7.17	Academy Trips Policy		C		A	R/I
7.18	Pupil Premium Report		C		A	R/I
7.19	Year 7 Catch-Up Report		C		A	R/I
7.20	Accessibility Plan		C		A	R/I
7.21	Travel Plan		C		A	R/I
8.	Premises and Assets					
8.1	Asset Management Policy and Plan		R			I
8.2	Health & Safety Policy		R	A		I
8.3	Estates Management Strategy		R	A		I

Note:

Central policies will be brought to meetings for reference only.

AFH = Academies Financial Handbook

OJEU = Official Journal of the European Union (previously called OJEC – the Official Journal of the European Community).

Appendix B

Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust

Financial Authorisation Levels

September 2016

Delegated Duty	Value	Delegated Authority
1. Ordering goods and services (raising requisitions) – excluding contracts All ICT-related purchases must also be approved by the Academy Head of ICT.	Up to £10,000	Budget Holder, approved by Finance Manager
	£10,001 - £30,000	As above plus Head of Academy or Finance Director
	Over £30,001	Finance and Resource Committee
	All contracts	Chief Executive Officer or Finance Director
Tendering procedures as per Appendix B		
2. Signatories for BACs, cheques and individual payments, as per the bank mandate for each FMAT/Academy bank account. (including BACS payments other than payroll)	Up to £10,000	Any 2 signatories from either: 2 panel B or 1 panel A and 1 panel B
	Over £10,001	Any 2 signatories from either: 2 panel B or 1 panel A and 1 panel B
		Panel A – Finance Manager and Deputy Head Teacher Panel B – Head of Academy, Finance Director, Chief Executive Officer
3. Signatories for cheques and payment authorisations for MAT	Any	Chief Executive Officer or Finance Director and Chair of the Finance and Resource Committee
4. Payroll BACS	Any	Finance Manager and Head of Academy, final approval Finance Director
5. Signatories for DfE grant claims and DfE returns for individual academies	Any	Two signatories from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chief Executive Officer - Head of Academy - Finance Director
6. Signatories for DfE grant claims and DfE returns for MAT	Any	Two signatories from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chief Executive Officer - Finance Director - Board Director

Delegated Duty	Value	Delegated Authority
7. Virement of budget provision between budget headings.	Any value – non -pay budget moving to non-pay budget	Head of Academy and Finance Manager, reporting to the Finance Director
	Any value – pay budget moving to Pay budget	As above plus Finance Director
	or Pay budget moving to non-pay budget	
	or non-pay moving to pay budget	
8. Virement of funding between academies	Any	Board of Directors
9. Disposals or write-off of stock, assets or debts Up to £1,000	Up to £1,000	Finance Director
10. Disposals or write-off of stock, assets or debts over £1,000	Over £1,000	Finance and Resource Committee, reporting to the Board of Directors
11. Purchase or sale of any freehold property	Any	Board of Directors and DfE approval required
12. Granting or take-up of any leasehold or tenancy agreement exceeding three years	Any	Board of Directors and DfE approval required
13. Raising invoices to collect income	Any	Finance Manager or Finance Director

Delegated Duty	Claimant	Delegated Authority
14. Petty cash (up to £30)	Academy Staff	Budget Holder
	Budget Holder is claiming	Finance Manager
	Finance Manager	Head of Academy
	Head of Academy	Chief Executive Officer
15. Expense claims	Academy Staff	Head of Academy
	Head of Academy	Chief Executive Officer
	Central Office Staff	Chief Executive Officer
	Chief Executive Officer	Chair of Finance and Resource Committee

Appendix C

Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust
Purchasing and Tendering Policy
September 2016

Purchasing

Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust wants to achieve the best value for money from all our purchases. This means they want to get what they need at the correct quality, quantity and time, at the best price possible. A large proportion of their purchases will be paid for with public funds and they need to maintain the integrity of these funds by following the general principles of:

- **Probity**, it must be demonstrable that there is no corruption or private gain involved in the contractual relationships of the Academy/Trust;
- **Accountability**, the Academy/Trust is publicly accountable for its expenditure and the conduct of its affairs;
- **Fairness**, all those dealt with by the Academy/Trust are dealt with on a fair and equitable basis;
- **Value for Money**, the Academy/Trust shall aim for:
 - Economy, minimising cost and having regard to appropriate quality;
 - Efficiency, an appropriate relationship between outputs and costs;
 - Effectiveness, the achievement of the intended outputs.

Routine Purchasing

Routine purchases up to £1,000 can be requested and are authorised as per the financial authorisation levels detailed in the Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust Financial Procedures Policy. A quote or price must always be obtained before any order is placed. The Finance Office has a list of regularly used suppliers; however, if the purchaser considers that better value for money can be obtained by ordering from a supplier not regularly used by the Academy/Trust, then this must be discussed and agreed with the Finance Office.

All requisitions must be made, or exceptionally confirmed, in writing using an official requisition form, which details the required actions and expenditure approval bands (stocks of requisition forms are held in the Finance Office). Requisitions must bear the signature of the employee requesting the order; they will be countersigned by the budget holder as required and must be forwarded to the Finance Office, where they will be checked to ensure adequate budgetary provision exists before the requisition is released.

All orders must be made, or exceptionally confirmed, in writing using an official order form, stocks of which are held in the Finance Office. Orders must bear the signature of the member of staff requesting the order; they will be countersigned by the budget holder as required and must be forwarded to the Finance Office, where they will be checked to ensure adequate budgetary provision exists before the order is released.

Orders over £1,000 but less than £10,000

Budget holders are expected to check and compare prices to ensure that best value is obtained. Three comparison quotes need to be obtained and approved by the Finance Manager and Head of Academy. On approval, quotes should be attached to the Purchase Requisition form.

Orders over £10,001 and up to £30,000

At least three written quotations should be obtained for all orders between £10,001 and £30,000 to identify the best source of the goods/services. Written details of quotations obtained should be prepared by the Finance Manager for approval by the Head of Academy and the Chief Executive Officer or Finance Director as per the Financial Authorisation Levels and retained by budget holders for audit purposes. Telephone quotes are acceptable if these are evidenced and faxed or emailed confirmations of quotes have been received before a purchase decision is made. On approval, quotes should be attached to the Purchase Requisition form.

Orders over £30,000

All goods/services ordered with a value over £30,000 must be subject to formal tendering procedures. Purchases over £156,442 (threshold from 01/01/2010) excluding VAT may fall under EU procurement rules which requires advertising in the Official Journal of the European Union. Guidance on the OJEU thresholds is given in the Academies Financial Handbook. Ordering goods which may potentially be over £30,000 must be discussed with the Finance Director prior to any communication with suppliers. This is to ensure correct procedures are followed from the outset. On approval, quotes should be attached to the Purchase Requisition form.

Forms of Tenders

There are three forms of tender procedure: open, restricted and negotiated, and the circumstances in which each procedure should be used are described below.

A. Open Tender: This is where all potential suppliers are invited to tender. The budget holder must discuss and agree with the Finance Director how best to advertise for supplier's, e.g. general press, trade journals, or to identify all potential suppliers and contact directly if practical. This is the preferred method of tendering, as it is most conducive to competition and the propriety of public funds.

