

Stronger Together



BRADGATE
Education Partnership

POLICY:

Finance & Reserves Policy

Approved: Trust Board
Review Date: June 2026
Responsible Officer: Chief Finance Officer

Ambitious
Collaborative
Ethical



MISSION:

Through strong collaboration between our schools, Bradgate Education Partnership is committed to providing an ambitious and inclusive education for all.

We want our children and young people to realise their full potential academically, socially and personally. We celebrate the distinctive ethos of each individual school. We ensure that all who are part of our Trust have a deep sense of belonging and a supportive opportunity to grow.

Stronger Together

VALUES:



Ambitious

We aim high and are aspirational for all.



Collaborative

We work closely together to encourage, support, challenge and share.



Ethical

We treat everyone fairly, within a culture of kindness and respect.

VISION:



PUPILS

All our pupils are equipped with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to thrive in life and make a positive difference.



SCHOOLS

All our schools provide a safe and happy space where pupils study an ambitious curriculum which unlocks their personal potential so that they achieve exceptional outcomes.



WORKFORCE

All staff have positive impact in their roles whilst feeling supported and valued both personally and professionally.



COMMUNITY

All our schools embrace the local area they serve within a deeply embedded culture of community partnership.



WIDER WORLD

All our pupils and staff understand, respect and embrace the diversity of the wider world in which they live.



SUSTAINABILITY

Across our partnership, everything we do is aligned to meet the needs of the present without compromising a sustainable future.

Contents

Introduction	3
Scope & Principles.....	3
Accounting system.....	7
Financial Planning Detail	10
Staff.....	12
Purchasing.....	14
Income.....	21
Cash Management	22
Fixed assets.....	24
Appendix 1 BEP Budget Planning Process.....	26
Appendix 2 Reserves Policy	27
Appendix 3 Staff Expenses	29
Appendix 4 Gifts and Hospitality.....	31
Appendix 5 Procurement Policy	
Appendix 6 Planning for the use of School Condition Allocation and Devolved Formula Capital	40
Appendix 7 Finance Team Roles and Responsibilities.....	41
Appendix 8 Bradgate Education Partnership – GAG Sharing Policy	42

Linked Policies

- Academy Trust Handbook
- Scheme of Delegation
- Lab Handbook

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Bradgate Education Partnership (BEP) maintains and develops effective systems of financial control that conform with the requirements of statutory & regulatory authorities, as well as complying with established principles of good financial management and common sense. It is essential that these systems operate properly to meet the requirements of the Funding Agreement between BEP, The Department for Education (DFE); the Scheme of Delegation in force between Trust and Schools; the Articles of Association; the Academies Trust Handbook (published by the DFE).
- 1.2 Each School must comply with the principles of financial control outlined in the Academies Trust Handbook published by the DFE. This policy converts this into practical detailed information on the Trust's accounting procedures and should be read and absorbed by all staff interacting with the Trust's finances.
- 1.3 It is incumbent on Members, Trustees, Staff and all parties engaged by or with the Trust to observe both the letter but also the spirit of the Trust Finance Policy. The Trust is responsible for public money and as such the duty of care is naturally set very high. Whenever in doubt and where this handbook does not specifically set out an appropriate approach, the highest principles should be observed, and advice sought to ensure the Trust is able to fully stand behind the approach taken by the decision maker.
- 1.4 The Trust has a duty to act transparently to ensure that public funds have been used as intended by Parliament.

2.0 Scope & Principles

- 2.1 BEP is a Company limited by Guarantee, registered in England and Wales and is a Multi Academy Trust. The company has charitable status.
- 2.2 The Trust has defined the responsibilities of each person involved in the administration of both Trust level and individual School finances. The financial reporting structure is illustrated in the following bullet points:
 - 2.3 The Trust Board
 - 2.3.1 The Trust Board has overall responsibility for the management and administration of the Academy Trust's finances. The Trust Board is led by the Chair. It is the Trust's statutory responsibility to safeguard the assets of the company and to meet all requirements of the Companies Act. The main DfE prescribed responsibilities set out in the Master Funding Agreement issued to the Trust by the DfE include:
 - Ensuring that educational grants are used for the purpose intended.
 - Managing budgets to be balanced, and annual approval of those budgets.
 - Approval and issuing of Annual audited accounts to the DFE.
 - Instructing & reviewing internal audit reports to ensure high internal rigor.
 - Appointment of Accounting Officer (CEO), Finance Officer and external auditors.
 - Appointment of School Head Teachers.

2.3.2 The Accounting Officer is the Trust Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO is ultimately accountable for all Trust activity. As well as signing off Annual Accounts and being first contact point for all external stakeholders.

The Accounting Officer must provide assurance of high standards of probity in the management of the Trusts Funds particularly regularity, propriety, feasibility and value for money including economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

2.3.3 The CFO is responsible for the day-to-day Management of Trust finances. They will ensure Annual Accounts are delivered in accordance with all statutory and regulatory bodies. They are responsible for budget setting and ensuring an appropriate control environment exists across the Trust. The CFO must comply with the specific requirements of the DFE.

2.3.4 The Trust Board must operate within limits set out by DFE:

Write Off: The Trust will comply with the specific DFE guidance concerning write offs contained within the Academies Handbook. The Trust policy regarding local management of Write-offs is as follows:

The following personnel are authorised to write off bad debts as shown:

- Debts up to £500 – CFO.
- Debts above £500 – Trust Board.
- Debts above £45,000 or 1% of Total income – DFE Prior Approval

Severance Payments/Settlement Agreement Payments: severance payments made to staff are restricted to an assessment made of an Employment Tribunal award. Any amount of £50,000 or more requires specific DFE approval (note: this does not include any contractual amount e.g., statutory redundancy which should not be included in this assessment). No agreement should be entered into without expressly consulting with the Trust's Director of HR and obtaining authority from the Accounting Officer.

Leasing: There are two types of lease:

- Finance leases: these are a form of borrowing.
- Operating leases: these are not borrowing.

The Trust must obtain DFE approval for the following leasing transactions:

- Taking up a finance lease on any class of asset which is not on the DFE approved list
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/leasing-for-academy-trusts/changes-to-leasing-agreements-for-academy-trusts>
- Taking up a leasehold or tenancy agreement on land or buildings from another party for a term of seven or more years.
- Granting a leasehold interest, including a tenancy agreement, of any duration, on land and buildings to another party.

Trusts do not require the DFE's approval for operating leases, however Schools must not enter any leasing arrangements without first seeking authority to do so from the CFO and Procurement Manager

Fraud: any fraud or irregularity >£5,000 must be reported to DFE. The Trust is handling public funds and the standards expected within the Trust are suitably high. All examples of suspected irregularity or fraud will be investigated by the CFO and reported to Trust Board at the first available opportunity. If the CFO is in anyway implicated in the fraud, responsibility for the investigation will move to the CEO or another appropriate member of the Trust's ELT dependent upon the circumstances.

The Trust must be aware of cybercrime and take appropriate action where a cyber security incident has occurred. The Trust must not pay any cyber ransom demands.

Any novel, contentious or repercussive transactions must always be referred to the DFE for approval, the request must be made to and approved by the DFE before the transaction occurs.

All Trust expenditure will be authorised in accordance to the delegated limits set out below.

All Trust ELT expenses will be co-signed by the CFO.

The Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee of the Board will meet at least once a term, but more frequent meetings may be arranged if necessary.

The DFE requires the Trust to have oversight and sign off on any new contract, new land and or new buildings. Please consult with the Trust prior to agreement.

2.4 The Local Advisory Board

Each School Local Advisory Board (LAB) provides appropriate oversight and challenge to support the schools.

2.5 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for the school's activities including financial activities, assuming the overall finance situation is stable (deficit schools will meet with the Trust to discuss the changes to delegated authorities/Scheme of Delegation). The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Committing school funds only for the purpose intended.
- Approval of all expenditure in accordance with delegated limits.
- Approving new staff appointments within the authorised establishment. The only exception to this is ELT appointments which need to be in line with the Scheme of Delegation.
- Authorising purchases in accordance with delegated limits at Article 6.4 'Delegated Limits'.
- Ensuring the School complies within the prescribed Scheme of Delegation both in letter and spirit.

2.6 Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

The CFO is responsible for the efficient and secure financial operations of the Trust. The specific responsibilities can be delegated in order to achieve the strategic financial aims and

the physical delivery of day-to-day financial operations. The CFO is supported by a wider Central Finance Team; the CFO is responsible for:

- Managing the trusts financial position at a strategic and operational level within the framework for financial control determined by the Board.
- Complying with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook
- Short and medium-term financial plans for the Trust.
- Adherence to all financial statutory reporting requirements.
- Ensuring the annual accounts are presented properly.
- Authorising purchases in accordance with delegated limits.
- Preparing monthly management accounts, cash flow statements for BEP.
- Leadership of all financial functions within the Trust.
- Managing day-to-day financial issues of BEP including the establishment and operation of a suitable accounting system; ensuring financial records are kept up to date and maintaining the integrity of the system.
- Ensuring the correct procurement procedures are followed by the Trust.
- Maintaining effective systems of internal control across the whole of BEP.
- Authorising purchases in accordance with delegated limits.
- Line Management of School Finance Managers.
- Supporting the School Office Managers.
- Identifying and addressing financial training needs within BEP.
- Reconciliation of Trust Wide payroll.

2.7 The School Finance Manager

The School Finance Manager works in close collaboration with the Head Teacher and reports to the CFO. Their main responsibilities are:

- The day-to-day management of financial issues including the operation of an accounting system in line with the requirements of BEP, specifically linked to school.
- The management of the school financial position at an operational level within the framework for financial control outlined by the ATH and within this policy.
- The maintenance of effective systems of internal control.
- The preparation of monthly management accounts (See paragraph 4.5.1).
- Authorising orders in accordance with delegated limits.
- Ensuring the correct procurement procedures are followed by the school.
- Assisting the BEP CFO in complying with DFE returns and reports.
- Identifying and reporting any overspends or underspends at the earliest opportunity to the Head Teacher and CFO.
- Complete the monthly payroll reconciliation and identifying and correcting any discrepancies.
- Preparing the short and medium-term financial plans for the school in conjunction with the Head Teacher.

