



Trustee Expenses Policy

Relating to Members, Trustees and
Local Governors

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1. Statement of Intent

At the trust, we are dedicated to good practice and ensuring equality through school processes.

The governance of schools in England is deeply rooted in the principle of voluntary service, but academies have the opportunity to decide whether they wish to pay expenses to trustees. We believe that no trustee should be out-of-pocket in respect to carrying out their duties on behalf of the academy and, therefore, that the payments of expenses for trustees are important in ensuring equality for all members of the school community.

We encourage all trustees to submit claims for reasonable expenses incurred whilst carrying out their duties.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Charities Act 2022
- The Trustee Act 2000
- The Charity Commission (2022) 'Trustee expenses and payments'
- DfE (2020) 'Governance handbook'
- ESFA (2024) 'Academy Trust Handbook 2024'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Conflicts of Interest Policy for Members, Trustees & LGBs
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy

3. Expenses Trustees can claim for

For this policy, "**expenses**" are refunds paid to trustees to cover the costs incurred whilst fulfilling their governance duties for the academy trust. Allowances of properly incurred expenses are not a payment to trustees for their services, nor do they count towards any kind of personal benefit.

ALL expenses must be pre-approved by either the CEO or dCEO.

In line with this policy, payments will only be made for expenditure necessarily incurred to enable the person to perform any governance duty.

Expenses will be paid on provision of a receipt, at the rate set out in the scheme, and will be limited to the amount shown on the receipt.

Trustees will be permitted to claim expenses in the following instances, on a case-by-case basis and with prior approval from the CEO or dCEO:

Travel

- Claims for expenses may be made for travel between the trustee's household and an academy or the trust's central administration office in their personal car, at the level of mileage rates [published by HMRC](#).
- The nature of the travel must be related to the work of the Board of Trustees, e.g. trustee meetings, training courses.
- Payments will be reimbursed for use of public transport or taxis, upon production of a valid receipt.
- The costs of parking for business away from the academy trust, where necessary, will be returned upon production of a valid receipt.

Hospitality

- Expense claims may be considered for the costs of meals taken whilst undertaking their trustee duties and upon production of a valid receipt.
- The costs for reasonable overnight accommodation and subsistence while attending trustee meetings or conferences will be reimbursed, only when the proposed claim has been agreed in advance by the CEO or dCEO in line with the limits documented in the Staff Expenses policy.

Childcare

- In cases where a trustee does not have a spouse or family member to care for a child/children when the trustee must attend meetings in person (rather than on Teams) relating to the work of the Board of Trustees, expenses claims will be considered for the cost of childcare or a babysitter.
- Allowances will also be considered for reimbursement for the cost of care for elderly or dependant relatives where the trustee must be absent due to their trustee duties.

Specific needs

- Trustees may claim allowances for expenses relating to specific needs incurred when carrying out approved duties. This may include expenses related to taxi fares, special transport for individuals with disabilities, audio equipment, support from a signer, braille transcription etc.

Telephone charges, broadband, photocopying, stationery, etc

- Claims for reimbursements will be considered where a trustee is unable to use an academy's or the trust's central administration office facilities for any of the above.
- Claims will also be considered upon production of a valid receipt, where appropriate. In all other cases, a full written report must be submitted.

Reimbursement for loss of earnings:

Trustees may be able to claim expenses for loss of earnings if there is suitable authority to do so and it would be of an advantage to the academy trust.

The Board of Trustees will consider this type of payment to be viable where the trustee:

- Brings particular skills or perspectives which are valuable.
- Cannot afford to serve as a trustee as their employer does not pay them for their time spent undertaking their duties for the academy trust.
- Is self-employed, and carrying out their trustee duties would cause them to suffer financially.

If the payment is approved, the Charity Commission will normally impose a condition that the reimbursement is no more than:

- The amount which could be regarded as reasonable payment for the work undertaken; **or**
- The amount lost by the trustee, whichever is lower.

This list is not exhaustive, and the Board of Trustees may decide to reimburse in other instances; however, this will be discussed by the Board of Trustees prior to any repayment of expenses.

4. Payments which do not count as expenses

Trustees will not be able to receive allowances for the following:

- Payments for hotel accommodation or travel costs for spouses or partners who are not participating in the business of the academy trust
- Payments for private telephone bills for business unrelated to the academy trust
- Payments for private medical insurance
- Petrol mileage rates above the mileage rates published by HMRC
- Parking fines

This list is not exhaustive and the CEO/dCEO may decide to reject other requests for expenses which are excessive, false or unreasonable.

Any trustee that attempts to claim expenses which are excessive or which do not relate to legitimate trustee activities, as outlined above, may be liable to removal from the Board of Trustees and, if the expense has already been reimbursed, will be liable to repay the academy trust for the amount paid.

5. How Expenses are Claimed

Trustees will have all potential expenditure pre-approved before it occurs. Expense claims after the event must be made at least on a termly basis unless the amount to be claimed is substantial and/or urgent.

Claims will be made using an appropriate form provided by Central Finance and submitted to the CFO, attaching receipts when applicable.

Claims will not be reimbursed unless authorised by the CEO/dCEO.

All claims will be subject to independent audit. If claims appear to be too frequent or excessive, the Board of Trustees may ask for further details.

The Board of Trustees will account for all expenses in the academy trust's accounts and disclose the following information:

- The total amount of trustee expenses
- The nature of the various expenses
- The number of trustees involved

Claims will be submitted for approval to the Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. If claims come from the Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, approval will be sought from the Chair of the Trust Board.