B. Restricted Tender: This is where suppliers are specifically invited to tender. Restricted tenders are appropriate where:

- there is a need to maintain a balance between the contract value and administrative costs,
- a large number of suppliers would come forward or because the nature of the goods are such that only specific suppliers can be expected to supply the Academy's requirements,
- the costs of publicity and advertising are likely to outweigh the potential benefits of open tendering.

C. Negotiated Tender: The terms of the contract may be negotiated with one or more chosen suppliers. This is appropriate in specific circumstances:

- the above methods have resulted in either no or unacceptable tenders,
- only one or very few suppliers are available,
- extreme urgency exists,
- additional deliveries by the existing supplier are justified.

Preparation for Tender

Full consideration should be given to:

- the objective of the project
- overall requirements
- the technical skills required
- after-sales service requirements
- form of contract

It may be useful after all requirements have been established, to rank requirements (e.g. mandatory, desirable and additional) and award marks to suppliers on fulfilment of these requirements to help reach an overall decision.

Invitation to Tender

If a restricted tender is to be used, then an invitation to tender must be issued. If an open tender is used, an invitation to tender may be issued in response to an initial enquiry.

An invitation to tender should include the following:

- introduction/background to the project;
- scope and objectives of the project;
- technical requirements;
- implementation of the project;
- terms and conditions of tender; and
- form of response.

Aspects to Consider

Financial

Like should be compared with like, and if a lower price means a reduced service or lower quality, this must be borne in mind when reaching a decision.

Care should be taken to ensure that the tender price is the total price and that there are no hidden or extra costs, e.g. power supplies.

Is there scope for negotiation?

Technical/Suitability

Qualifications of the contractor

Relevant experience of the contractor

Descriptions of technical and service facilities

Certificates of quality/conformity with standards

Quality control procedures

Details of previous sales and references from past customers.

Other Considerations

Presales demonstrations

After-sales service

Financial status of supplier. Suppliers in financial difficulty may have problems completing contracts and in the provision of after sales-service. It may be appropriate to have an accountant or similarly qualified person examine audited accounts etc.

Tender Acceptance Procedures

The invitation to tender should state the date and time by which the completed tender document should be received by the Academy. Tenders should be submitted in plain envelopes clearly marked to indicate they contain tender documents. The envelopes should be time and date stamped on receipt and stored in a secure place prior to tender opening. Tenders received after the submission deadline should not normally be accepted.

Tender Opening Procedures

All tenders submitted should be opened at the same time and the tender details should be recorded. The people that should be present for the opening of tenders are as follows:

- i. For contracts up to £30,000 - the Head of Academy, the Finance Director, plus a member of the Finance Committee.
- ii. For contracts over £30,000 - the Chief Executive Officer, the Finance Director, plus at least two members of the Finance Committee.

A separate record should be established to record the names of the firms submitting tenders and the amount tendered. This record must be signed by those people present at the tender opening.

Tendering Procedures

The evaluation process should involve at least two people. Those involved should disclose all interests, business and otherwise, that might impact upon their objectivity. If there is a potential conflict of interest, then that person must withdraw from the tendering process.

Those involved in making a decision must take care not to accept gifts or hospitality from potential suppliers that could compromise or be seen to compromise their independence.

Full records should be kept of all criteria used for evaluation, and for contracts over £30,000, a report should be prepared for the Finance Committee highlighting the relevant issues and recommending a decision. For contracts under £30,000, the decision and criteria should be reported to the Finance Committee.



Where required by the conditions attached to a specific grant from the DfE, the department's approval must be obtained before the acceptance of a tender.

The accepted tender should be the one that is economically most advantageous to the Trust. All parties should then be informed of the decision.

Appendix D

Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust

Finance Policies

September 2016

This appendix also contains the following policies:

1. Fixed Asset & Depreciation Policy
2. Investment and Reserves Policy
3. Charging and Remissions Policy
4. Charge Card Policy
5. Gifts and Hospitality Policy
6. Staff Expenses Policy
7. Whistleblowing Policy
8. Fraud Policy and Procedures
9. Best Value Statement

Fixed Asset & Depreciation Policy

1. Introduction

101. International Accounting Standard (IAS) 16 defines Fixed Assets as “assets whose future economic benefit is probable to flow into the entity, whose cost can be measured reliably”.

102. The purpose of this Fixed Asset Policy is to ensure that the Trusts’ balance sheet correctly reflects its assets and liabilities.

103. The policy defines the treatment of Non-Current, Current, Tangible and Intangible Fixed Assets. Procedures are attached as annexes to the policy.

104. A Fixed Asset Register is maintained and reconciled to the financial statements of the Academy and is written in accordance with Accounting Standard FRS15 Tangible Fixed Assets.

105. The policy will be reviewed by the Finance Committee annually.

2. Fixed Asset Register

201. The Fixed Asset Register consists of a list of items (or specific group of items purchased within the accounting period) valued over £3,000 that are considered to have a life longer than the financial year in which they were purchased. Capitalised assets are not necessarily bought on one order; so long as a group of items is purchased within the same accounting period they will be capitalised.

202. Fixed Assets are categorised as follows:

- a) ICT Equipment
- b) Other ICT Equipment
- c) Fixture and Fittings
- d) Other Fixture and Fittings
- e) Buildings
- f) Leasehold Land and Buildings
- g) Land

203. Assets excluded from the Fixed Asset Register are Current Assets and Stock. Current Assets include cash and bank balances which are controlled through reconciliation to control accounts on a regular basis.

204. The appropriate accounting transactions are processed for all capitalised assets and recorded in the Fixed Asset Register. Transactions will be recorded within the Fixed Asset Fund Account in addition to the Balance Sheet.

205. All ICT items that have been included in the Fixed Asset Register are security marked, where practicable, as the property of the Academy and have an asset number and barcode.

206. Physical counts are undertaken annually against the Fixed Asset Register for Furniture and Equipment and termly for ICT.

207. Discrepancies between the physical count and the registers are investigated promptly by the Finance Manager. Any discrepancies over the value of £500 are reported to the Finance Director.

208. All disposals of assets are recorded in the Fixed Asset Register and the appropriate transactions recorded through the financial statements.

209. All working papers for the purchase of assets, including invoices, are copied and filed in a central record.

210. Attractive and portable ICT/electronic items of equipment that fall below the capitalisation limit of £3,000 and over £100.00 are security marked and barcoded and recorded on the school asset manager software (e.g. a single digital camera purchased for £250). Asset control is as for the assets held in the Fixed Asset Register.

3. Depreciation

301. Non-current Assets are to be depreciated to reflect the recoverable amount in the financial statements, over the useful life of the asset.

302. The depreciation will be calculated on an annual basis for preparation of the year-end accounts.

303. A budget can be set within the Fixed Asset Fund to provide an indicative charge for depreciation for the year to the Fixed Asset Fund Account.

304. Groups of assets will use the same method of depreciation. There may very occasionally be an asset that does not completely fit into one of the categories below, and the Finance Committee will discuss these items on an individual basis.

ASSET GROUP	DEPRECIATION METHOD
ICT Equipment	33% (3 yrs) Straight line with nil residual value
Other ICT Equipment	10% (10yrs) Straight line with nil residual value
Fixture & Fittings	20% (5 yrs) Straight line with nil residual value
Other Fixture & Fittings	10% (10yrs) Straight line with nil residual value
Buildings	2% (50 yrs) Straight line
Land	0% No depreciation is provided on freehold land
Leasehold Land and Buildings	Straight line over the life of the lease

ICT Equipment	33% straight line
Other ICT Equipment	10% straight line
Fixture & Fittings	20% straight line
Other Fixture & Fittings	10% straight line
Buildings	2% straight line
Land	0% no depreciation is provided on freehold land
Leasehold Buildings	Straight line over the life of the lease

305. The expected useful life of all assets will be assessed prior to depreciation calculations and recorded in the Fixed Asset Register.