2.8 Internal Audit

Internal Audit is appointed by the Trust Accounting Officer (following approval by FAR Committee) to provide Trustees and Directors with an independent oversight of the Trust's financial affairs. The main duties of Internal Audit are to provide Trustees with independent assurance that:

- The financial responsibilities of the Trust 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 are consistent across schools.
- Procurement procedures are being followed correctly.
- Risks relating to procurement procedures, authorisation limits and governance are being kept under review.
- Any other specific risks identified from time to time by the Trust FAR Committee are being kept under review.
- Financial considerations are fully taken into account in reaching decisions.

Internal Audit will undertake a rolling timetable of Trust-wide financial compliancy checking over a three-year period as agreed by the Trust FAR Committee.

2.9 Other Trust/School Staff and Partners/Subcontractors/Suppliers

Other staff/partners/subcontractors/suppliers will have varying degrees of access to Trust/School assets, and all will have some financial responsibilities. All such public are responsible for:

- The security of School property, for avoiding loss or damage.
- For ensuring economy and efficiency in the use of resources.
- For conformity with the requirements of the Trust/School 's financial procedures.

2.10 Register of Pecuniary Interests

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 Members/Trustees/Directors/Local Advisory Board members and any staff/partners/ subcontractors/ suppliers with significant financial or spending powers are required to declare any financial interests they have in companies or individuals from which the Trust/School may purchase goods or services. The register is open to public inspection.

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 school. The disclosures should also include business interests of relatives such as a parent or spouse or business partner where influence could be exerted over a Trustee or a member of staff by that person.

The existence of a register of pecuniary interests does not, of course, detract from the duties of Members, Trustees, LAB members and staff to declare interests whenever they are relevant to matters being discussed by the Trust Board/Local Advisory Board or a committee. Where an interest has been declared, governors and staff should not attend that part of any committee or other meeting.

3.0 Accounting system

3.1 IRIS Financials Accounting System

All the financial transactions of the Trust and each School must be recorded on the IRIS accounting system. The system is operated by the Central Finance Team, and anyone appointed by the Trust with appropriate skills and experience, and consists of:

- Orders/Invoices/Journals
- Payments/Receipts/Nominal Ledger bank postings
- Monthly Reconciliations
- Recording of all Transactions
- Aged Purchase Ledger & Sales Ledger
- Balance Sheet Management – custody of Trust/School assets
- Payroll Input
- Asset System Management & Depreciation
- All routine Reporting

3.2 System Access

Entry to the accounting system is password restricted. At no time should an individual disclose their password to anyone else. It is expressly forbidden for more than one person to access the financial system using the same username/password.

Access to the IRIS system is to be restricted to the Finance Manager/Office Manager and anyone delegated by this post, the Head Teacher or any signatory given authorising responsibility in the Head Teacher's absence as well as those responsible for auditing the financial systems of the School. Where it is suspected that unauthorised access to the system has taken place, the Central Finance Team must be notified immediately.

The Central Finance Team must be notified immediately if a member of staff who has access to the IRIS system leaves or is on long term absence from work.

3.3 Back-up Procedures

The Trust's accounting software is hosted by IRIS Cloud. The system is fully backed up and disaster recovery plans are in place. In summary:

Contingency:

- The primary data centre has its own Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS), backed up with on-site diesel generators and 5 day's supply of diesel.
- The secondary data centre is serviced to the same standard and located 40 miles away.
- Each data centre is serviced by 6 internet providers, any two of which are active at any point in time.
- If any virtual server is detected as having failed, it is automatically restarted.
- All virtual servers are replicated to our secondary data centre on a weekly basis.
- All transient data is replicated to the secondary data centre on a nightly basis.

Disaster Recovery:

- In the event of a catastrophic disaster (Explosion, Flood etc.) at the primary site, the whole infrastructure will continue to be powered at the secondary site, the latest data backups are applied and the externally facing non-geographical IP addresses are repointed.
- This process may take up to 48 hours to complete from a completely cold start, but there will be no changes required from a customer perspective.

3.4 Transaction Processing

All transactions input to the accounting system must be authorised in accordance with the procedures specified in this manual. The detailed procedures for the operation of the payroll, the purchase ledger and the sales ledger are included in the following sections of the manual.

Detailed information on the operation of the Iris system can be found in the user manuals available from Iris.

3.5 Reconciliations

BEP Central Finance Team is responsible for ensuring the following reconciliations are performed each month, and that any reconciling or balancing amounts are cleared:

- Sales ledger control account
- Purchase ledger control account
- Payroll control account
- All suspense accounts – cleared down
- Bank balance per the nominal ledger to the bank statement

The Schools Finance Manager is responsible for ensuring the following reconciliations are performed each month, and that any reconciling or balancing amounts are cleared:

- Credit Card Statement checked against purchases and receipts.
- Payroll Reports should be checked and reconciled.

The Schools Office Manager is responsible for ensuring the following reconciliations are performed each month, and that any reconciling or balancing amounts are cleared:

- Credit Card Receipts matched against statement and sent to Finance Manager.

Any unusual or long outstanding reconciling items must be brought to the attention of the Head Teacher and the CFO. The Head Teacher will review and sign all reconciliations as evidence of this review.

3.6 Financial Planning

The school prepares medium term (5 years) which includes annual financial plans.

The medium-term financial plans are prepared as part of the school improvement planning process. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) indicates how the school's educational and other objectives are going to be achieved within the expected level of resources over the next period.

The SIP provides the framework for the annual budget. The budget is a detailed statement of the expected resources available to the school and the planned use of those resources for the following year.

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

4.0 Financial Planning

- 4.1 Each year the Trust will complete a medium term (5 year) budget plan.
- 4.2 The BEP CFO is responsible for submitting the consolidated budget to the DFE. The consolidated budget must be approved by the Accounting Officer, the Trust FAR Committee and the Trust Board. In doing so, approval of planned individual school budgets must be given by Trustees in a timeline that allows for consolidation to take place.
- 4.3 The approved consolidated budget must be submitted to the DFE by 31st August each year and the BEP CFO is responsible for establishing a timetable which allows sufficient time for the approval process and ensures that the submission date is met.
- 4.4 Head Teachers with the support of School Finance Manager are responsible for budget planning in their individual schools. School annual budgets will reflect the best estimate of the resources available to the school for the forthcoming year and will detail how those resources are to be utilised. There should be a clear link between the SIP objectives and the budgeted utilisation of resources.
- 4.5 The budgetary planning process will incorporate the following elements:
 - Forecasts of the likely number of pupils to estimate the amount of DfE grant receivable.
 - Review of other income sources available to the school to assess likely level of receipts.
 - Review of past performance against budgets to promote an understanding of the school cost base.
 - Identification of potential efficiency savings and review of the main expenditure headings in light of the SIP objectives and the expected variations in cost e.g., pay increases, inflation and other anticipated changes.
- 4.6 Balancing the Budget

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.

Once the different options and scenarios have been considered, a draft budget should be prepared by the School Head Teacher and if requested, discussed with the Local Advisory Board (LAB). The LAB does not approve the budget.

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 however, all significant changes in budget, including alterations to agreed staffing structures must be approved by the Accounting Officer (CEO).

Once the Finance Managers and the Head Teacher have met, they will submit their draft budget to the CFO. The Finance Manager and the HT will then meet with the CFO, and Director of Education/Deputy Director of Education to discuss and agree the budget. Once the

budget proposals are understood and endorsed, recommendations will be made to the FAR Committee with a view to individual school budgets being ratified by Trustees at the Trust Board meeting.

The detailed submission routine will be published annually in line with GAG statements being published and is presented as Appendix 1 to this policy.

4.7 Budget Monitoring

Monthly budget monitoring will be undertaken in the following way:

- School Finance Manager to undertake monthly forecasting and narratives using the budget planning tool, flagging any discrepancies on the reports as soon as they are identified.
- Forecasts to be completed by the date specified in the closedown calendar.
- Individual school reports will be amalgamated into monthly management accounts and reported to Trustees in accordance with the direction contained within the ATH.

Any potential overspends against the school budget must in the first instance be discussed with the Head Teacher with significant variances reported to the CFO as soon as practical. The CFO meets once a month with CEO and will advise of these variances.

The monitoring process should be undertaken by the School Finance Manager in an effective and timely manner highlighting variances in the budget so that differences can be investigated, and action taken where appropriate.

The manner of local reporting within school is a matter for Head Teachers, however the monthly reporting to the Trust outlined at paragraph 4.5.1 should be considered statutory.

If a budget overspend is forecast, it may be appropriate to vire money from another budget or from the contingency. Virements within the same Management Accounts groupings do not require approval, virements above £10,000 must be authorised by the CFO and virements over £50,000 must be authorised by the Trust FAR Committee.

Management Accounts will be presented to Trustees in accordance with the ATH. The following Trust-wide management accounts will be:

Month	Report	Electronic	Trust FAR	Full Board
September	Management Accounts	✓		
October	Management Accounts and Narrative	✓		
November	Management Accounts	✓	✓	
December	Management Accounts and Narrative	✓		✓
January	Management Accounts	✓		
February	Management Accounts	✓		
March	Management Account and Narratives	✓	✓	✓
April	Management Accounts	✓		
May	Management Accounts and Narrative	✓		

June	Management Accounts and Narrative	✓	✓	✓
July	Management Accounts	✓		
August	Management Accounts and Narrative	✓		

5.0 Staff

5.1 Staff Appointments

The Head Teacher has authority to appoint staff within the authorised establishment in line with the Scheme of Delegation. Anything outside the authorised establishment such as a new post, removal of post or increase in grade or hours will need Director of Education's agreement and advice from Finance and HR to ensure that any changes to posts are affordable and consistent with Trust wide employment.

