



Coastal Learning PARTNERSHIP

Finance Regulation Manual

This policy has undergone an Equalities Impact Assessment in line with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty

Committee:	Resources
Policy Ratified:	February 2025
Review Date:	February 2026

Additional school Procedure – N/A	
Committee:	
Procedure Adopted:	
Review Date:	

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to ensure that CLP maintains and develops systems of financial control which conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management. It is essential that these systems operate properly to meet the requirements of our Funding Agreements with the Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA).

CLP must comply with the principles of financial control outlined in the Academy Trust Handbook (ATH) published by the ESFA. This manual expands on that and provides detailed information on CLP's accounting procedures and systems. This manual should be read by all staff involved with financial systems, all Headteachers (and other SLT if using Access finance), all operations staff involved with procurement and all Resources Committee Trustees. Compliance with both this manual and the ATH is also reviewed by the external and internal auditors of the Partnership.

Achieving value for money should be embedded in our all financial processes, defined by the ATH as "Achieving the best possible educational and wider societal outcomes through the economic, efficient and effective use of resources, the avoidance of waste and extravagance, and prudent and economical administration"

Any members of staff who have questions over any part of CLP's Financial Regulations, financial policies and procedures should raise these with their school Finance Team in the first instance. They may wish to escalate queries to the Chief Financial and Operations Officer for further clarification.

2. Roles

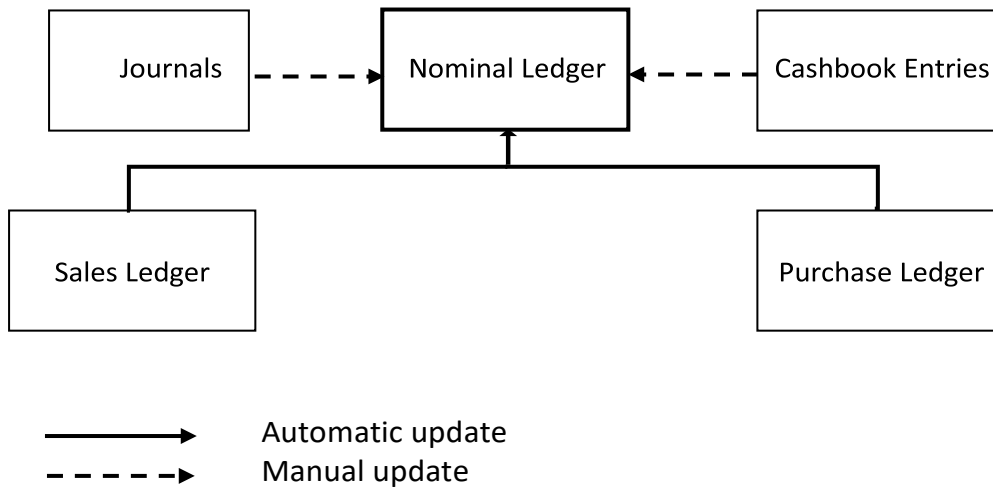
The roles in the Partnership integral to the processes detailed in this document are:

- Full Trust Board / Resources Committee – responsibilities as defined in the Board/Committee Terms of Reference and the Partnership Scheme of Delegation.
- Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – also the Accounting Officer of the Partnership. Accountable to the Trustees. Responsible for ensuring the correct internal controls framework is in place and attesting to the regularity, propriety and compliance of the Partnership.
- Chief Finance and Operations Officer (CFOO) – responsible for the oversight of all finance and operations activities defined within this document. Reports into the CEO and accountable to the Trustees.
- Head of HR (HoHR) – responsible for oversight of all HR activities defined within this document
- Headteacher (HT) – Accountable for setting and managing the schools' own budget and authorising financial transactions as per the financial authorisation levels detailed in this document.
- Management Accountant (MA) – Deputy to the CFOO. Responsible for the oversight of the day to day management of the schools' financial processes. In the event of the absence of the CFOO the Management Accountant will take responsibility for all CFOO tasks detailed in this document unless stated otherwise.
- Partnership Finance Managers (FM) – responsible for managing the day to day financial operations of the schools allocated to them and completing the month end management accounts and budget processes.
- Finance Officers / Finance Assistants (FO) – this role is school based and can also relate to financial responsibilities which may be part of a wider school role, such as Operations Manager. Responsible for the daily processing activities for the schools within the finance system.