Appendix A to Fixed Asset Policy

Asset Disposal Procedure

1. The best possible value will be obtained from the disposal of assets. Assets disposed of with a carrying amount (Cost less Accumulated Depreciation) above £500 must be approved by the Finance Committee.
2. Equipment is not normally disposed of to staff because it is difficult to provide evidence that the Academy obtained value for money in the sale or scrapping of such equipment. If computer equipment is disposed of, licences for software programmes must be legally transferred to the new owner. Pecuniary Interests must also be considered at all times.
3. Under the Academy Funding Agreement, the approval of the Secretary of State is required before the sale, or disposal by other means, or reinvestment of the proceeds from the disposal, of an asset (or specific group of assets) for which a capital grant in excess of £20,000 was originally paid.
4. The Trust agrees to reinvest the proceeds from all asset sales for which a capital grant was received and therefore every effort will be made to maximise the sale of such assets.
5. If such proceeds are not reinvested, the Trust will repay to the DfE the same proportion of the proceeds of the sale or disposal as equates to the proportion of the original cost met by the Secretary of State (i.e. if the Secretary of State purchased 50% of the original cost of the asset, the Academy agrees to repay 50% of the proceeds).
6. The proceeds from the sale of assets acquired with a grant from the Secretary of State cannot be used to contribute to further named grant-aided projects or purchases.

Investment and Reserves Policy

Investment Policy

1. Aims

101. The aim of this policy is to ensure that funds which the Trust does not immediately need to cover anticipated expenditure are invested in such a way as to maximise income but without risk.

102. Our aim is to spend the public monies with which we are entrusted for the direct educational benefit of students as soon as is prudent. The Trust does not consider the investment of surplus funds as a primary activity; rather it is the result of good practice as and when circumstances allow.

2. Purposes

201. To ensure adequate cash balances are maintained in the current account to cover day to day working capital requirements.

202. To ensure there is no risk of loss in capital value of any cash funds invested.

203. To protect the capital value of any invested funds against inflation.

204. To optimise returns on invested funds.

3. Guidelines

301. Regular cash flow reports are to be prepared and monitored to ensure there are adequate liquid funds to meet all payroll-related commitments and outstanding creditors that are due for payment.

302. Where the cash flow identifies a base level of cash funds that will be surplus to requirements, these may be invested following approval from the Finance Committee. Approval must be signed off and recorded in the minutes.

303. In making decisions regarding where and how any surplus funds should be invested, due regard will be given to risk.

304. Currently, surplus funds are invested into a fixed-term deposit with Lloyds. Interest is received when the investment matures.

305. The Finance Committee will receive a report at each meeting as to the performance of the investment.

306. The aim is to reach an appropriate level of reserve to allow the Finance Director and the Finance Committee to explore alternative investment possibilities, with criteria being:

- i. Investment with a different counterparty (in order to reduce counterparty risk);
- ii. Consideration of whether there should be a maximum level of investment with a single approved counterparty; and
- iii. A longer-term investment with a higher return (but not high-risk investments which are not in the best interests of the Trust).

Reserves Policy

4. Aim

401. The aim of this policy is for the Finance Director and the Finance Committee to review the reserves level of the Trust annually. This review encompasses the nature of income and expenditure streams, the need to match income with commitments and the nature of reserves. The level of reserves will be kept under review by the Directors.

402. In addition, the Trust will seek to build up free reserves in order to contribute to any pension deficit that may arise from time to time and to develop the Trust's longer-term goals and ambitions by building up seed funding for future capital projects and educational initiatives for the benefit of students.

5. Purpose

501. The purpose of the policy is to consider the maintenance of a minimum working reserve in order to minimise any financial risks facing the school, such as delays between spending and the receipt of grants, or unexpected emergencies.

6. Guidelines

601. The Finance Committee has determined that the appropriate level of free reserves should be equivalent to 4 weeks of expenditure. The reason for this is to provide sufficient working capital to enable the Trust to manage its cash flow efficiently; thus, to cover delays between spending and the receipt of grants, to manage annual variations in student numbers and to provide a cushion to deal with unexpected emergencies.

602. It should be noted that as the majority of income is received from the EFA with restrictions on the amount that can be carried forward, the Directors are therefore mindful that it is not possible to build up free reserves in line with other non-educational charities.

Charging and Remissions Policy

1. Introduction

101. The Trust recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including clubs, out-of-school trips, residential trips and experiences of other environments, can make towards students' all-round educational experience and their personal and social development. (Throughout this policy, the term "parents" means all those having parental responsibility for a child.)

2. Charging

201. The Trust reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances for activities organised by the Academy: -

202. Trips

Academy trips and residential trips (all costs)

Activities outside Academy hours (all costs)

203. Materials

A contribution towards the costs of materials purchased by the Academy in relation to items produced by students which will be taken home for personal use.

204. Acts of vandalism and negligence

The Academy reserves the right to recover part or the whole cost of any damage to buildings or equipment which is the result of vandalism or negligence by a student.

205. Examination fees

- i. If a student has not regularly attended the lessons for a particular examination subject, the examination fee may be requested.
- ii. If, without a medical certificate explaining the reason, a student fails to complete the examination requirements for any public examination for which the Academy has paid an entry fee, the Academy may seek to recover the fee from the parent.
- iii. There may be a charge for examination entry where there is a request from the parent for additional subject entries to be made, which are not supported by the Academy.
- iv. If a late exam entry fee is the direct result of actions by a student or parent(s), the Academy may seek to recover the fee from the parent.

206. Music and Vocal Tuition

Although the law states that all education provided during Academy hours must be free, specialist music lessons are an exception to this rule. Charges may be made for tuition in playing a musical instrument, and the teaching is not an essential part of the National Curriculum. Lessons can be for either an individual student or groups of any size appropriate to this lesson and health and safety considerations.

3. Remissions

301. The Trust may remit charges in full or in part to parents after considering financial support applications. The Trust invites parents to apply, in the strictest confidence, for the remission of charges, in part or in full, incurred by their child's Academy. The Head of Academy will authorise remission in consultation with the Chair of the Academy Association.

4. Insurance

401. Any insurance costs will be included in charges made for trips or activities.

5. Voluntary Contributions

501. Nothing in this policy statement precludes academies from inviting parents to make voluntary contributions. The Academy should make clear that such contributions are voluntary; that the children of parents who do not contribute will not be discriminated against; and that if insufficient contributions are received, the trip may be cancelled.

6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

601. The Trust will review this policy every year and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout all academies.

Charge Card Policy

The Trust has approved the use of the Lloyds Business Charge Card; these procedures are included in the Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust Financial Procedures Policy.

From time to time, the academies may be offered an opportunity to purchase goods or arrange for services from companies that shall not invoice but shall only accept a direct payment. In order to make use of these offers, the academies hold a charge card. The Finance Manager at each academy will ensure that there is budgetary provision for all purchases and that there is a sufficient balance available in the bank to cover the expenditure.

The primary method of payment remains invoicing and this shall generally be used in preference to card purchases where such is offered by the supplier.