If a worker is providing a service to a school and is requesting payment by invoice, the HMRC Check Employment status tool should be used to determine if IR35 rules apply and the worker should be classed as employed. Evidence of the outcome from the tool should be retained.

5.2 Payroll Administration

The Trust payroll is administered by NEO Payroll. The Trust's Payroll Team is responsible for the management of changes to payroll on a monthly basis via communication from Office Managers within the Trust.

All staff are paid monthly. A personnel file is created for each employee which is kept locked away with access restricted to named employees. The following information should be kept in each staff member file and signed accordingly:

- Checklist
- New starter forms
- Offer letter including salary, hours and weeks paid
- References x2
- Bank account details
- Taxation status
- Personal details
- Contract
- Job description
- Copy of job advert
- All documentation evidencing variations to any of the above

Changes to contracts, including details of any new appointments, terminations, contract changes or additional payments are prepared by administrative staff and must be authorised by the School Head Teacher and agreed by the School Finance Manager before any changes are made to payroll.

Changes to contracts for any member of ELT must be signed off by the CEO, having taken advice from the Trust's Director of HR.

A copy of the E-form should be sent to the School Finance Manager by the HR team to enable them to update the budgeting software for the monthly forecast and payroll reconciliation.

Any changes required via payroll for a Head Teacher must only be processed by the Trust's Human Resources Department with the approval by the CEO.

Any changes required via payroll for the Directors of Education/Director of Human Resources must only be processed by the Trust's Human Resources or Finance Department with the approval by the Chief Executive Officer.

Any changes required via payroll for the Chief Executive Officer must only be processed by the Trust's Director of Human Resources with the approval by the Chair of the Trust Board.

New staff can only be added to the payroll with the express authorisation of the School Head Teacher. New staff must complete all relevant payroll documents issued by the HR Team. Failure to do this may result in non-payment of salary. In these circumstances, the salary payment may not be made until the next payroll run in the following month.

The payroll must be authorised by the School Head Teachers. The Trust payroll will be reconciled by the CFO and authorised by the CEO.

The Finance Manager /Office Manager is responsible for liaison with the HR Team to ensure all pay and other pay related matters are correctly determined prior to payments being authorised and that any errors are corrected as soon as is practically possible.

The Trust's Payroll Guidance must be followed by Head Teachers and Office Managers.

5.3 Payments

After the payroll has been processed but before payments are dispatched a report of salary payments by individual and showing the amount payable in total will be provided to the Schools Finance Managers and the HR Team by NEO for reconciling. The report must be reviewed and authorised together with authority to release payment by the School Finance Managers.

All salary payments are made by BACS.

The School Finance Manager should complete the payroll reconciliation before payday. The current payroll report should be reconciled to the contract of employment record and the budget, and any discrepancies investigated and dealt with. This reconciliation should be carried out promptly and identified discrepancies reported to the Head Teacher and queried with the Trust's HR Team to be resolved.

After the payroll has been processed the nominal ledger will be automatically updated. Postings will be made both to the payroll control account and to individual cost centres. The School Finance Manager should review the cost centre accounts each month to ensure the correct amount has been posted from the payroll system. The Central Finance Team will review the payroll control account each month and identify any amounts posted to the suspense account.

Where it has been identified that an underpayment has been made to a member of staff the HR Team or the Office Manager will discuss with the member of staff whether this can be

processed within the next payroll and back pay be put in place, or whether a payment needs to be raised as soon as possible.

Where it has been identified that an overpayment has been made to a member of staff, the HR Team will calculate this and seek to claw the monies back. This must be discussed with the staff member and a repayment plan agreed within the next payroll month that is suitable to their financial position. The agreement will be followed up in writing by the Trust's HR Team.

Claim forms for payment of extra hours must be submitted by the Office Manager following approval by the Head Teacher. The relevant details will then be forwarded to the Trust's HR Team for processing. Copies of timesheets must be kept with the payroll reconciliation reports.

6.0 Purchasing

6.1 The Trust will attempt to achieve the best value for money from all purchases. This means getting what is needed in the correct quality, quantity and time at the best price possible. A large proportion of purchases will be paid for with public funds and there is a 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 school.
- **Regularity**, the spend should be legally compliant and comply with the requirements of this document.
- **Spending decisions** should represent value for money.
- **Accountability**, the School is publicly accountable for its expenditure and the conduct of its affairs.
- **Fairness**, that all those dealt with by the school are dealt with on a fair and equitable basis.

The Trust will work closely with all the Head Teachers, School Finance Managers and Office Managers to support the development of cross-Trust buying power. Professional advice should be obtained where appropriate.

6.2 Charge Cards

Where appropriate, the school charge card can be used to make payments:

- This should be used if a cost saving can be demonstrated
- The item is of low value
- For course fees and travel costs
- Or is unavailable from a supplier that offers credit

A charge card form must be completed before purchase and authorised; if the value of the purchase is unknown then a projected cost should be included on the form. The School Finance Manager /Office Manager is required to reconcile the charge card each month to the statement of activity.

Charge card spend is limited to the following amounts per month; temporary increases in these amounts can be applied with approval from the CFO:

Primaries	£1,000 per card
Secondaries	£2,500 per card

Charge cards must not be linked to staff personal Amazon or other supplier accounts.

6.3 Routine Purchasing

Budget holders will be informed of the budget available to them at least one month before the start of the academic year. It is the responsibility of the budget holder to manage the budget and to ensure that the funds available are not overspent. The School Finance Manager/Office Manager will ensure that budget holders have access to appropriate data from the Finance system to enable them to proactively monitor and manage their budget.

Routine purchases up to £1,000 can be ordered by budget holders up to the limit of their budget. A quote or price must always be obtained before any order is placed. If the budget holder considers that better value for money can be obtained by ordering from an alternative or new supplier this decision must be discussed and agreed with the School Finance Manager.

All Purchases must be made, or confirmed in writing using an official order form generated using the IRIS system, unless:

- It is an order placed by charge card.
- The work is of an urgent nature and must be carried out immediately, in this case an order should be placed retrospectively as soon as possible.

The order is approved electronically by the School Finance Manager, Head Teacher, CEO using the Iris Finance system.

Authorised orders are dispatched electronically to the supplier by the Central Finance Team at 3:00pm each day. If the order is not required to be sent electronically then a note of 'Do not send' must be completed in the reference field of the order.

A goods receipt note (GRN) should be input into IRIS by the School Finance Manager/Office Manager on receipt of the goods.

All invoices once authorised should be sent to the Central Finance Team. Any order invoices can be sent to the Central Finance Team without further authorisation by the Head Teacher as this has taken place at time of ordering. Should there be any issue with quantity / price compared to the invoice, the team will contact the school.

If a budget holder is pursuing a query with a supplier the School Finance Manager/Office Manager must be informed of the query and periodically kept up to date with progress.

At the end of every month the Central Finance Team will review all outstanding invoices from the purchase ledger. This is to ensure any old items are resolved, credits chased and cleared, and payments made on a timely basis. This review should be performed BEFORE finalisation of monthly management accounts.

The Central Finance Team will generate the BACS payments required. The BACS report and associated paperwork must be authorised by the CFO.

The Central Finance Team will send a report of outstanding commitments monthly in accordance with the closedown calendar. The School Finance Manager/Office Manager will review this report to ensure that the orders are still required. They will ensure that any deliveries/services received are accurately reflected. This review should be performed BEFORE finalisation of monthly management accounts.

6.4 Delegated Purchasing Limits

Delegated authorities for the ordering of goods and services in Primary Schools are as follows (value limits refer to the total cost of a contract over a whole period and not just for the current financial year):

Primary Schools Purchasing Limits

Purchases up to £1,000	Head Teacher
Purchases £1,000 to £10,000	Head Teacher & School Finance Manager
Purchases up to £10,000 to £60,000	Head Teacher & School Finance Manager & CEO
Purchases over £60,000	Trust Board or Trust FAR

Delegated authorities for the ordering of goods and services in Secondary Schools are as follows (value limits refer to the total cost of a contract over a whole period and not just for the current financial year):

Secondary Schools Purchasing Limits

Purchases up to £10,000	Secondary Finance Manager
Purchases £10,000 to £60,000	Head Teacher, Secondary Finance Manager & CEO
Purchases over £60,000	Trust Board or Trust FAR

Delegated authorities for the ordering of goods and services at Trust level or Trust-wide:

Central Team / Trust wide Purchasing Limits

Purchases up to £1,000 (Trust level)	-	CFO
Purchases £1,000 to £60,000	-	CEO & CFO
Purchases over £60,000	-	Trust Board or Trust FAR

6.5 Orders over £10,000

All goods/services ordered with a value over £10,000 or for a series of contracts which in total exceed £10,000 must be subject to formal tendering procedures. Purchases over £214,904 (Threshold from Feb 25) fall under UK Procurement Act 2023 which requires advertising on the governments Central Digital Platform.

Threshold totals in the Procurement Act 2023 at February 2025 are:

Goods/Services - £214,904

Utility non-works - £429,809

Utility light touch - £884,720

Light touch - £663,540

Works - £5,372,609

Schools are not subject to below threshold obligations of £30K unless on a Framework.

Competitive Tendering Procedures:

Open Procedure

Competitive Flexible Procedure

Direct Award (in special cases)

Frameworks and Dynamic Markets:

Frameworks

Open Frameworks

Dynamic Markets

Utilities Dynamic Markets

Specific guidance concerning Tendering is at Paragraph 6.6 onwards however, the following guidance should be observed when considering what level of Value for Money (VFM) compliance is required:

- Up to £10K demonstrate VFM as appropriate to the situation. Head Teachers should contact the CFO for support to obtain Trust wide VFM.
- £10K – 214,904 (Current Threshold) – Minimum 3 quotes or use of framework agreement or Dynamic Purchasing System offer.
- £214,904 (Current Threshold) – Observe UK Procurement Act 2023 including advertising Central Digital Platform.