All approved claims must be submitted within two months of the expenditure. The exception to this is at the financial year-end when ALL claims must be provided by the end of September.

6. Mileage Rates

January 2021 HMRC approved mileage rates; where the Members, Trustees or LGB members uses their own car:

Vehicle type	First 10,000 business miles in the tax year	Each business mile over 10,000 in the tax year
Cars and Vans	45p	25p
Motorcycles	24p	24p
Bicycles	20p	20p

The mileage rates will be revised annually to reflect the current approved or advisory rates issued by HMRC. Mileage claims must be pre and post approved and are calculated using postcodes on the AA website. **No mileage claims can be made for separate journeys shorter than five miles.**

7. Trustee Payments

The trust recognises that, with mutual agreement, there may be circumstances where trustees provide additional goods or services over and above their normal trustee duties.

Trustee payments will be paid from the academy trust's funds in return for the work the trustee has carried out on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Trustees may also receive benefits “in kind,” i.e. free use of an academy within the trust’s facilities for which other users would need to pay.

Such payments will be classed as taxable income and, therefore, the academy trust will only grant these payments if there is suitable authority from the Charity Commission to do so and the academy trust’s governing document does not prohibit these payments.

The Charity Commission will only authorise these payments where it has been clearly shown to be in the academy trust’s interests, and will consider issues such as the following:

- The reasons for the payment
- Whether conflicts of interest have been managed appropriately
- Whether the Secretary of State for Education is in agreement
- Whether the payment of any trustees is in the longer-term interests of an academy in the trust or the academy trust

Before the payment can be validated, and authority is received from the Charity Commission, the Board of Trustees will ensure that the following conditions are met:

- There is a written agreement between the academy trust and the trustee or connected person to whom the payment is to be paid
- The written agreement sets out the exact or maximum amount to be paid
- The trustee concerned will not partake in decisions made by the Board of Trustees concerning the making of the agreement or the acceptability of the service provided
- The payment is reasonable in relation to the service provided and equivalent to the same service that may be provided by an equally qualified and experienced person
- The Board of Trustees follows the duty of care guidelines outlined in the Trustee Act 2000
- The total number of trustees, or those connected to the trustees, who are receiving the payment is a minority
- There is no prohibition against payment of a trustee
- The Charity Commission’s guidance surrounding trustee payments has been considered and adhered to where relevant
- The payment is in the best interests of an individual academy, academies or the academy trust

Before entering into this type of agreement, trustees will ‘have regard to’ the Charity Commission’s guidance on the subject and be able to show that:

- They are aware of the guidance.
- In making a decision, where the guidance is relevant, they have taken it into account.
- If they have decided to depart from the guidance, they have a good reason for doing so.

Written agreements

Any written agreements for payments to trustees will be recorded separately to trust meeting minutes and include the following details:

- An accurate description of the goods or services to be provided.
- The name of the trustee or connected person (including a business) who will receive the payment.
- Details of the amount, if a 'one-off' or fixed-term payment, or else the maximum amount for goods or services to be provided over the duration of the agreement. Where the benefit is a 'payment in kind,' details of the benefit and its approximate value will be given.
- A statement that the trustee concerned (including one who is connected to a person providing goods or services) will withdraw from any discussion of the trustees which has any bearing on the terms of the agreement, or the acceptability of the standard of goods or services provided.
- A statement that the trustee concerned will not vote on any of these matters and will not be included when deciding whether a quorum exists at a meeting to discuss them.

The agreement will be signed by someone authorised by the trustees to do so. This could be one or more of the trustees who do not stand to benefit under the agreement, or someone who is not a trustee but who has a sound knowledge of the matter. The agreement will also be signed by the trustee or connected person who is to be paid.

As the agreement forms part of the trust's accounting records, it should be retained for 7 years as recommended best practice.

Duty of Care

When exercising the statutory duty of care requirement to decide whether a payment to a trustee is viable, the Board of Trustees will fulfil its requirements to:

- Act honestly, in good faith and exercise all reasonable care and skill in reaching their decision.
- Exercise the power responsibly in the best interests of the academy trust.
- Seek professional advice when in doubt.
- Be clear that the payment of a trustee can be justified.
- Ensure that conflicts of interest are properly and openly managed in accordance with the academy trust's Conflicts of Interest Policy.
- Ensure that agreements are complied with, and that any poor performance is identified and addressed.
- Retain the agreement.
- Disclose the payments in the academy trust's accounts.

In the application to the Charity Commission to approve a payment, the Board of Trustees will demonstrate:

- What steps have been taken to recruit trustees without payment for their services and, if none, the reasons why.
- Why it is considered advantageous to the academy trust to pay a trustee.
- Whether the functions to be carried out are genuinely those of a trustee.
- That the payment is reasonable and affordable and will not affect the ability of the Board of Trustees to carry out its duties.

- What risks have been identified and how they will be managed.
- How the unpaid trustees will be able to review performance, judge value for money and, if necessary, bring the payments to an end.
- How conflicts of interest will be managed in accordance with the Conflicts of Interest Policy.

8. Monitoring and Review

The CFO will review this policy on an annual basis in conjunction with the Board of Trustees and will make any changes necessary.

All trustees are required to familiarise themselves with this policy upon their appointment to the Trustee Board.