- the Trust authorises any one or more of the following to be a cardholder:
 - a. Chief Executive Officer
 - b. Head of Academy
 - c. Finance Director
 - d. Finance Manager
- the charge card shall be issued by Lloyds bank, the Trust's bankers
- the PIN number for each card shall be stored in the safe, within separate sealed envelopes
- in the event of loss of the PIN number, the bank will be able to provide cardholders only with the information
- should the card be lost or stolen, the loss shall be reported by the cardholder to the issuing bank, the police and the Finance Director immediately
- should fraud or misuse be suspected, the bank should be informed immediately so that the appropriate action can be taken
- the charge card account shall have a spending limit of between £5,000 and £10,000 in line with the financial authorisation limits. Any amendments can only be actioned with the approval of the Chief Executive Officer and Finance Director in line with the bank mandate
- the charge card balance shall be settled in full automatically each month by direct debit; there are no credit facilities available on the card
- the cards shall not be used for personal expenditure under any circumstances
- cash withdrawals will not normally be required or permitted
- all orders must be delivered to the Academy address
- all authorised cardholders shall sign to accept that they have personal responsibility for transactions on "their" card which are not conducted with the approval of the Academy in accordance with this policy (refer to Appendix 1 attached)
- cardholders shall also authorise the Academy to recover the cost of any unauthorised transactions, and where reimbursement is not received, then the Academy is authorised to either make a salary deduction or take legal action to recover the unauthorised amount

- cardholders shall be made aware of the action to take in the event of a card being stolen, lost or going missing
- a VAT (if applicable) receipt must be obtained
 - if ordering online using the security code, the cardholder must have a purchase order signed in advance in line with the FMAT Finance Procedures Policy
 - the cardholder must present the receipt for goods/services attached to a Purchase Requisition form to the Finance Assistant for processing
 - all receipts shall be authorised in line with the FMAT Financial Procedures Policy

Separation of duties is fulfilled by the following FMAT Financial Procedures Policy.



Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust Charge Card Consent Form

I consent to be a cardholder on the following charge card account held by Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust.

Name on Charge Card :

Card Number :

I confirm that I have read the Charge Card Policy and that I will abide by its terms and conditions.

In particular, I acknowledge and agree that:

- 1. I will use the account only to purchase items/services on behalf of the Academy and not use the account for any personal expenditure
- 2. I will only purchase items/services in accordance with the Policy.
- 3. I will take care of the card whilst it is in my possession to avoid its loss or theft.
- 4. I will not disclose to any other person the card PIN number.
- 5. I will only use the card security number for online purchases where a website address begins with https:, a security number is requested and only on a secure website (indicated by the padlock symbol).
- 6. I will not use the card to withdraw cash
- 7. I understand that upon discovery of loss or theft of the card, I must as soon as possible notify:
 - a. the issuing bank; and
 - b. the Finance Director or Finance Manager; and
 - c. the police (only in the event of theft).
- 8. I understand that I am personally liable for all charges on the Account which relate to transactions which have not been conducted in accordance with the Policy.
- 9. I accept that I must reimburse the Academy promptly should I cause the Account to incur any unauthorised charges, and in the absence of prompt reimbursement, I authorise the Academy to recover all unauthorised charges by deduction from any amounts otherwise owing to me by the Academy, including, but not limited to, salary and expenses.
- 10. I agree that if I cease to be employed by the Trust, I will return the card to Finance Office immediately.

Agreed by:

Signature:

Print Name: Date:

Gifts and Hospitality Policy

1. As a general guideline, business gifts and hospitality should not be accepted by any member of staff, except as provided for below.
2. The intention of this policy is to ensure that the Trust (including academies with the Trust) can demonstrate that no undue influence has been applied or could be said to have been applied by any supplier or anyone else dealing with the Trust. The Trust should be able to show that all decisions are reached on the basis only of value for money and for no other reason. Any consideration of whether or not the principles of this policy have been breached will be determined by reference to this principle.
3. Any breach of this policy could lead to disciplinary action and may constitute gross misconduct.
4. Employees shall not use their authority or office for personal gain and shall seek to uphold and enhance the standing of the Trust by:
 - a) maintaining an unimpeachable standard of honesty and integrity in all their business relationships;
 - b) complying with the letter and spirit of the law, and contractual obligations, rejecting any business practice that might be deemed improper;
 - c) at all times in their business relationships acting to maintain the interests and good reputation of the Trust.
5. Any employee who becomes aware of a breach of policy must report this immediately to their line manager, who will instigate investigations as necessary.
6. Any personal interest that may impinge on or might reasonably be deemed by others to impinge on an employee's impartiality or conflict with the duty owed to the Trust in any matter relevant to an employee's duties (such as conflicting business interests) should be declared in writing (see paragraph 9). Any member of staff who is aware of any business dealings conferring personal gain, or involving relatives or associates of members of staff must supply details of such transactions to the Finance Office for entry into the Pecuniary Interests Register.
7. Employees are permitted to accept gifts, rewards or benefits from members of the public or organisations with which the Trust has official contacts only where they are isolated gifts of a trivial character or inexpensive seasonal gifts (such as diaries or calendars). Gifts should not therefore be accepted if they appear to be disproportionately generous or could be construed as an inducement to effect a business decision. Exceptions are small gifts received as 'thank-you' tokens from students, parents, line managers, for example at Christmas/end of term.
8. Where purchased items include a "free gift", such a gift should be either used for Trust business or handed to the Trust for general use.

9. Conventional hospitality (lunches, outings, tickets for events, etc.) is acceptable provided that it is normal and reasonable in the circumstances. Such invitations should not therefore be accepted where there is no reasonable business justification for doing so, where an invitation is disproportionately generous, or where the invitation could be seen as an inducement to affect a business decision.

10. Any hospitality other than of a nominal value (£30) or facilities provided during the normal course of business should be reported to the Finance Manager, to include details of the following:

- Who the gift is from;
- Date the gift is received;
- Details of the gift;
- Action taken (whether the gift is retained or refused or passed on, etc.), for entry into the Gifts in Kind Log Sheet (which can be found in the Finance Office at each Academy).

Staff Expenses Policy

Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Claiming Expenses
3. Tax Considerations
4. Travel Expenses
5. Vehicle Insurance
6. Use of Public Transport
7. Subsistence Allowances
8. Telephone and Mobile Expenses

Appendices

- A. Staff Expenses Claim Form
- B. Staff Mileage Claim Form
- C. RSA Occasional Business Use – Policy Summary
- D. Director / Associate Expenses Claim Form
- E. Director / Associate Mileage Claim Form

1. Introduction

Staff, Members, Directors and Associates may claim reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred wholly, necessarily and exclusively in the course of the Trust/Academy's business. These may arise from attending meetings, training or conferences, or purchases made on the Trust/Academy's behalf. Any purchase made on behalf of the Trust/Academy must be approved by the budget holder prior to purchase.

It is essential that Inland Revenue regulations are complied with and therefore this policy must be adhered to when making an expenses claim.