It is strongly advised that schools follow the procurement tables that are included in Appendix E of this document.

6.6 Forms of Tenders

The BEP Procurement Manager must be consulted before the commencement of any tender. Tendering for goods and services is subject to very specific legislation and guidance and should not therefore be entered into lightly. General guidance is offered by Central Government including the purchasing levels where the UK Tenders Legislation is governed by the Procurement Act 2023. Trustees must sign off on all goods and services subject to Tender, thus early engagement is essential.

There are three forms of tender procedure: open procedure, Competitive flexible procedure and direct award (in special cases) the circumstances in which each procedure should be used are described below.

Choosing the right procedure

Open:

- Known requirement
- Simple requirement
- Emerging market (SMEs)

- Small market
- Established / known market – no need to assess conditions of participation before inviting a tender.

Competitive flexible:

- Unknown solution
- Complex requirement
- Novel/innovative goods and services
- Large market
- Would require formal engagement with suppliers during the process (i.e. negotiation or dialogue)
- Small specialist market
- Would want to assess conditions of participating before inviting a submission

Direct award:

- Prototypes and development
- Single supplier where only one supplier exists due to artistic, technical or IP reasons
- Purchase of any additional or repeat goods from existing suppliers
- In response to an event as declared by a Minister of the Crown
- Purchase of commodities
- Urgent requirements

6.7 Preparation for Tender

Pre Procurement Preparation

- Understand the Market
- Engage effectively with the Market
- Develop your specification
- Develop your Procurement Strategy
- Plan your Procurement process Effectively

Full consideration should be given to:

Objective of the project

- Overall requirements
- 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.

6.8 Award Criteria

MAT (most advantageous tender) instead of MEAT (most economically advantageous tender). Makes it clear that the focus for awarding contracts is not always to be based on lowest price. Price should not take precedence over non-price factors.

Freedom – design value for money award criteria based on whole life blend of economy, efficiency and effectiveness that achieve the intended outcomes. Awarding based on lowest

price is still possible where it is value for money. Ensure off the shelf/catalogue goods are updated regularly.

Quality – can be a significant factor which can encourage innovation and open up the market. Consider giving weight to the technical ability of the supplier to modify or add value to their existing products.

Wider impacts – e.g. social value are a key way of ensuring wide-reaching and long term value for money. Insist that the contract pays the real living wage and not minimum wage as this can effect turnover of staff. It benefits the local community and economy.

Flexibility – select the most appropriate award criteria to not only meet the specific requirements but deliver wider benefits based on the nature of the procurement as long as they are not discriminatory. A contracting authority may require the tender to create employment and training opportunities in the local area, particularly for those who face barriers to employment, and for people in the roles with known skills shortages. It will benefit the local community and economy.

Public benefit – have regard to the importance of maximising public benefit ensures they have a clearer focus on social value – which plays to the strengths of SMEs and VCSEs. Make use of local knowledge.

Setting Award Criteria

- Must relate to the subject matter of the contract.
- Must be specifically clear, measurable and specific.
- Must not refer to certain particulars (trademarks, place of origin, specific producer etc.) when describing technical specifications.
- Must be proportionate.
- Must be accompanied by the “assessment methodology” describing how tenders are to be assessed by reference to the award criteria and, in particular, specify whether failure to meet one or more criteria would disqualify a tender.
- Must detail their relative importance by (i) weighting each as representing a percentage of the total importance, (ii) ranking them in order of importance or (iii) describing it in another way.

Must not discriminate against suppliers whose home country has a trade agreement with the UK that covers the works, goods or services.

The award criteria must be sufficiently described in the tender notice and/or associated documents.

If an open procedure is used, then a tender notice 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.

6.9 Aspects to Consider

Financial

- Like should be compared with like
- Care should be taken to ensure that the tender price is the total price and that there are no hidden or extra costs.
- Determine whether there is 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

- Pre-sales 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.

6.10 Tender Acceptance Procedures

The invitation to tender should state the date and time by which the completed tender document should be received by the school. Tenders should be published and managed on the Central Digital Platform. Tenders received after the submission deadline should not be accepted.

6.11 Tender Opening Procedures

All tenders submitted should be opened at the same time and the tender details should be recorded. At least two persons from the BEP Procurement Manager should be present for the opening of tenders.

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

6.12 Tendering Procedures

For Trust and individual Schools, the evaluation process for tendering should involve at least two people, refer to above. 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 not 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. For contracts over £60,000 a summary should be prepared for the Trust Board, highlighting the relevant issues and recommending a decision.

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 the most advantageous to the school. All parties should then be informed of the decision.

7.0 Income

7.1 The main sources of income for the school are the grants from the DFE. The receipt of these sums is monitored directly by the CFO and School Finance Managers who are responsible for ensuring that all grants due to the school are collected.

7.2 The School also obtains income from:

- Students, mainly for trips and lunches.
- Local Authority including Early Years Funding and SEN Funding
- The public, mainly for sports lettings and use of accommodation.
- Staff supporting in other schools.

7.3 Trips

A trip organiser must be appointed for each trip to take responsibility for liaising with the Office Manager regarding costs and organising the collection of sums due. In conjunction with the Office Manager the trip organiser must prepare a record for each student intending to go on the trip showing the amount due. For the majority of local trips, the trip organiser will delegate responsibility for managing these records to the Office Manager.

Pupils should make payments through the Trusts payment portal and the Office Manager should make a record of individual payments received against the pupil.

With residential trips the Office Manager should maintain an up-to-date record for each student showing the amount paid and the amount outstanding. This record should be regularly updated as payments are made, and parents kept informed through a payment record of amounts outstanding.

It is strongly recommended that parental payments, such as for school meals are made via online payment platforms however, where this is not possible parental contributions paid by cash must be recorded individually by the Office Manager and kept in a safe until banked. A record of payments is kept electronically, and documentation completed for paying into the bank.

7.4 Lettings

The Sports Development Officer/Office Manager is responsible for maintaining records of bookings of sports facilities and other accommodation and for identifying the sums due from

each organization. Each school should invoice ad hoc hirers in advance of any lettings to enable payments to be made in advance for the use of facilities.

Schools are to inform the Central Finance Team the lettings detail who will then raise a sales invoice from the IRIS accounting system.

The Central Finance Team will provide the school with an aged debtors report monthly in accordance with the closedown timetable. Outstanding debts must be chased by the school to ensure payment is made on a timely basis, and/or the account is put on stop until debts are recovered. No further lettings should be made until payment has been made in full.

Debts should be written off by complying with Paragraph 2.3.4.1 of this policy. The Trust & DFE's prior approval is also required if debts to be written off are above the value set out in the Academies Trust Handbook, currently 1% of total annual income or £45,000 (whichever is smaller) per single transaction.

VAT may be applicable to some lettings. If unsure when establishing a new Letting the Trust Finance Manager Strategic must be contacted before quoting any rates to a potential new Let.

7.5 Custody

All income should be recorded in the Trusts Finance system. All cash and cheques must be kept in the safe before being banked. Care must be taken to ensure the cash sums collected does not exceed the limits prescribed by the school's insurance cover.

Monies collected must be banked in their entirety. The Office Manager is responsible for preparing reconciliations between the sums collected the sums deposited at the bank and the sums posted to the accounting system.

Monies for banking should be collected by an approved Cash Collection Service. Under no circumstances should any member of staff pay school cash directly into a bank.

8.0 Cash Management

8.1 Bank Accounts

The Trust operates a single bank account for all BEP activity.

8.2 Deposits

Particulars of any deposit must be entered on a copy paying-in slip, counterfoil or listed in a supporting book. The details should include:

- Date paid in
- Amount of the deposit
- Paying in slip reference
- Coding details

8.3 Payments and withdrawals

All cheques and other instruments authorising withdrawal from the Trust bank account must bear the signatures of two of the signatories on the bank mandate.

8.4 Administration

The Senior Finance Officer must ensure bank statements are received regularly and that reconciliations are performed at least on a monthly basis. Reconciliation procedures must ensure that:

- All bank accounts are reconciled to the Trust's cash book.
- reconciliations are prepared by the Trust Operations Finance Manager.
- adjustments arising are dealt with promptly.

8.5 Petty Cash Accounts

The Trust does not permit Petty Cash accounts; credit cards or staff expenses should be used instead.

8.6 Cash Flow Forecasts

The CFO is responsible for preparing cash flow forecasts to ensure that the Trust has sufficient funds available to pay for day-to-day operations. Where cash flow forecasts predict a lack of available funds to service commitments, this should be notified to the CEO immediately.

8.7 Investments, Reserves and Cash flow

Currently, surplus funds are held with the existing banker Lloyds in an instant access current account. Interest is received on a monthly basis.

Adequate cash balances must be maintained in the current account to cover day-to-day working requirements. Any investment made by the Trust must ensure there is no risk of loss of capital value of any cash funds invested and that the funds invested are protected against a rise in inflation and a view is taken to optimize returns on invested funds.

Investments must be made only in accordance with written procedures approved by the Trust Board.

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. 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 Trust FAR. Approval must be signed off and recorded in the committee minutes. When making decisions regarding where and how any surplus funds should be invested, due regard will be given to risk.

The aim is to reach an appropriate level of reserve to allow the Trust FAR Committee to explore alternative investment possibilities with criteria being:

- Investment in a deposit account attracting a higher rate of interest than current accounts.
- Investment with a different counterparty (in order to reduce counterparty risk).
- Consideration of whether there should be a maximum level of investment with a single approved counterparty.
- A longer-term investment with a higher return (but not high-risk investments which are not in the best interests of the Trust and its schools).

All investments must be recorded in sufficient detail 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.