The role of the Local Governing Board in the finance processes of the Partnership is as detailed in the Partnership Scheme of Delegation

3. Accounting System

All the financial transactions of the Partnership must be recorded into a computerised financial information accounting system. For CLP, this is Access Finance ([Link to Access Finance](#)). This system is operated by the finance teams of the Partnership and consists of:



3.1 System Access

- Entry into Access is password restricted and the CFOO, in consultation with the Data Protection Officer is responsible for implementing a system which ensures that passwords are changed every 6 months. This is automated in the system via a security policy administered by the CFOO.
- Access to the component parts of Access are set by the CFOO, who is responsible for setting access levels for all members of staff using the system. Requests for changes to access or new access requests must be authorised and processed by the CFOO.
- All leavers are to be removed from the finance system by the CFOO or MA within 5 working days of leaving
- A full review of all users is carried out by the CFOO at the end of each term to ensure only valid users are using the system
- A full review of role profiles and permissions is undertaken by the CFOO on an annual basis to ensure all profiles accurately reflect the contents of this Finance Regulation Manual & that no toxic combinations exist.

3.2 Back-up Procedures

Access Finance and all other Access modules are completely cloud based. Back-ups are undertaken by Access as follows:

- 1st of the month – full back up – retained for 7 years for financials, 5 years for payroll
- Every Saturday – full back-up – retained for 3 months
- Daily, differential back up – retained for 1 month
- Every 15 minutes – transaction log back up – retained for 1 month

Any reports downloaded from the finance system which form a key part of the processes detailed in this document should be saved as per local networking arrangements to ensure they are backed up.

3.3 Transaction Processing

- The financial transactions of the Partnership must be recorded on Access Finance in accordance with the processes, authorisations and controls detailed in this document.

- The Partnership has a standard chart of accounts (broadly in alignment with the ESFA Chart of Accounts) which will be used by all schools. Requests to set up new nominal accounts or cost centres need to be made to the CFOO or the MA who have the only rights to the access levels in Access to make such structural changes.
- Detailed information on the operation of the Financial Information System can be found in the Access user manuals.

3.4 Transaction/Journal Review

- The school FM will review all journals, including cashbook entries posted by the FO where applicable as part of preparing the management accounts to ensure they are valid, regular transactions.
- The MA will review the transactions on Access via the monthly review of the management accounts comparing actuals to budget/forecast. This review will include the identification of any journals > £10,000 to ensure they are appropriate. Typical journals of over £10,000 may include:
 - Monthly payroll journal – processed by the FM/MA/CFOO
 - Allocations of income/central slice – processed by CFOO or FM
 - Monthly Accruals and Prepayments/Accrued and Deferred Income – processed by CFOO or FM
 - Salary recharges between schools where staffing contracts are across multiple schools
 -
 - Year-end adjustments – processed by FM/MA/CFOO

3.5 Reconciliations

- The CFOO has overall accountability for all reconciliations with school FM responsible for ensuring the following reconciliations are performed each month for their own school with relevant back-up provided and that any reconciling or balancing amounts are cleared:
 - Sales ledger control account
 - Purchase ledger control account
 - School bank balance per the ledger code to the bank statement (may be completed by FO and reviewed by FM)
 - Accruals/prepayments/accrued and deferred income
 - Any other balance sheet accounts
- The CFOO or MA will undertake the following reconciliations on a monthly basis:
 - Payroll control account
 - VAT control account (VAT 126 return may be prepared one of the Finance Managers)
 - Inter Trust account
 - Central bank account reconciliation
- Any reconciling items should be annotated as to what they are and why there are a reconciling item
- Any unusual or long outstanding reconciling items of greater than 6 months must be brought to the attention of CFOO who will advise a course of action in accordance with the regulations contained in this manual and inform the CEO and/or Resources Committee if appropriate.

4. Financial Planning

- CLP prepares both an annual budget for the next academic year and a 3 year rolling plan. A 5 year plan will be prepared for those schools with deficit accumulated funds or significant financial challenge as identified by the CFOO

- The system used to prepare the budgets and plans is Access Budgets.
- The CFOO will prepare and circulate a Budget Parameters document each year to provide a framework for consistency and application for the budget and planning process. Schools are required to adhere tightly to the framework laid out in this document when setting their budgets.