2. Claiming Expenses

- 2.1. Payments for the personal expenditure of staff must be made using a Staff Expenses Claim Form; please see Appendix A.
- 2.2. Payments for the personal expenditure of Members, Directors and Associates must be made using an Expenses Claim Form, please see Appendix D.
- 2.3. The purchase of classroom equipment and items must be completed using the purchase ordering system and paid for directly by the school. A Staff Expenses Claim Form **may not** be used for reclaiming the cost of such purchases.
- 2.4. Individuals should make **reasonable efforts** to get the best value possible when purchasing items, food or travel tickets.
- 2.5. Supporting documents are required as evidence, such as original VAT receipts and invoices, and these must be attached to the Expenses Claim Form.
- 2.6. Claim forms must be approved and signed by the budget holder.

- 2.7. Claims submitted over a month after the expense was incurred may not be paid.
- 2.8. Claims which do not meet approval will not be processed and will be returned.
- 2.9. Approved expenses will be sent to Finance for payment.
- 2.10. The submission of false claims will be treated as a serious matter and may lead to disciplinary action.
- 2.11. Claims by the Head of Academy must be authorised by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- 2.12. Claims by the CEO must be authorised by the Chair of the Board of Directors.
- 2.13. Claims by Members, Directors and Associates must be authorised by the Chair of the Finances and Resource Committee, the CEO and the Company Secretary.

3. Tax Considerations

- 3.1. Claims adhering to the procedures in this Policy will be paid without the deduction of income tax. However, it is the claimant's responsibility to ensure payment for any due tax is made.

4. Travel Expenses

Claims for mileage exclude ordinary commuting, including weekends, evenings, holidays etc. (Commuting refers to one journey each way from home to work and work to home on normal/contractual working days and will not be reimbursed.)

- 4.1. Payment for mileage will be paid at the appropriate HMRC rate (currently up to 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles per annum and 25p for each business mile thereafter). The rate is paid irrespective of the fuel type or capacity of the car.
- 4.2. Individuals are encouraged to car share where possible.
- 4.3. If an individual starts/ends their journey at their home, and the distance travelled is less than the distance that would have been travelled had they started/ended at their usual place of work, the lesser distance will be paid.
- 4.4. The date of, reason for, starting point and destination of the journey should all be shown on the Mileage Claim Form; please see Appendix B/Appendix E.
- 4.5. Claims submitted over a month after the expense was incurred may not be paid.
- 4.6. Parking or speeding fines will **never** be reimbursed.

5. Vehicle Insurance

- 5.1. The Trust does provide car insurance for staff using their own vehicles for occasional business use. Terms and conditions apply please see attached Appendix C: RSA Occasional Business Use – Policy Summary
- 5.2. Individuals are responsible for ensuring they are appropriately insured prior to travel.
- 5.3. Individuals must also ensure that the car is safe and legal to drive.

6. Use of Public Transport

- 6.1. The use of public transport for eligible journeys will be reimbursed upon receipt, provided the expenses are reasonable.
- 6.2. Individuals should use the most economical class of travel. Generally, standard or economy class. However, in order to support work productivity, the Trust will allow first class travel that does not exceed £200.00 for a return journey.

- 6.3. The Academy will not pay for the travel of any accompanying person, unless their attendance is required as a representative of the academy or the staff member requires assistance by means of reasonable adjustments.

7. Subsistence Allowances

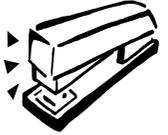
- 7.1. Subsistence allowances may be claimed for meals purchased by staff required to work at a location ten miles or more away from their home or the workplace. No reimbursement will be made for an activity or visit where the staff member will normally have provided their own lunch, e.g. school trips and residential visits.
- 7.2. Overnight Subsistence Rates:
- 7.2.1. Reasonable expenses for the cost of accommodation, food and drink will be reimbursed **when supported by receipts**. Dinner expenses will only be reimbursed to a maximum value of £20.00.
- 7.2.2. Only the cost of accommodation required for business purposes will be reimbursed by the Trust/Academy. The Academy will not meet the costs incurred by additional parties or accommodation provided to a spouse or other family members.
- 7.2.3. Personal items, such as alcoholic drinks, mini-bars etc. will not be reimbursed and their total should be deducted from any bills submitted for expenses purposes.
- 7.3. "Staying with Friends" Allowance:
- 7.3.1. If an employee chooses to stay with friends or relatives instead of in a hotel, no allowance may be claimed.

8. Telephone and Mobile Expenses

- 8.1. Business calls made from a home telephone may be reimbursed subject to provision of an itemised telephone bill and their inclusion on the Staff Expenses Claim Form.
- 8.2. Calls from personal mobile phones made for business purposes may be reimbursed subject to provision of evidence of the calls being attached to the Staff Expenses Claim Form.
- 8.3. Line or equipment rental will not be reimbursed.



PLEASE ENSURE
YOU ATTACH ALL
EXPENSE RECEIPTS
HERE



Staff Expenses Claim Form

Employee Name		Department		Finance Code (Office Use)	
---------------	--	------------	--	---------------------------	--

Date	Item Description	Reason for Expense	Expense Cost
			£
			£
			£
			£
			£
			£
			£
			£
Total Staff Expenses Claim			£

Employee Signature		CEO/FD Signature		Director Signature	
Date		Date		Date	

GENERAL DETAIL (for office use only)

Staff Expenses Claim Form guidance

Staff may claim reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred wholly, necessarily and exclusively in the course of the Academy's business. These may arise from attending meetings, training or conferences, or from purchases made on the academy's behalf. Any purchase made on behalf of the Academy must be approved by the budget holder prior to purchase.

It is essential that Inland Revenue regulations are met and therefore this policy must be adhered to when making an expenses claim.

Claiming Expenses

1. Payments for the personal expenditure of staff must be made using a Staff Expenses Claim Form.
2. The purchase of classroom equipment and items must be completed using the purchase ordering system and paid for directly by the school. A Staff Expenses Claim Form **may not** be used for reclaiming the cost of such purchases.
3. Staff should make **reasonable efforts** to get the best value possible when purchasing items, food or travel tickets.
4. Supporting documents are required as evidence, such as original VAT receipts and invoices and these must be attached to the Staff Expenses Claim Form.
5. Claim Forms must be approved and signed by the budget holder.
6. Claims submitted over a month after the expense was incurred may not be paid.
7. Claims which do not meet approval will not be processed and will be returned.
8. Approved expenses will be sent to Finance for payment.
9. The submission of false claims will be treated as a serious matter and may lead to disciplinary action.
10. Claims by the Head of Academy must be authorised by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
11. Claims by the CEO must be authorised by the Chair of the Board of Directors.

Further information and guidance is detailed in the Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust – Financial Procedures Policy



Staff Mileage Claim Form

Employee Name		Vehicle Make		Vehicle Registration	
Month		Vehicle Model		Engine Size (cc)	

Date	Journey Start Location	Journey End Location	Business Miles Claimed	*Less Ordinary Commuting Miles	Total Miles Claimed	Mileage Rate	Mileage Cost	Purpose of Journey
						£0.45	£	
						£0.45	£	
						£0.45	£	
						£0.45	£	
						£0.45	£	
						£0.45	£	
						£0.45	£	
TOTAL							£	
Employee Signature		CEO/FD Signature		Director Signature				
Date		Date		Date				

* Less Ordinary Commuting Miles = distance from permanent residence to contracted place of work

GENERAL DETAIL (for office use only)

Staff Mileage Claim Form Guidance

Claims for mileage exclude ordinary commuting, including weekends, evenings, holidays, etc. (Commuting – refers to one journey each way from home to work and work to home on normal/contractual working days and will not be reimbursed.)