9.0 Fixed assets

9.1 Asset register

All items purchased with a value over the Trust's capitalization limit must be entered in a local asset register. The Head Teacher will delegate this task to School Finance Manager/Office Manager. The capitalization limit has been set at £1,000. The asset register should include the following information:

- Asset description
- Asset number
- Serial number
- Date of acquisition
- Asset cost
- Source of funding (% of original cost funded from DfE grant and % funded from other sources)
- Expected useful economic life
- Depreciation
- Current book value
- Location
- Name of member of staff responsible for the asset

9.2 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 utilization of assets and to plan for their replacement.
- Help the external auditors to draw conclusions on the annual accounts and the school 's financial system.
- Support insurance claims in the event of fire, theft, vandalism or other disasters.

9.3 Security of assets

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

All the items in the register should be permanently and visibly marked as the school'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 Local Advisory Board. Inventories of School property should be kept up to date and reviewed regularly. Where items are used by the school but do not belong to it this should be noted.

9.4 Disposals

Items which are to be disposed of by sale or destruction must be authorised for disposal by the Head Teacher and, where original cost >£10k, by the Trust. The school must seek the

approval of the DfE (via the Trust) in writing if it proposes to dispose of an asset for which capital grant in excess of £20,000 was paid.

Disposal of equipment to staff is not permitted, as it may be more difficult to evidence the school obtained value for money in any sale or scrapping of equipment. Before disposal, please check for equipment redistribution to other schools in the Trust. In addition, there are complications with the disposal of computer equipment, as the school would need to ensure licenses for software programmes have been legally transferred to a new owner, or that the hard drive has been cleaned prior to the computer work being handed over.

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

All disposals of land must be agreed in advance with the Trust, Secretary of State and the Local Authority.

9.5 Loan of Assets

Items of School property must not be removed from School premises without the authority of the Head Teacher. A record of property loan must be recorded in a property loan book and booked back in at the school when it is returned. This does not apply to laptops which are used in the school and taken home on a daily basis.

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. Property loans should therefore be kept under review and any potential benefits discussed with the school's auditors.

Appendix 1 BEP Budget Planning Process

Budget Planning Process

Number on Roll (NOR) Vs Staffing Analysis	Action	When & Who
October – Publish Trust census data. GAG statement based on this data.	CFO to circulate census data to the Exec Team by the end of October annually.	Oct -CFO to circulate census data.
November – Schools with falling rolls -Director of Education and Deputy Director of Education aware.	Census data. Pull together indicative budgets for HTs and Directors.	Nov –Finance Managers. This is to give the 'Heads Up'.
November –FM meet with HT.	Finance Managers follow up with HTs to look at indicative budgets.	Nov - HT to discuss plans with FM and ensure budget balances. NB. This is the HTs responsibility (balanced budgets)
December – Trust Board	Inform FAR / Trust Board on the possible implications and outcomes of the latest census info and what approach we are taking and why.	Dec – SFM to give early indication to Trust Board on any potential issues. Dec – Inform HR of risks at certain schools and possible restructures.
January – School with potential staffing concerns (i.e., deficit on the horizon and NoR issues) HT will be expected to lead suitable changes supported by HR and FM.	If needed, start re-structure process to ensure any changes occur prior to May 31st. Line Manager of HT to be aware of time scales.	Jan - HT and FM to review the initial budget with HR. i.e., Do we need to restructure or not?
February – Launch restructures (If needed).	HR should be informed by the Head Teacher that they want to restructure current staffing model (if needed)	It takes 6 to 8 weeks to run a restructure correctly. Please plan sufficient time.
May – Final budget planning cycle DoE and D. DoE meet with HT, FM, HR. First two weeks in May – Annually.	Present final balanced budget. Check and sign off.	HT FM DoE D.DoE
June – FAR and Trust Board	Seek sign off for balanced budgets trust wide.	SFM / CEO

Appendix 2 Reserves Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The DfE expects Academy Trusts to use their allocated funding each year for the full benefit of the schools' current pupils. Therefore, it is important that if the Trust has a substantial surplus there is a clear plan how it will be used to benefit the pupils and to fulfil the Trust's charitable objectives.
- 1.2 The Trust also recognises that a level of reserve is required to cover unforeseen events and areas of investment. The Trust is expected to retain 1 months running cost at all times as a minimum reserve figure.
- 1.3 The DFE previously set limits on the amount of General Annual Grant (GAG) that could be carried forward from one year to the next. These limits have now been removed so that academy trusts have the freedom to keep money aside for when it is needed most and to build up reserves, for example for long term capital projects.
- 1.4 The review of reserves will encompass the nature of the income and expenditure streams, the need to match income with commitments and the nature of reserves. The level of reserves will be determined by the Finance Audit Committee annually.

-The Trust is expected to retain 1 month running cost at all times

2.0 Reserve Pooling

- 2.1 From 1st September 2024 Bradgate Education will pool each constituent academies reserves to a shared fund.
- 2.2 Although no formal policy has been in place, this has been Trust practice for several years as without pooling reserves the Trust would be unable to function, as academies in a deficit position would be unable to operate.
- 2.3 Pooling reserves allows the Trust to invest in Trust-wide projects, and it simplifies reporting to the DFE as only the pooled fund is reported rather than each academies position. It also fits with the Trust's Values of working collaboratively as each school shares reserves.
- 2.4 For any schools joining the Trust the school's reserves will be added to the BEP pooled reserve fund.
- 2.5 If for any reason a school decided to leave the trust then the reserve value to transfer would be Nil.

3.0 Reserve Expenditure

- 3.1 Reserves at the end of each year which are generally held in support of but not restricted to:
 - Contribution to capital projects planned or in development.

- Anticipated downward movements in pupil numbers (e.g., low cohort going through all school years).
- Financial commitments made but not yet come to fruition (e.g., IT Infrastructure work).

4.0 The following responsibilities apply in relation to this policy:

- Finance & Audit Committee (FAR) – Responsibility for approving the policy
- Chief Executive and Executive Leadership Team – Responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the policy
- Education Directors - Responsibility for ensuring compliance and understanding within their academies
- Headteachers –Responsibility for ensuring compliance within their academies
- All staff – Where they are budget holders, responsible for ensuring they stay within permitted spending limits.

Appendix 3 Staff Expenses

1 Introduction

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

2 Claiming Expenses

2.1 Staff should make reasonable efforts to get the best value possible when purchasing items or food.

2.2 Reimbursements for Staff Expenses should be made using the Staff Expenses Claim Form and authorised by the Head Teacher/ CEO / Finance Manager /Chair of Board and signed by the member of staff.

2.3 Claims by the Head Teacher must be authorised by the Director of Education.

2.4 Receipts should be attached to the staff expenses claim form and where VAT is incurred a VAT receipt or invoice must be attached.

3 Travel Expenses

3.1 Payment for mileage will be paid at the Inland Revenue approved rate of 45p per mile.

3.2 Staff are encouraged to carpool where possible.

3.3 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 school, the lesser distance will be paid.

3.4 Claims should be made using the mileage claim form showing the date, starting point, destination and number of miles.

3.5 Parking or speeding fines will never be reimbursed.

3.6 The Trust does not provide car insurance for staff using their own vehicles. Staff members are responsible for ensuring they are appropriately insured prior to travel.

3.7 Staff must also ensure that the car is safe and legal to drive.

3.8 Fuel receipts should be attached to the claim form in order for VAT to be reclaimed.

3.9 Mileage Claims should be submitted promptly, ideally monthly or termly if this is not possible. The latest a claim should be submitted is the month after the last day of term. Any claims received after this will not be paid.

4 Public Transport

4.1 Travel tickets should be pre-ordered from the school office at least one week in advance of the date of travel.

4.2 Reimbursements will be made for use of public transport for eligible journeys providing the expenses are reasonable.

4.3 Staff should use the most economical class of travel generally standard or economy class. First class will be permitted on the occasion that it is of an equal or lower value than the cost of a standard ticket.

5 Subsistence Allowances

5.1 Subsistence allowances may be claimed by staff where they are required to stay overnight. Supporting evidence such as receipts should be attached to the staff Expenses Claim form.

5.2 If staying overnight at a hotel, subsistence allowance will be capped at £7.50 per day for breakfast, £10.00 per day for lunch and £15.00 for an evening meal.

5.4 Hotel bookings will be of 4* or lesser standard.

5.3 No alcohol will be reimbursed.

Appendix 4 Gifts and Hospitality

The Trust has to display propriety and regularity in the use of public funds.

Gifts

Public funds must not be used to purchase gifts of any kind (including flowers) for members of staff, volunteers, LAB members or Trustees. These should be paid for by collections.

Hospitality

Trust funds must not be used to purchase alcohol.

Trust funds should not be used to purchase meals for staff during their working day with the exception of staff training days which is at the headteachers discretion and will be funded by the school.

Acceptance of Gifts

The Trust permits gifts, hospitality, awards and prizes to be accepted but these will need to be declared to the Trust over a value of £50. This also applies to suppliers and contractors.

The Head Teacher /School Finance Manager should report any gifts received and their value as soon as possible to the Central Finance Team.

Appendix 5

Procurement Policy

1 Introduction

All employees and members of the Trust have a duty to ensure value for money when sourcing supplies, services and works requirements.

As a publicly funded organisation, the Trust is required to comply with public sector procurement regulation. This is enshrined in the Procurement Act 2023. The Trust, however, benefits from the Schools Exemption, which relieves the Trust of some elements of procurement regulation across the wider public sector and its Financial Regulations and this Policy reflect the exemptions permitted.

This procurement policy sets out the principles to be followed when procuring third party supplies, services and works contracts by the Trust and by the Schools within the Trust. This Policy shall be read in conjunction with the Trust's Financial Regulations and the Procurement Flowchart (Appendix one).

2 Delegated Purchasing Limits / Delegated Authorities

All employees and members of the Trust have a duty to ensure value for money when sourcing supplies, services and works requirements.

- a. Delegated Purchasing Limits and Delegated Authorities can be found in the Finance Policy, page 16, 6.4.
- b. The Procurement Flowchart can be found at the end of this policy..