4.1 Budget Cycle

- The budget cycle is as follows:
 - **Autumn term (Sept-Dec)**
 - Implementation of current budget including upload to Access Finance.
 - Monitoring of the budget against actuals via the monthly management accounts process (September may be 'light touch' as defined by the CFOO to take consideration of the year-end audit process).
 - Revisit current year budget via forecasting for October month end management accounts and monitor actuals against the forecast going forward.
 - Reconciliation and closure of previous financial year.
 - **Spring term (Jan-Mar)**
 - Forecasts updated monthly for any significant known changes to previous forecast.
 - Undertake benchmarking review using the SRMA dashboard and other benchmarking tools
 - Formal revisit of October/November forecast for all budget lines for March month end management accounts and monitor actuals against this revised forecast.
 - Preparation and circulation of budget parameters document.
 - Pre-planning for new budget process including system readiness.
 - Review staffing assumptions for following years and discuss staffing models with HTs.
 - **Summer term (Apr-Jul)**
 - Forecasts updated monthly for any significant known changes to previous forecast.
 - Set budgets for next financial year and approval by Full Trust Board.
 - Submission of ESFA Budget Forecast Return for next financial year. Due end of July.
 - July and August management accounts are prepared together as one set of accounts at August month end, prepared in September. This takes into consideration the holiday period for finance staff and Headteachers.

4.2 Annual Budget

- The CFOO is responsible for writing the Budget Parameters document detailing the assumptions to be used, including the principles of Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning. This document will be approved by the Resources Committee typically in March.
- The HTs are responsible for preparing the annual budget and 3-year plan utilising the key assumptions in the Budget Parameters document. They are supported in this responsibility by their FM.
- The CFOO is responsible for preparing the central team budget for approval by the CEO and Full Trust Board in May.

- The CFOO is responsible for reviewing and challenging all school budgets for consistency and compliance with the Budget Parameters document as well as consolidating all budgets for approval by the Resources Committee and the Full Trust Board. The CFOO is supported in this, especially in schools with staffing models over benchmarks or significant school improvement actions in place, by the CEO or Head of Learning and Achievement.
- The approved budget must be submitted to the ESFA in their required format by the ESFA specified date. The CFOO is responsible for establishing a timetable which allows for the approval process and ensures the submission date is met. The CEO must approve the online submission via the CFOO.
- The annual budget will reflect the best estimate of the resources available to each school in the MAT for the forthcoming year and will detail how those resources are to be utilised. There should be a clear link between the Partnership's overall objectives and the school Improvement/Development plans.
- 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.
- It is the responsibility of the HT at each school, supported by their FM, to ensure that ALL staffing contracts per the payroll administration tool are accurately reflected in the budgeting tool.

4.3 Balancing the Budget

- The budget should be set in accordance with the Partnership's latest reserves policy and outlined in the budget parameters document.
- If shortfalls are identified, opportunities to increase income should be explored and expenditure headings will need to be reviewed for areas where savings 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 the reserves are compliant with the Partnership's reserves policy.
- Once the budget parameters have been applied, if early draft budgets are showing an in-year deficit then the CFOO and CEO/Head of Learning and Achievement, if appropriate must be engaged to work with the school to assess the risk of this and consider if there is a need to eliminate the shortfall or ensure that sufficient levels of Trust reserves are in place to support such a deficit.

4.4 Monitoring and Review

- Budgets will be loaded onto Access at the start of September to be monitored as part of the management account process.
- The original budget will always remain as approved however adjustments can be made for known deviations via the forecast process reflected in the management accounts within the allowed tolerance. There will be two formal forecast points in the year; one as at October accounts and the other as at March accounts. The forecast of each school will be reviewed by the MA or for the central CLP forecast by the CFOO with a Partnership consolidated summary position reported to the Resources Committee.
- Outside of the two formal forecast points detailed above the forecast should be considered and revised monthly for any known significant changes.