1. Payment for mileage will be paid at the appropriate HMRC rate (currently up to 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles per annum and 25p for each business mile thereafter). The rate is paid irrespective of the fuel type or capacity of the car.
2. Staff are encouraged to car share where possible.
3. If a member of staff starts/ends their journey at their home, and the distance travelled is less than the distance that would have been travelled had they started/ended at the Academy, the lesser distance will be paid.
4. The date of, reason for and starting point and destination of the journey should all be shown on the Staff Expenses Claim Form.
5. Claims submitted over a month after the expense was incurred may not be paid.
6. Parking or speeding fines will **never** be reimbursed.

Vehicle Insurance

1. The Academy does provide car insurance for staff using their own vehicles for occasional business use. Terms and conditions apply; please see Staff Expenses Policy Appendix C: RSA Occasional Business Use – Policy Summary
2. Staff members are responsible for ensuring they are appropriately insured prior to travel.
3. Staff must also ensure that the car is safe and legal to drive.

Further information and guidance is detailed in the Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust – Financial Procedures Policy



Occasional Business Use – Policy Summary

Keyfacts

Your RSA Occasional Business Use policy is an annual contract which may be renewed each year subject to your needs and our terms and conditions.

The cover provided is

Occasional Business Use

- Cover for any Motor Car belonging to an employee of the Policyholder or his/her spouse or a member of the governing body or a volunteer while being used occasionally in connection with the Policyholders business
- Comprehensive – Accidental Damage, protection against third party legal liability for accidental injury or damage, including costs and expenses incurred and fire & theft for your vehicle(s)

The following table provides a summary of the main policy features & benefits and any significant limits or exclusions. For full policy details and our full terms & conditions, please read your Policy Wording, a copy of which will be provided on completion of your contract or at any time on request

Standard Features & Benefits

The following will automatically be included in your Policy

Features & Benefits	Significant Exclusions	Policy Section
<p>Territorial Limits</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The territorial limits of the policy are Great Britain, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, the Isle of Man and The Channel Islands. This includes Transit by sea between any of these Territories</p>		
<p>Third Party Only</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Protection against Legal Liabilities for injury to other persons (including Passengers)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Protection against Legal Liabilities for damage to third party property</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Payment of emergency treatment fees</p>	<p>The following limits apply for any one claim for damage to third party property</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> £20,000,000 in respect of Motor Cars</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> £5,000,000 in respect of any other Insured Vehicle</p>	<p>2</p> <p>4</p>
<p>Indemnity to Principal</p> <p>Indemnity to any principal with whom you have an agreement</p>	<p>Excluding negligence of the principal</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Indemnity to Hirer</p> <p>Indemnity to hirer of the vehicle is included</p>	<p>Excluding negligence of the hirer</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Third Party Fire & Theft</p> <p>As Third Party only, plus loss of, or damage to vehicles caused by fire, lightning, explosion, theft or attempted theft</p>	<p>Subject to any excess stated in your Policy Schedule</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>Comprehensive</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> As Third Party Fire & Theft, plus the cost of repairing/replacing vehicles following loss or damage by other accidental causes</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Subject to any excess stated in your Policy Schedule</p>	<p>1</p>

<input type="checkbox"/> Damage to windscreens	<input type="checkbox"/> Subject to any excess stated in your Policy Schedule	1
Audio Visual Equipment		
Covers audio, telephone, visual navigation and visual entertainment equipment	Only applies to equipment that is permanently fitted, or can only be used in your car	

General Conditions & Exclusions		
The following may apply to the policy as a whole. For full details of these and other conditions & exclusions, please read your Policy Wording		
Cover	What is not covered	Policy Sections
Loss or damage to the Vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/> The cost of wear & tear, loss of value, parts breaking down or failing <input type="checkbox"/> The loss from deception by an alleged purchaser or his agent	1
Theft or attempted theft of Vehicle	Excluded if vehicle is left unlocked with keys left in or on the vehicle	1
Airside use	Excluded, except as required by road traffic legislation	2
Terrorism	Excluded, except as required by road traffic legislation	5
Use and Driving of the Vehicle	Any vehicle being used for a purpose not stated in the Policy or being driven by a person not covered by the Policy	5

Other Conditions & Exclusions	
Reasonable Precautions It is a condition that you take all reasonable precautions to prevent injury, loss or damage and maintain your vehicle(s) to a roadworthy condition	6
Damage to property owned by you or in your custody or control is excluded	2

Excess and Limits	
<p>The policy may be subject to excesses, which are the amounts you must pay in the event of a claim. In addition, certain limits may also apply. These will be shown in your Policy Schedule, plus any standard excesses shown within your Policy Wording</p>	

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Law applicable to the Policy

Both you and we may choose the law which applies to this contract. However, unless you and we agree otherwise, the law which applies is the law applicable in the part of the United Kingdom, Channel Islands or the Isle of Man in which you live. Full details will be provided in your policy documentation.

Complaints

We aim to give customers a high standard of service at all times. If you are unhappy with the service provided for any reason or have cause for complaint, you should initially contact the person who arranged the policy for you or the manager of RSA at the address shown on your quotation or schedule, as appropriate. They will tell you what they will do to resolve your concerns and how long it will take. In the unlikely event that you remain dissatisfied and wish to make a complaint, please contact our Customer Relations Office at the address below.

Customer Relations Office
 RSA
 Bowling Mill
 Dean Clough Industrial Estate
 Halifax
 HX3 5WA

Compensation

Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance plc is a member of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS). This provides compensation in case any member goes out of business or into liquidation and is unable to meet any valid claims against its policies. You may be entitled to compensation if we cannot meet our obligations, depending on the circumstances of the claim. Further information about the compensation scheme can be obtained from the FSCS.

Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance plc (No. 93792).
 Registered in England and Wales at St Mark's Court, Chart Way, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 1XL.
 Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority.

Whistleblowing Policy

Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust

September 2016

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Academy Association and Board of Directors are committed to the highest possible standards of honesty and integrity, and we expect all staff to maintain these standards [in accordance with our Code of Conduct]. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring or to address them when they do occur.
- 1.2 This policy has been implemented following consultation with the recognised trade unions.
- 1.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

2. Scope and purpose

- 2.1 The aims of this policy are:
 - (a) To encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected.
 - (b) To provide staff with guidance on how to raise concerns.
 - (c) To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all employees of the Trust, governors, consultants, contractors, casual and agency staff and volunteers (collectively referred to as staff in this policy).

3. What is whistleblowing?

- 3.1 Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. The law provides protection for workers who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters or "qualifying disclosures". A qualifying disclosure is one made in the public interest by a worker who has a reasonable belief that there is wrongdoing or dangers at work. These may include:
 - (a) criminal activity;
 - (b) miscarriages of justice;
 - (c) danger to health and safety;
 - (d) damage to the environment;

- (e) failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;
 - (f) bribery;
 - (g) financial fraud or mismanagement;
 - (h) negligence;
 - (i) breach of our internal policies and procedures [including our Code of Conduct];
 - (j) conduct likely to damage our reputation;
 - (k) unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
 - (l) other unethical behaviour;
 - (m) the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.
- 3.2 A whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of our activities (a whistleblowing concern), you should report it under this policy.
- 3.3 This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases you should use the Grievance Procedure [or Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy as appropriate].
- 3.4 If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy you should seek advice from a member of the Academy/Trust's leadership team.
- 4. Raising a whistleblowing concern**
- 4.1 We hope that you will be able to raise any concerns with your line manager. You may tell them in person or put the matter in writing if you prefer. They may be able to agree a way of resolving your concern quickly and effectively.
- 4.2 However, where the matter is more serious, or you feel that your line manager has not addressed your concern, or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, or they are the subject of the complaint, then you can raise the matter with:
- (a) A designated member of the Academy Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
 - (b) The Head of Academy
 - (c) The Chair of the Academy Association
 - (d) The Chief Executive Officer
 - (e) The Chair of the Board of Directors
- 4.3 Contact details are set out at the end of this policy.