3 Procurement Principles

Outcomes for students/pupils are at the focus of the Trust's operations and these outcomes, together with sustained financial security are core to both its financial regulation and procurement procedures.

The Trust focusses on the following procurement principles:

Simplicity. Procurement should be as simple as possible to ensure that members of the Trust and suppliers to the Trust and its schools are engaged in the procurement process. Anything which does not add value to the procurement process should be removed.

Value for Money. Procurement should both demonstrate and achieve value for money when outsourcing to third party suppliers and contractors. Partnership opportunities, internal/external collaboration and use of education sector framework agreements provide routes to market which will assist the Trust to achieve value in its third-party expenditure.

Sustainability. The Trust and its Schools will include the Trust's Sustainable Procurement Policy in its procurement decision making processes. Whole life costing and end of life disposal will be taken into account when determining specifications and award of contracts.

Supply Base. The Trust and its Schools will support businesses local to its areas of operation to participate in the Trust's procurement activity and will structure appropriate contract opportunities to enable local and smaller businesses to compete.

Supplier Relationships. The Trust and its Schools will manage its third-party contracts in such a way that supplier relationships are strengthened. Strategic and higher value contracts will be actively managed to deliver value for money outcomes for the Trust.

Conduct. The Trust and its Schools will have regard to the procurement principles of transparency, equal treatment and proportionality in its conduct of procurement activities.

Procurement 'Five Rs'. The Trust and its Schools will apply the 'Five Rs' of procurement, seeking to obtain the right **quality**, in the right **quantity**, for the right **price**, at the right **place** and at the right **time**.

4 Value for Money

Purchasing decisions made by the Trust and its Schools will aim to achieve value for money for the Trust and strive to determine in each instance, the most advantageous tender/quotation. In achieving value for money, the Trust will not simply consider initial price, but also take account of the following non-exhaustive elements:

- a. Delivery, installation and design requirements
- b. Servicing, maintenance, operation and reliability
- c. Depreciation
- d. End of life / disposal
- e. Staff training
- f. Trust mobilisation / changes to practice & procedure

The Trust and its Schools will also consider routes to market as part of a wider value for money consideration, including:

- a. **Collaboration.** The Trust will seek to collaborate internally with its Schools and externally with other educational and wider public sector establishments to achieve value for money through economy of scale.
- b. **Frameworks.** The Trust and its Schools will seek to procure its third-party contracts through frameworks established for use by and which are focussed on the education sector. The Trust recognises the value of procuring through existing routes to market which reduces the cost of procurement to the Trust whilst achieving value for money which education-focussed frameworks set out to deliver.

5 One-off Purchases and Ongoing Requirements

The Trust and its Schools will not disaggregate requirements to avoid procurement regulation. The treatment of one-off purchases and the calculation of expenditure for ongoing requirements are set out in the Trust's Financial Regulations.

Ongoing requirements will be reviewed on a minimum four-yearly basis and contracts with no defined termination date, which simply roll-over from year to year will not be entered into.

6 Processes and Procedures

- a. **Trust Financial Regulations.** This Procurement Policy shall be read in conjunction with the Trust's Finance Policy. For avoidance of doubt, the Finance Policy shall take precedence, if there is a conflict of wording.
- b. **Transparency.** Requests for quotation and formal tenders will be sought on a competitive basis where appropriate and in accordance with the Trust's Finance Policy. All tender processes will be managed electronically. The Trust and its Schools will access frameworks established for the education and wider public sector when it is appropriate to do so, and when value for money is demonstrated. All tender processes will be proportionate to the requirement sourced and will ensure equal treatment of suppliers in the tender process.
- c. **Social Value.** The Trust and its Schools will endeavour to obtain additional social value through its third-party spend
- d. **Sustainability.** The Trust and its Schools will source supplies, services and works, seeking to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on its community and the environment in which it operates.
- e. **Plan.** The Trust and its Schools will maintain a register of its contracts. This will enable the Trust to plan and coordinate its procurement activity across all members of the Trust.
- f. **Define.** The Trust and its Schools will consider the following when defining its requirements:
 - i. The overall objectives of each requirement
 - ii. In-house technical knowledge and any requirement to source external technical advice
 - iii. The lifecycle of any product purchase, including after-sales services, in-life servicing & maintenance and end of use disposal
 - iv. Supplier/contractor conditions of contract/licensing over and above Trust agreed contract terms.
- g. **Procure.** The Trust and its Schools will ensure that its requirements are fully detailed, to secure the most advantageous tender or quotation for each requirement. This includes:
 - i. Allowing a realistic timetable for the procurement activity
 - ii. Setting out technical, qualitative and quantitative requirements in its documentation and ensuring that all three elements are given consideration in the evaluation of tenders.
 - iii. Setting out the terms and conditions of contract which the Trust and its Schools will expect suppliers/contractors to agree to.
- h. **Manage.** The Trust and its Schools will manage its awarded contracts to ensure that it receives the supplies, services and works that have been contracted. Higher value contracts will include key performance indicators, which will be actively managed and reported upon. Any modifications and variations of awarded contracts will be recorded and agreed with the supplier/contractor.

7 Contract Terms and Conditions

The Trust and its Schools will establish an agreed set of contract terms and conditions for supplies/services, which will be used when awarding third party contracts. When procuring works, the Trust will take advice from its specialist consultants and use their expertise to award and manage, using appropriate standard form construction contracts. The Trust will usually enter into the following contract lengths:

- Three years initially with the ability to add plus one year plus one year maximum.
- Five year maximum for key systems e.g. MIS, Finance.
- No contracts will be allowed to roll over automatically.

8 Safeguarding

The Trust considers paramount, the safety and welfare of its students and this will be reflected in its relationships with third party suppliers providing supplies, services and works on and within its school sites. All colleagues involved in the procurement of third-party contracts shall abide by, and shall embed, the Trust's Safeguarding Policy in the contracts it awards. Any person entering or working on school premises will either be subject to Enhanced DBS checks at the expense of their employer or always accompanied by a staff member.

9 Conflicts of Interest

The Trust and its Schools will identify and remove conflicts of interest which may, or may be perceived to, lead to the unfair treatment of suppliers/contractors and/or distort competition.

For each request for quotation or tender, both staff members and suppliers involved in the procurement and award of contract shall complete the Trust's Conflict of Interest form and this will be retained on file to provide an audit trail. All staff members involved in the procurement process will ensure that the Trust maintains the highest standard of integrity in all business relationships. Staff members will not use their position for personal gain.

10 Dealing with suppliers

The Trust work with a vast number of suppliers to ensure the smooth running of our organisation. Our procurement is managed centrally in the main, however there are aspects of procurement that sit at school level. When procuring or buying goods/services we seek assurances from businesses/organisations that they comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Those companies we engage with are informed that any breach of the act will result in the termination of the trading relationship.

The Trust promotes the following in all its procurement activities:

- All suppliers, regardless of size, will be treated fairly and equitably.
- We will consider any barriers for SME's and look to reduce or remove them.
- We will pay particular attention to the Central Debarment Register of suppliers.
- We will consider any applications to be included on our approved supplier list

- We will utilise the use of Frameworks by Purchasing Organisations such as CPC, ESPO, YPO and Crown Commercial Service; this list is not exhaustive.
- Any procurement opportunities will be published on the Find a Tender portal and our own website.
- Our payment terms for all suppliers are 30 days.

Any new supplier must provide us with a completed Supplier Form provided by the school or our finance team and must include:

- Full name of supplier
- Type of Business
- Full postal address
- VAT number
- Companies house number
- IR35 details
- Contact phone number
- Email address for orders
- Email address for remittances
- Bank details on Company letterhead
- Any related party transactions
- Any conflicts of interest actual, potential or perceived
- GDPR compliance e.g. if alternative provision, where is data stored and how long
- Cyber accreditation if IT related
- Modern Slavery statement