- Any potential overspend against the budget/forecast will be flagged by Access when entering purchase orders and invoices. Commentaries should be provided to explain variances against budget/forecast on the monthly management accounts. A pre-agreed tolerance, set in September but changeable depending on financial circumstances internally and externally, is allowable between budget and latest forecast position. Variances outside of this must be discussed with the CFOO before expenditure is committed to where the variance is negative.
- Monthly reports will be prepared by each school FM and reviewed and consolidated by the MA. The reports will detail budgeted income and expenditure the latest forecast at ledger code level for schools and at a summary level for the CEO and Trustees. YTD actuals detailed on the management report should be used as a sense check that the full year forecast is accurate. Commentaries on the summary level reports will flag any exceptional items to the CEO and Trustees. Summary reports will be prepared by the MA and presented to the Resources Committee by the CFOO.
- To ensure accuracy and completeness of the monthly accounts, a month-end checklist is completed by the school FM to ensure all tasks and reconciliations have been undertaken as the accounts are finalised. Each task has a completion date noted against it. The MA or CFOO will routinely review the month-end checklist and evidence of completion of tasks. Each school checklist will be reviewed at least once a year. A note of the date of these reviews is captured on the central/Trust month-end checklist.
- An annual timetable for completion of monthly management reports will be circulated by the CFOO at the start of each academic year. This timetable will detail the date on which monthly management reports prepared by the FM and reviewed by the HT should be submitted to the MA for final review and consolidation. On the deadline date any subsequent amendments for the month prepared will be picked up by the review and consolidation process the following month.
- Each month will be closed on Access on the last working day of the following month i.e. September will be closed on Access at the end of October.
- In accordance with the Academy Trust Handbook, the final monthly consolidated accounts are circulated for review to the Chair of Trustees, the Resources Committee and the CEO by the end of the following month to which the accounts relate (i.e. October management accounts will be sent by 30th November). Each month's accounts outside of Resources Committee presentation will be circulated to all Resources Committee Trustees and the Chair of Trustees for continuity and awareness between meetings.
- The Local Governing Boards' of the schools will be made aware of the latest financial position of the school via the annual financial context reports circulated in September.

5. Payroll

The main elements of the payroll system are:

- Staff appointments/Changes to Establishment
- Payroll administration
- Payments

5.1 Staff Appointments/Changes to Establishment

- All staff appointments are made in accordance with the Partnership Scheme of Delegation and the Safer Recruitment Policy.

- Any proposed recruitment or changes to the establishment should be detailed on the surveys found on the HR page of the intranet. Changes should not be actioned until the survey has been approved centrally by finance and HR as well as local governors where required.

5.2 Payroll Administration

- The Partnership payroll is administered by a chosen external provider, currently Strictly Education (appointed April'24). This document reflects the expected process with Strictly Education.
- All staff are paid monthly on the penultimate working day of the month. The payroll tool, Edupeople will hold the following information for each employee which records:
 - Salary;
 - Contract details;
 - Bank account details;
 - Taxation status;
 - Details of absences;
 - Personal details and
 - Any deductions or allowances payable
- Each school will appoint its own HR admin lead who is responsible for updating the payroll system.
- Each school HR Admin lead is responsible for processing any appointments, leavers and other amendments in Edupeople according to the monthly timetable issued by the central HR team. All school changes will be approved in the system by the HT. Any HT and central team changes will be approved by the CEO and any CEO changes will be approved by the Head of HR. The payroll provider will be responsible for ensuring all other changes notified from other sources are processed (e.g. minimum wage, pension, tax code changes etc.).
- The payroll provider will prepare a monthly timetable ensuring that there is sufficient time for processing, review and payment of payroll.

5.3 Payments

- Following the processing of payroll by the provider the following reviews will take place before payments are made:
 - A review of the Run 1 reports, detailing draft payroll by the school HR Admin lead and HT (the CFOO for the central team) using month on month comparison reports and the establishment list from the prior month as a guide. Narrative should be provided for any variances to prior month of greater than £300 on the 'Variation Report' tab of the Run 1 workbook.
 - Correction of errors can be made by the HR Admins direct in Edupeople in line with the monthly timetable. Any further queries will be raised by the school HR Admin leads directly with the payroll provider
 - Review of Run 1A reports following adjustments and queries by the school HR Admin Lead or central HR team as required
- All salary payments as processed by the payroll provider are made by BACS from CLP's central bank account. The CFOO (or CEO in the event of an absence) will sign-off the BACS amounts via email to Strictly Education, following the issue of the Run 1A reports. The school totals will be added to a summary workbook to calculate the total BACS to be taken for net pay, pensions and HMRC.