- 4.4 We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.
- 4.5 We will take down a written summary of your concern and provide you with a copy after the meeting. We will also aim to give you an indication of how we propose to deal with the matter.

5. Confidentiality

- 5.1 We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, if you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating your concern to know your identity, we will discuss this with you.
- 5.2 We do not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. It is also more difficult to establish whether any such allegations are credible. Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to one of the other contact points listed in paragraph 4.2 and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality. If you are in any doubt, you can seek advice from Public Concern at Work, an independent whistleblowing charity that offers a confidential helpline. Their contact details are given at the end of this policy.
- 5.3 Where we receive anonymous complaints, we will make a determination about whether to investigate based on:
 - (a) the seriousness of the issue raised;
 - (b) the credibility of the concern; and
 - (c) the likelihood of confirming the allegation from other sources.
- 5.4 We will keep a central record of disclosures made under the Whistleblowing Policy.
- 5.5 We will comply with data protection requirements in terms of any records made and kept.

6. External disclosures

- 6.1 The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.
- 6.2 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. It will very rarely, if ever, be appropriate to alert the media. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Public Concern at Work holds a list of prescribed

regulators for reporting certain types of concern. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

- 6.3 Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of our staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a contractor, supplier or service provider. The law allows you to raise a concern with a third party, where you reasonably believe it relates mainly to their actions or something that is legally their responsibility. However, we encourage you to report such concerns internally first. You should contact your line manager or one of the other individuals set out in paragraph 4.2 for guidance.

7. Investigation and outcome

- 7.1 Once you have raised a concern, we will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. We will inform you of the outcome of our assessment. You may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information.
- 7.2 In some cases we may appoint an investigator or team of investigators, including staff with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. The investigator(s) will collate their findings on the matter and may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing. These will be sent to the Head of Academy and/or the Academy Association/Board of Directors to act upon.
- 7.3 We will aim to keep you informed of the progress of the investigation, its likely timescale and outcome. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving you specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.
- 7.4 If we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously, or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.

8. If you are not satisfied

- 8.1 While we cannot always guarantee the outcome you are seeking, we will try to deal with your concern fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this policy you can help us to achieve this.
- 8.2 If you are not happy with the way in which your concern has been handled, you can raise it with one of the other key contacts in paragraph 4.2. Alternatively, you may contact the Chair of the Academy Association or our external auditors. Contact details are set out at the end of this policy.

9. Protection and support for whistleblowers

- 9.1 It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support staff who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- 9.2 Staff must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform one of the contact people in paragraph 4.2 immediately. If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure.
- 9.3 Staff must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. Anyone involved in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

10. Review of policy

- 10.1 This policy is reviewed annually by the Trust.

11. Contacts

Whistleblowing Officer	Detailed in Staff Handbook
Head of Academy	Detailed in Staff Handbook
Chair of the Academy Association	Detailed in Staff Handbook
Chair of the Board of Directors	Andy Keane directors@fmat.co.uk
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Andy Bird 0121 378 1288 a.bird@fmat.co.uk
Academy/Trust's External Auditors	Crowe Clark Whitehill LLP Black Country House, Rounds Green Road, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 2DG
Public Concern at Work (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: (020) 7404 6609 E-mail: whistle@pcaw.co.uk Website: www.pcaw.co.uk

Fraud Policy and Procedures

Introduction

The Fairfax Multi-Academy Trust (FMAT) aims to be an honest and ethical institution. As such, it is opposed to fraud and seeks to eliminate fraud by the way it conducts business. This document sets out FMAT's policy and procedures for dealing with the risk of significant fraud or corruption. In order to minimise the risk and impact of fraud, FMAT's objectives are, firstly, to create a culture which deters fraudulent activity, encourages its prevention and promotes its detection and reporting and, secondly, to identify and document its response to cases of fraud and corrupt practices.

In order to achieve these objectives, FMAT has taken the following steps:

1. The development and publication of a formal statement of its expectations on standards of personal conduct, propriety and accountability;
2. The establishment of adequate and effective systems of internal financial and management control (and a clear requirement to comply with them), and an independent External Audit Check function with an ongoing responsibility to review and report on these systems;
3. The development and publication of a formal statement of the procedures to be followed by employees who have a suspicion of, or concern about, possible or actual malpractice within the Academy and a fraud response plan which sets out the Academy's policies and procedures to be invoked following the reporting of possible fraud or the discovery of actual fraud.

These three steps are described in greater detail in the following sections.

Personal Conduct

FMAT aims to promote an organisational culture which encourages the prevention of fraud by raising awareness of the need for high standards of personal conduct. To help ensure that all employees are fully aware of FMAT's expectations regarding standards of personal conduct, appropriate guidance is provided in the following key statements:

- these regulations are binding on all Directors, Academy Associates, members of staff, students and constituent parts of FMAT. Refusal to observe them will constitute grounds for disciplinary action.
- in disbursing and accounting for all funds, FMAT must demonstrate that it is adopting high standards of financial probity. Implicit within this regime is the requirement that Directors, Academy Associates and employees of FMAT must at all times conduct financial affairs in an ethical manner.
- all members of staff, trustees and governors of FMAT are responsible for disclosing any personal, financial or beneficial interest in any transaction with respect to the Academy or its related companies, minority interest companies and trading areas.
- any person who is responsible for placing an order with a supplier (whether a contractor or not) with whom he has a personal interest must disclose this to the Head of Academy or the Finance Manager.
- Directors, Academy Associates or employees of FMAT shall never use their office or employment for personal gain and must at all times act in good faith with regard to the Trust's interests.
- Heads of Department/Budget Holders are expected to adhere to the Financial Regulations at all times and to use their best efforts to prevent misuse or misappropriation of funds and other FMAT property.

Taken together, these requirements represent a statement of the framework within which governors and employees are expected to conduct themselves. These requirements will also be stated within the Staff Handbook which will be issued to all members of staff and which will also include a statement of the disciplinary consequences if they are not complied with.

Systems of Internal Control

The next line of defence against fraud is the establishment of operational systems which incorporate adequate and effective internal controls designed to minimise the incidence of fraud, limit its impact and ensure its prompt detection. These controls include high-level management controls such as budgetary control (designed to identify fraud which results in shortfalls in income or overspending against expenditure) and organisational controls such as separation of duties, internal checks and staff supervision. Personnel policies are also a key part of setting the culture and deterring fraud. This includes seeking to reduce the risk of employing dishonest staff by checking information supplied by employees and references obtained during the course of the recruitment process, including DBS checks.

The general framework of responsibilities for financial management and the policies relating to the broad control and management of FMAT are documented in the Financial Procedures Policy. The Financial Procedures are issued and updated periodically by the Finance Director. They are binding on all Directors, Academy Associates, members of staff, students and constituent parts of the FMAT and are distributed to the Head of Academy, the Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Department and staff in the academies' finance offices.