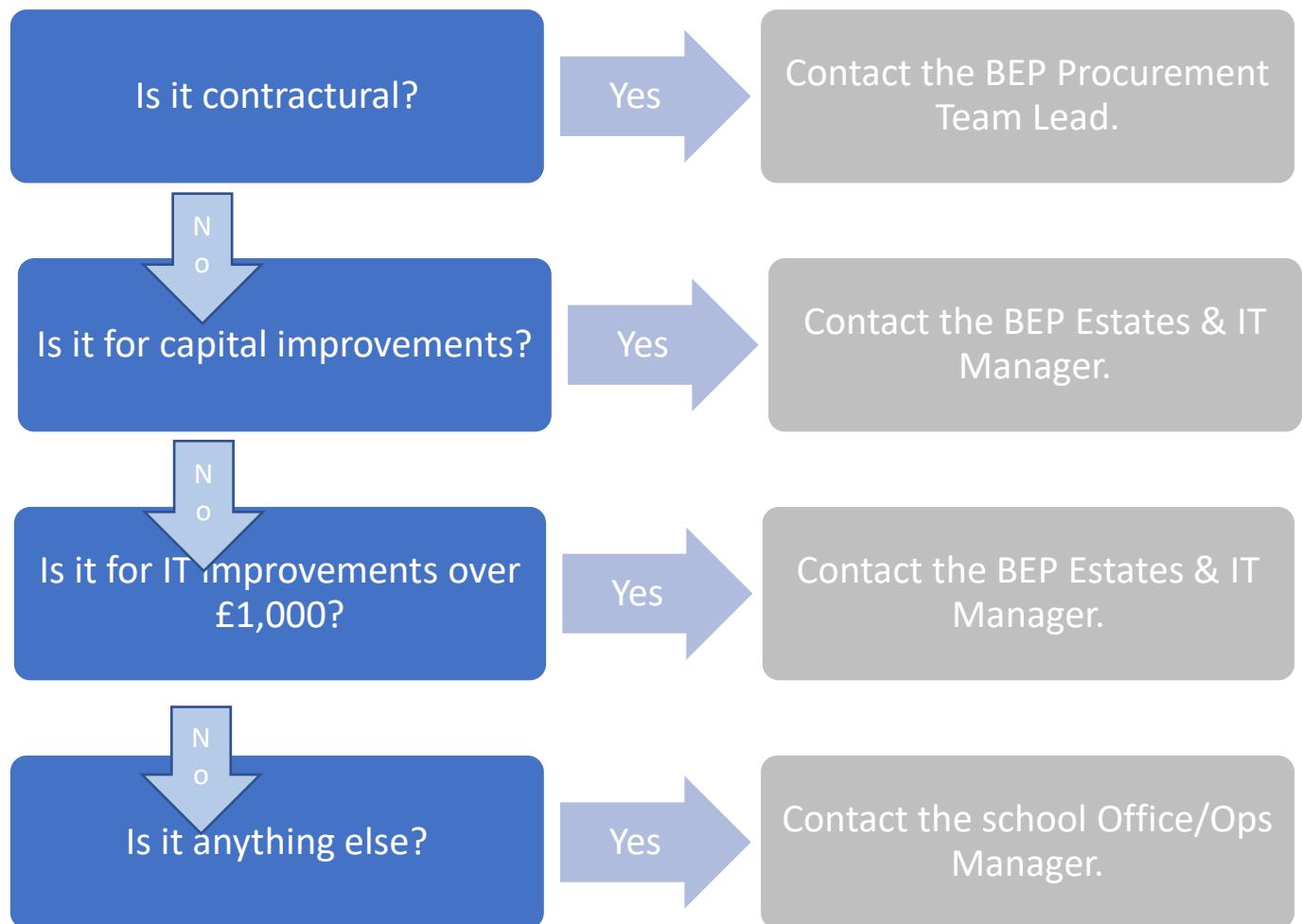
Procurement Flowchart

STEP 1 – Finance Manager Approval

Note: please ensure you have spoken with your finance manager for all orders to agree/confirm budgets before proceeding to Step 2.

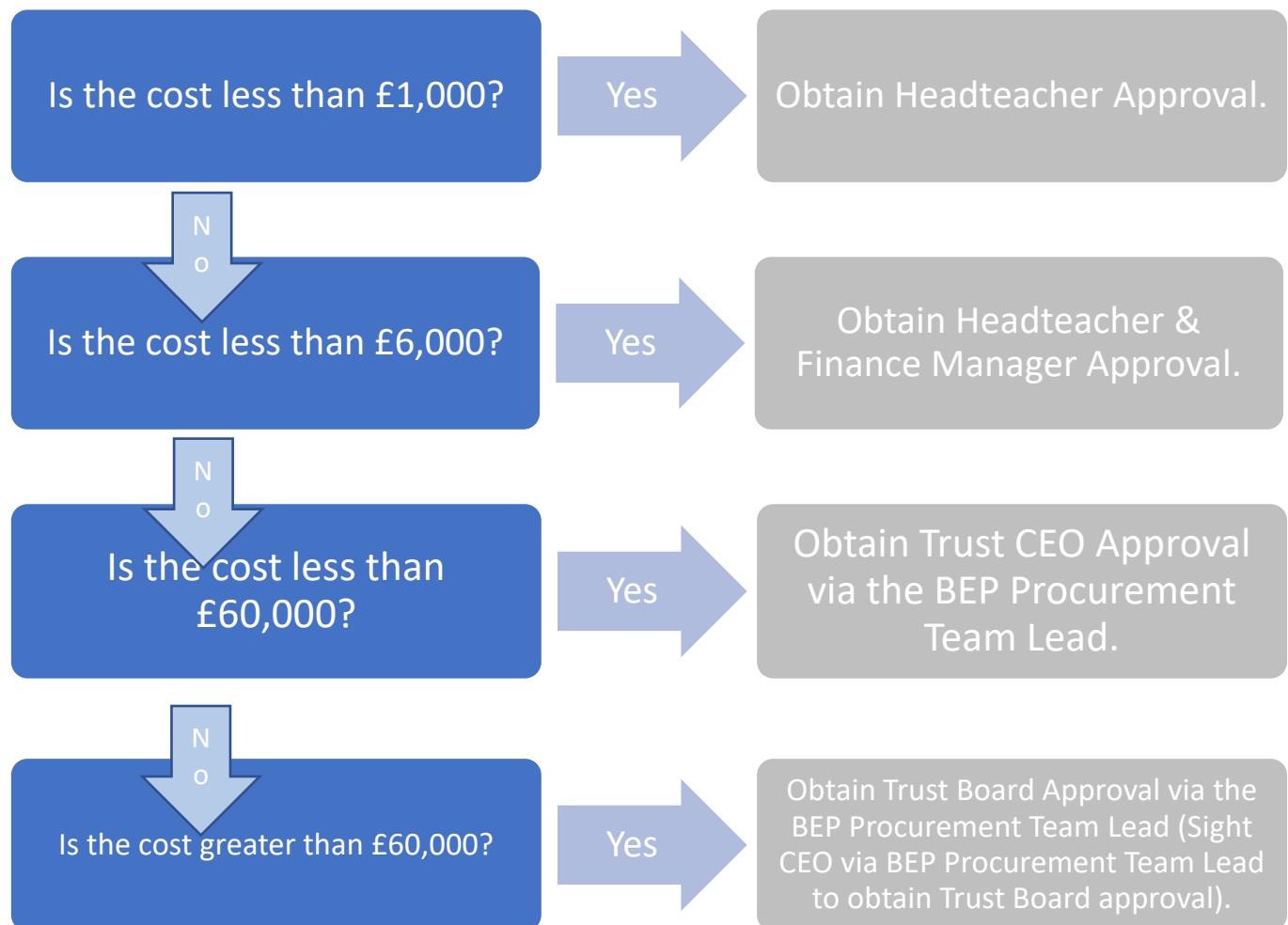
STEP 2 – Operational Approval.

Note: please ensure you contact and gain authorisation from the relevant person listed below before proceeding to Step 3.



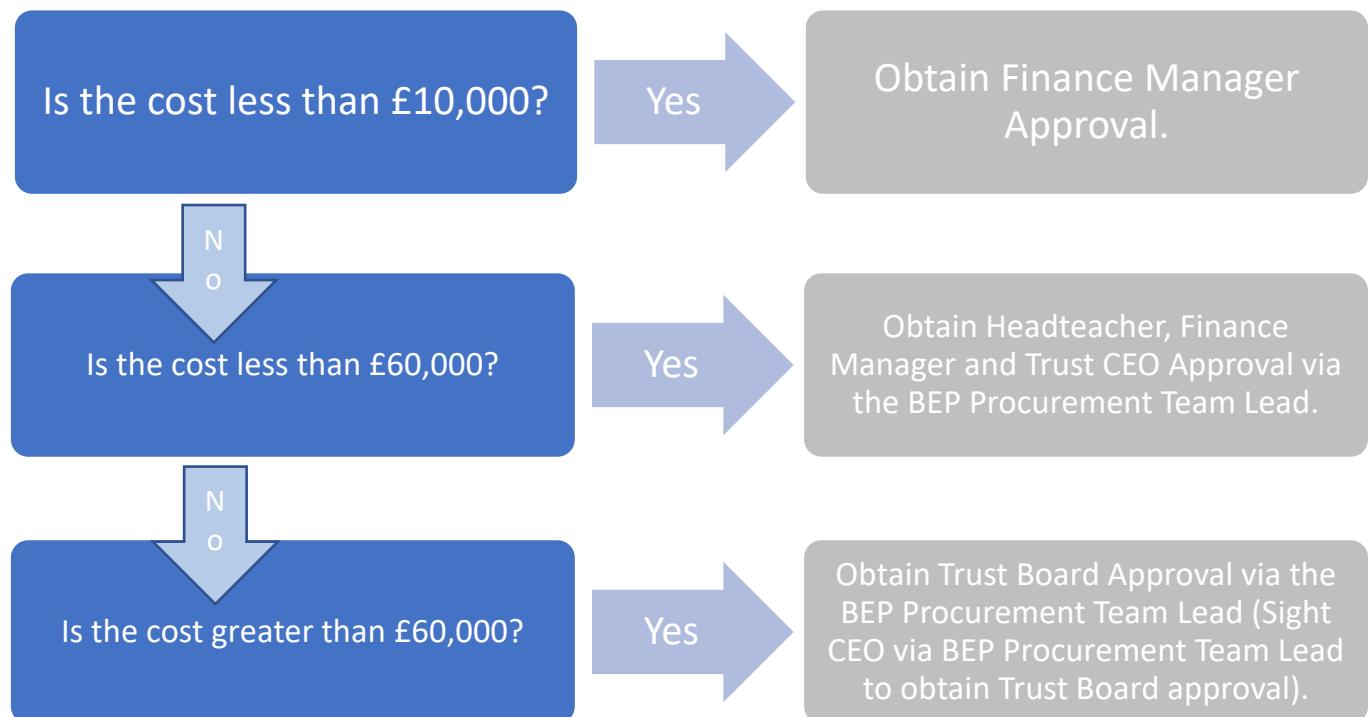
STEP 3a – Financial Approval – Primary Schools

Note: value limits refer to the total cost of a contract over a whole period and not just for the current financial year.