- The payroll system automatically calculates the deductions due from payroll to comply with current legislation. The major deductions are for tax, National Insurance contributions and pensions. The amounts payable to HMRC and Teachers' Pension will also be made by BACS out of the CLP central bank account.
- After the payroll and BACS has been processed, the payroll provider will provide Run 2 reports which detail the final payroll. The payroll journals are posted by the FM for each school in Access as part of the monthly management accounts process. The payroll amounts are compared to the latest forecast to ensure all staff costs have been correctly recorded and variances noted and updated in the forecast.
- The MA is responsible for ensuring the payroll control account for the Partnership reconciles to the outstanding payments for deductions on a monthly basis. This is reviewed by the CFOO.

5.4 Salary Advances

- The Partnership does not ordinarily award salary advances. These can be permitted in exceptional circumstances but must be approved by the CFOO and HoHR in advance and must be repaid in the next available payroll run or as formally documented in a letter to the member of staff.

5.5 Overtime

- All overtime claims will be processed in the Payroll Administration tool by the HR Admin leads or central HR team for central team overtime. Claims are authorised in the HR system by the line manager/approver set up in the system.
- No overtime claims will be made in advance of the work being carried out.
- All overtime will be agreed by the line manager in advance of undertaking the work.
- No payments for work undertaken will be made other than through the payroll system.

5.6 Staff expenses

- Staff can use the self-service function in the HR system to load their own expenses accordance with the Partnership Staff Travel and Expenses policy.
- All expenses will be authorised by the line manager for school staff expenses and by the CEO or Head of Learning and Achievement (reflective of current line manager responsibilities) for all HT expenses. Central team expenses will be authorised by the line manager. The CEO expenses will be authorised by the HoHR
- Expenses are paid without deductions for tax, NI and pension as part of staffs' monthly net pay.

5.7 Severance payments

- The Partnership is able to self-approve the non-contractual element of severance payments up to £50,000.
- Where the non-contractual element is on or over £50,000 prior approval from ESFA must be sought.
- Each business case must be reviewed and approved as per the Financial Authorisation Limits in Appendix A.
- Any contracted severance payments should be entered on the HR system by the Central HR Team for approval by the HT. These payments will form part of the monthly payroll process.

5.8 Ex-gratia payments

- Any ex-gratia payments must be submitted to ESFA for prior approval.

5.9 Staff bank accounts

Staff bank details may only be entered or amended by the employee using the self-service portal in EduPeople. There are no exceptions and bank details must not be entered by another individual, even with the supervision of that individual. New starters will be sent a log-in to the portal as part of their induction. Staff bank details must not be written on new starter forms and entered by school administration.

6. Ordering and Purchases

For the purposes of this section the Finance Team is defined as the individual schools' own finance resources. This will be a Finance Manager allocated from within the Central Team and will also be a Finance Officer/Finance Assistant more commonly school-based or a school Operations or Admin Manager where financial responsibilities form a part of their role.

CLP wants to achieve the best value for money from all purchases. This means it wants to get what it needs in the correct quality, quantity and time at the best price possible. A large proportion of its purchases will be paid for with public funds and it needs 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 CLP and its schools.
- **Accountability:** CLP is publicly accountable for its expenditure and the conduct of its affairs.
- **Fairness:** that all those dealt with by the CLP are dealt with on a fair and equitable basis.

6.1 Routine Purchases/Orders

- Budget holders will be informed of the budget available to them at the start of the academic year. It is the responsibility of the budget holder to manage the budget and to ensure that the funds available are not overspent. Data detailing actual expenditure and committed expenditure can be accessed directly from the finance system or by requesting a report from the school Finance team. Analysis of each budget line in total will also form a part of the monthly management accounts as reviewed by the HT.
- Budget holders will be responsible for requesting the purchase of items or services from their own budgets and in accordance with the Financial Authorisation Levels detailed in Appendix A. If a budget holder is not defined for each cost centre, then the HT has overall responsibility for those unassigned cost centres.
- For all new suppliers a checklist should be completed (as per Appendix F) to ensure the supplier is valid and reputable. This includes checks for self-employed status and the application of IR35 regulations. The checklist should be completed by the FO and then authorised and processed by the FM or MA.
- Orders can be placed using an internal ordering form or via an email from the budget holder's internal email account to the Finance Team which must then be entered on the finance system. Orders must not be accepted or processed from an email address external to the Partnership. All orders must be authorised in accordance with the Financial Authorisation Levels detailed in Appendix A.