The FMAT has also established an Audit Committee and an independent External Audit Check function which provides advice to management in respect of control matters and which conducts a cyclical programme of reviews of the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems which have been put in place (including those intended to minimise the potential exposure to fraud and corruption).

Fraud Response

This document sets out FMAT's policies and procedures for ensuring that all allegations and reports of fraud or dishonesty are properly followed-up are considered in a consistent and fair manner and that prompt and effective action is taken to:

- minimise the risk of any subsequent losses;
- reduce any adverse operational effects;
- improve the likelihood and scale of recoveries;
- demonstrate that the Academy retains control of its affairs in a crisis; and
- make a clear statement to employees and others that it is not a soft target for attempted fraud.

The plan includes both statements of general policy and specific steps to be taken when circumstances dictate and as necessary in order to reduce the following risks:

- inadequate communication so that action is late or inappropriate;
- lack of leadership and control so that investigators are not properly directed and waste time and effort;
- failure to react fast enough so that further losses are incurred or the evidence required for successful recovery or prosecution is lost;
- adverse publicity which could affect confidence in FMAT; and
- creation of an environment which, because it is perceived as being ill-prepared, increases the risk of fraud.

The main elements of the FMAT's policy are in line with those of the Whistleblowing Policy and are outlined below:

1. All Directors, Academy Associates, members of staff, students and constituent parts of the FMAT are required to notify immediately the Head of Academy and/or the Finance Manager of any financial irregularity, or any circumstance suggesting the possibility of irregularity, affecting the financial procedures, cash, stores or other property of FMAT. The Head of Academy and/or Finance Manager should bring this to the attention of the Chief Executive Officer or Finance Director, who will report it to the Chair of the FMAT Finance Committee immediately.
2. The Head of Academy/Finance Manager will ascertain whether or not the suspicions aroused have substance. He/she will, if appropriate, conduct a preliminary investigation to gather factual information and reach an initial view as to whether further action is required. The findings, conclusions and any recommendations arising from the preliminary investigation will be reported to the Chief Executive Officer or Finance Director, who will report them to the Chair of the FMAT Finance Committee.
3. The Head of Academy will have the initial responsibility for coordinating the individual Academy's response. In doing this, he/she will consult with the FMAT's Human Resources Advisor regarding potential employment issues. The Head of Academy will also seek expert legal advice from the FMAT's Legal Advisor on both employment and litigation issues before taking any further action.
4. The Head of Academy is required to notify the Chief Executive Officer or Finance Director of any serious financial irregularity. This action will be taken at the first opportunity following the completion of the initial investigations and will involve, inter alia, keeping the Chair of the Academy Association fully informed between committee meetings of any developments relating to serious control weaknesses, fraud or major accounting breakdowns. The Chief Executive Officer or Finance Director will report these to the Chair of the FMAT Finance Committee.
5. If evidence of a fraud is forthcoming, then the Board of Directors will inform the DfE as required by the Funding Agreement and will consider whether or not to refer the matter to the police.

Value for Money Statement

Improving educational results for our students remains our key priority. The Trust has taken the following steps to support such improvement for our students and to raise their attainment and aspirations. The Trust is committed to supporting our students to achieve their full potential through academic achievement, extra-curricular opportunities and extended learning, to develop the whole person to help prepare them for higher education, further training or work.

Targeted improvement: The Trust has a robust tracking system for monitoring achievement and is continually looking at how data can inform teachers in order to support and extend the learning of students. We have employed skilled staff to support the Trust's improvement agenda and we involve all our teams in focusing on the students' requirements and encourage innovation and creativity to meet those needs.

Focus on individual students: The Trust offers students a comprehensive student support service and specialist learning provision. Students benefit from one-to-one mentoring, small group work and external educational provision, where appropriate.

The Trust rewards excellence and encourages positive behaviour. We celebrate achievement and encourage students to try new activities to develop their confidence and leadership skills.

Diverse curriculum: We recognise that students' skills and knowledge are diverse, and it is necessary to differentiate the curriculum in order to make the most appropriate use of resources to meet students' needs.

Classes are set individually, as 'target' groups, in each of English, Maths, Science and MFL. Our most able students are offered triple Science. Students who struggle with English or Maths are given additional time at the expense of Modern Foreign Languages, as appropriate.

In order to meet student needs at KS4, we have moved away from a blocked curriculum, where curriculum provision is allocated according to staffing, to a model where students have a free choice of subjects and where the Trust then staffs the curriculum according to student demand. All students choose from a range of optional subjects within Business & Computing and Creativity & Design. In addition, the vast majority of students study a core curriculum of English, Maths, Science, MFL, History or Geography, Philosophy & Ethics, and PE.

Collaboration: The Trust works closely with local secondary academies. The Principals of each Academy meet regularly to share ideas and good practice and to discuss issues.

Quantifying improvements: The Academy Associations meet six times a year to ensure that the Academy's Improvement Plan to raise attainment is adhered to. Since opening, key KPIs have shown an improvement in attendance, significant rises in the Floor Targets of 5A* - C and Average Points Score per student, and a reduction in the number of exclusions.

Financial governance and oversight: The Trust's Board of Directors has strong oversight of the financial management of the budget. The Finance Committee meet four times a year and the Audit Committee meet twice a year to review the financial position, to receive reports and to challenge decisions. Crowe Clark Whitehill reviews our financial processes and undertakes the role of Responsible Officer to test our internal controls. The levels of delegation on spending proposals ensure we take the necessary steps to achieve best value.

The Board of Directors approves the budget each year and is mindful of the need to balance expenditure against income to ensure the Trust remains a 'going concern'. The Board of Directors also receives and approves the Annual Accounts and External Auditors Management Report.

Better purchasing: The Trust is a member of a group purchasing consortium which facilitates group purchases for a number of academies' to achieve best value. Our budget holders are continuously looking for the most competitive deals using various procurement tools such as internet shopping, advice from other academies and economies of scale.

The Trust regularly benchmarks financial performance against other academy trusts to demonstrate that the Trust provides good value for money.

Fitness for purpose: The Trust has a cycle of review for its ongoing services from external organisations to ensure those services continue to meet the needs of the Trust, are the best available to us at that time, and offer good value for money.

Tender exercises are regularly undertaken to ensure that high-value contracts are assessed against the marketplace on a regular basis to ensure that long-term contracts (3 to 5 years) remain competitive.

Better income generation: The Trust has been successful with a number of external income streams; each Academy explores every opportunity to generate income through the hire of Trust facilities.

Reviewing controls and managing risk: Monthly budget monitoring reports are produced by the Finance Director. These reports are presented to the Finance and Resource Committee, who take remedial action to address any significant variances that may have an impact on the budget outturn.

The Trust ensures that all surplus cash balances are invested in interest-bearing accounts to maximise interest-earning potential.

Reviewing operations to maximise use of resources: The Trust Leadership Team review expenditure and make adjustments based on the effectiveness of strategies introduced in previous years, curriculum offered, and any new strategies identified in the Trust Improvement Plan.

Lessons learned: The Trust is continually looking to learn what options are open to us and the autonomy and flexibilities we have and can achieve. Our aim is the continued development of the curriculum to support high student achievement and this remains our top priority. We will be focusing on how best to resource our Improvement Plan.