STEP 3b – Financial Approval – Secondary Schools

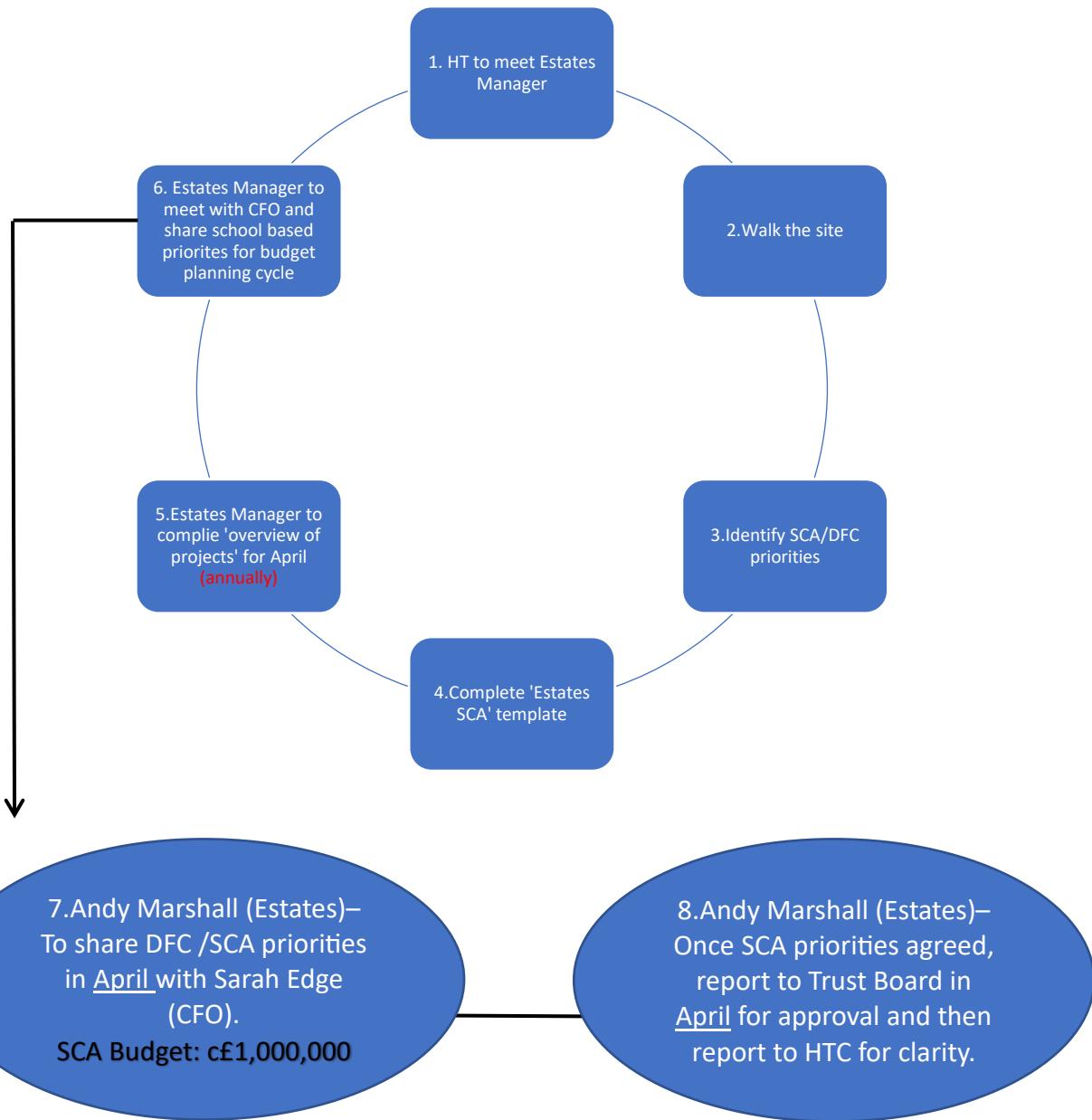
Note: value limits refer to the total cost of a contract over a whole period and not just for the current financial year.





Appendix 6 Planning for the use of School Condition Allocation and Devolved Formula Capital

HT / Estates Manager to meet annually (January / February) to discuss DFC and SCA priorities for the forthcoming cycle and to include in the budget planning cycle.



Appendix 7 Finance Team Roles and Responsibilities

Job role	Responsibility
CFO	Chief Finance Officer Line Manager for Schools Finance Managers Budget Planning Trust Wide Monthly Management Accounts Manage BEP budget Internal Audit SCA finance reporting VAT claims DfE returns Budget Planning System Credit card limits Maintain Trial Balance and control accounts Finance Assistant's Line Manager Accounting System Administration Payroll Journals
Secondary Finance Manager	Setting and Monitoring Schools Budgets Monthly forecasting Payroll reconciliation Purchase Order Approval Line Management of Secondary Finance Officer
Finance Manager	Setting and Monitoring Schools Budgets Monthly forecasting Payroll reconciliation Purchase Order Approval
Finance Officer	Process BACs runs Monitoring and Chasing debts Purchase order emails Finance document processing Bank Downloads Bank Réconciliation Control Account Reconciliation
Finance Assistant	Purchase order emails Finance queries Finance document processing

Appendix 8 Bradgate Education Partnership – GAG Sharing Policy

1.0 GAG Sharing

1.1 Under the provisions of the Academies Financial Handbook trusts are eligible to amalgamate the General Annual Grant (GAG) funding for their academies to form one consolidated GAG Share. This practice can enhance a trust's ability to allocate resources in line with improvement priorities and running costs across the Trust's constituent academies.

2.0 Benefits of GAG Sharing

- Enables headteachers to focus on Education
- Ensures equality as each school receives an equal amount of funding per pupil.
- Enables Trusts to direct funding to larger projects that wouldn't be affordable to individual schools.
- Resources can be concentrated on struggling schools to drive improvement.
- Gives the trust board more freedom to make decisions in the best interests of the children.
- Encourages collaboration between headteachers in using and developing shared resources.
- GAG Sharing would also create equality in the schools, ensuring that all schools have the required amount of staffing.
- Greater savings can be achieved through more centralised procurement.

3.0 Income

3.1 The following income streams will be subject to GAG Sharing.

- GAG Funding including AWPU, Lump Sum, MPPFL adjustment
- Any additional DFE funding streams that will form part of GAG in the future such as Core Schools Budget Grant.

3.2 The following income will not be subject to GAG Sharing

- Pupil Premium
- SEN Funding
- Local Authority Funding
- Sports Premium Grant
- Devolved Formula Capital Income
- Universal Infant Free School Meals Grant
- Lettings Income
- Parental Income such as catering, Trip, School Clubs



- Any other School generated income
- Sixth Form Bursary

4.0 Allocation to Schools

4.1 In February each year the GAG allocations for schools will be published, the combined amounts of these plus any other eligible grant funding will form the total funds available for the Trust for the year ahead (the GAG Share).

4.2 The trust must then decide if the level of reserves held is sufficient or if any of the GAG share will be required to top up the reserves, alternatively if the level of reserves is too high then some of this could be used to top up the GAG Share.

4.3 The Trust should then decide the level (if any) of the GAG Share that should be put aside as a contingency fund during the year.

4.4 The Trust central budget for the coming year will then be deducted from the GAG Share, the central budget will be used to fund the following expenditure.

Educational	Finance	HR
School Improvement Educational Psychology Education Welfare Officer MIS - Arbor CPOMS Hachette Assessments QA & SAM Support from BEP with regards to all education and support functions Teaching Walk Thru's The Key Membership CST Membership Inspiring Leaders membership	Finance Manager Support Audit Fees Accountancy Fees DFE Returns Annual Pension Valuation Financial Management System Budget Planning System Procurement Support Apprenticeship Levy	HR Support E-teach Payroll Contracts Recruitment Apprentice Levy Absence Management Well-Being Solutions Learning Management Bradgate Learning Hub
Estates	Governance	Other
Buildings Compliance Health & Safety YMD Boons Site Visits/Audits School Condition Allocation (SCA) Health & Safety Training Asset Management	Governance Clerking Governance Support Governor Hub National Governance Association Membership	Legal Support IT Services and Support Websites E-Learning GDPR Data Protection Coaching CPD

- 4.5 Additionally Schools will continue to receive the closest support from the senior leadership team with regard to all education and support functions as requested by Headteachers, Senior Leaders and Local Advisory Boards.
- 4.6 The remaining funds will be what is available to be distributed for school's budgets.
- 4.7 Each constituent academy will prepare a budget using the integrated curriculum financial planning tool (ICFPT) to identify their needs for the coming year, these will be reviewed by the executive team to ensure that the GAG share is allocated fairly and in line with the funding arrangement.
- 4.8 Once each constituent academy budget is agreed then this will be the proportion of the GAG share that will be allocated, this allocation will be journalled to schools monthly in twelve equal installments.
- 4.9 If any additional funding for the year is announced after the Budget has been set then this will be allocated to schools using the most appropriate methodology, e.g. pupil numbers or staff FTE.
- 4.10 During the year each school should remain within their allocated budget. Any forecast overspend should be reported immediately to the CFO. Academies are not permitted to run deficit budgets.

5.0 Appeals Process

- 5.1 The Academies Handbook states: "If a constituent academy's principal feels the academy has been unfairly treated, they should appeal to the trust. If the grievance is not resolved, they can appeal to the Secretary of State, via DFE. Where the DFE receives an appeal, it will review the process that the trust has followed, including whether the trust has considered the funding needs of the constituent academy, and whether the trust's internal appeals process has been applied. The DFE will provide the constituent academy and the trust with the opportunity to provide any evidence they feel is relevant to the case." (Section 5.31)

- 5.2 The BEP process for a constituent academy to appeal is as follows:

- 5.3 Headteacher to write to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) within 10 days of receiving their formal budget notification outlining why they feel the academy has been unfairly treated as part of this arrangement.
- 5.3 The Executive Leadership Team will review each appeal on an individual academy and Trust-wide basis and reply to the constituent academy within 10 days of receipt of the

appeal.

5.4 Should the Headteacher feel that their academy has still been unfairly treated, they have the right to appeal to the Finance Committee/Board of Trustees. The Finance Committee/Board of Trustees will discuss this at the next meeting and write back to the academy within 10 days of that meeting. Should the Headteacher still feel that their school has been unfairly treated by the Finance Committee/Board of Trustees, they have the right to appeal to the Secretary of State. The decision by the Secretary of State will be final.

6.0 Policy Review

6.1 The Trust reserves the right to amend this policy on an annual basis.