- Where budget holders have access to the finance system then orders can be placed directly onto the system without the need for an email or form. All orders raised by budget holders in the system must still be authorised in accordance with the Financial Authorisation Levels detailed in Appendix A.
- Orders must be placed on the finance system for all orders for goods with the exception of school meals, utilities, contracts, leases, supply staff, Amazon purchases and some low value services/goods. Where possible the order number generated by Access should be used with the supplier to cross reference to the invoice where received.
- The system will raise an alert where there is no budget available for that cost centre/ledger code. In this instance, the budget should be discussed with the HT to agree a change to the forecast which can then be implemented by the Finance Manager.
- Authorisation levels are set up in Access in accordance with the Financial Authorisation Levels table laid out in Appendix A.
- Once the goods have been received it is the budget holder's responsibility to check to the original order and pass on any delivery/Goods Received notes to the Finance Team which will then be processed on Access Finance.
- All invoices will be sent direct to or forwarded onto the Finance Team for processing and should be checked against the original order/Goods Received Note, where applicable for accuracy. All invoices in the system should be authorised in accordance with the financial authorisation levels in Appendix A.
- Each school should have a generic Finance mailbox for finance emails, which can be accessed by the school Finance Team and the FM. This mitigates any key person dependency and ensures invoices are processed and paid on time during holidays and periods of absence.
- Soft copies of all invoices, orders and any supporting documentation should be uploaded to Access Finance to retain easily accessible audit evidence and to move towards a paper-free finance workplace.
- All orders/goods received notes and invoices should be retained for a minimum of seven years. Once uploaded to Access, these documents do not need to be retained elsewhere either in mailboxes or network folders.
- No hard copy documents are required to be approved and should therefore not be printed. All authorisations are completed online.
- No orders or invoices for alcohol must be placed or processed through the schools' accounts. This includes no ordering of alcohol on behalf of Parent Teacher Associations for school fund raising purposes and neither for the purpose of a gift for staff leavers or occasions.
- No orders or invoices for any gambling products, including staff incentives such as scratch cards or lottery tickets must be placed or processed through the schools' accounts.
- See Appendix B for the Competitive Tendering Policy detailing the procurement process to be followed for differing values of orders/contracts.

6.2 Internet Purchases

- At all times, the same rigour of internal control must be placed on internet purchases as is applied to routine purchases detailed above with regard to segregation of duties and authorisation controls.
- The Finance Team will be authorised to place online purchases. The internet order must be raised in the name of the school with the school address, not to an individual.
- Requests should be made to the Finance Team in the normal manner (via internal order form or email) with the Finance Team raising the order on Access and where possible the order number quoted on the online order as a cross reference.
- The preferred method of payment for internet purchases will be the request of an invoice from the supplier which can be paid via BACS.
- Payment by a school business charge card can be made where required as per Section 7. Payment by an individual's personal credit card must not take place unless in accordance with the 'Out of Pocket' expenses limits in Appendix A and the Staff Travel and Expenses policy.
- Official VAT invoices/receipts, delivery notes and other relevant documentation should be obtained for all internet purchases and retained as per the Routine Purchasing section above. All such documents should be uploaded to the finance system.
- All purchases should only be made from secure websites that the Finance Team has gained reassurance are safe and free from fraudulent activity. The use of online auction websites is not recommended.

6.3 VAT on purchases

VAT can be claimed on purchases where a valid VAT number has been provided. VAT is entered at the point of invoice with the VAT number being held against the supplier details. The monthly VAT 126 return is prepared by one of the FM's. This is then reviewed by the MA and reconciled back to the VAT nominal ledger in Access. The Return is submitted by the MA via the HMRC online portal on a monthly basis once reconciled.

For Amazon purchases by invoice and for credit card transactions, the VAT number should be entered within the description field on the Access invoice template.

7. Credit Cards (Business Charge Cards)

- A maximum of 4 credit cards can be issued per school with a combined credit limit of £5,000 and a per transaction limit of £650. The HT and CFOO must approve any new card holders.
- Credit cards can be used for purchasing only where a supplier is unable to accept BACS payment. This can include online purchases as well as in-store purchases. BACS is the preferred payment method of the Partnership and staff should take appropriate measures where possible to minimise the use of credit cards.
- Approval levels for credit card transactions are as per Appendix A for routine orders and purchases for any card holders who are part of the school finance team or a nominated budget holder (i.e. site staff) as agreed with the HT. At the end of the month once the credit statement is received, all corresponding receipts/paperwork should be attached and these should all be signed off by the HT

using the front sheet in Appendix G. All central cardholder statements should be signed off by the CFOO.

- If the card holder is not part of the school finance team, then the credit card form in Appendix G should be used in all circumstances PRIOR to making the purchase online.
- If a card user is making routine purchases of a similar value for similar items frequently, a pre-approval form at the start of the year can be used to approve all such transactions throughout the year. For example, if wraparound food is purchased each week for around £50, this should be detailed on the credit card form and an annual approval noted and signed by the HT. The FM will routinely check the value stated is being kept to.
- Card purchases may only be placed by the named card holder. The cards are held by individuals and are not general school cards. Details should not be registered on school online accounts where these can be accessed by other members of staff. Cards must not be given to other staff members to use online or take offsite.
- Cards must be kept securely on the school premises unless they are taken offsite by the cardholder to buy a purchase and then must be immediately returned. Staff are not to take cards home with them or carry them around on their person over holidays.
- All cards will be administered by the MA. This will include the cancellation of cards, issuing of new cards, changes to credit limits (up to £5k per school) and any other changes to details.
- Cash withdrawals of up to £250 are permitted on the card but only with prior authorisation from the MA. A temporary permission to withdraw cash can be set up then on the card via the online portal via the card administrators.
- Credit cards shall be used for the payment of valid business expenses only, and the misuse of such cards shall be grounds for disciplinary action. Credit card activity will be regularly monitored online by the MA and also by the FM as part of the month end process.
- Under no circumstances should alcohol or any gambling products, including scratch cards and lottery tickets be purchased on a credit card. No exceptions will be approved.
- All credit card receipts should be logged on Access as a credit card expense monthly at the point at which the credit statement is received to ensure completeness of transactions and reconciliation back to the payment of the credit card. Credit card statements can be downloaded from the online portal by the cardholder and should be uploaded to Access alongside any receipts. FMs will check each month that all correct documents are loaded on Access and will query any unusual transactions.
- A direct debit arrangement has been set up to clear the card balance in full at the end of each month. This payment will be taken from the CLP central bank account. When logging the credit card statements on Access the central bank account option should be selected.
- Any credit cards for leavers are immediately disposed of by the school and cancelled via the online portal by the Management Accountant

A disclaimer containing the above credit card policy must be signed upon being issued a card and then annually, agreeing to the terms above for use. This will be managed via Parago e-sign. Any cardholders found in breach of any of the terms of use above will have their card removed and destroyed immediately.

8. Cash Management

8.1. Bank Accounts

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

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:
 - The date of the deposit
 - The amount of the deposit
 - Brief description of the deposit and
 - A reference, such as the number of the receipt or the name of the debtor

Payments and Withdrawals

- All BACS authorising withdrawal from CLP bank accounts must have the online approval of two separate authorised signatories as per the banking mandate.
- The first approver on Lloyds Online banking system would be the processor of the BACS batch and can be one of the following:
 - Finance Officer
 - Finance Manager
 - Management Accountant (for central establishment only)
 - Chief Financial and Operations Officer

When entering the BACS payment into Lloyds it is the responsibility of the processor to ensure all bank details on Lloyds correspond with the bank details on the supporting invoices or documentation.

Once first approval is completed a notification should be sent via email to the second approver detailing the school, the value of the BACS and the cut-off date for authorisation along with the BACS summary report from Access.

For Faster BACS all evidence supporting the payment should be sent to the second approver.

- The second approver on Lloyds Online banking system and the final authoriser of the BACS batch MUST be one of the following and different to the first approver:
 - Finance Manager
 - Management Accountant (except for central establishment)
 - Chief Financial and Operations (except for central establishment)
 - CEO (central establishment only)
 - Member of school SLT
- The second approver should review the list of payments on Lloyds for any large amounts or

unknown suppliers and look on the finance system for evidence of authorisation of invoices and challenge with the Finance team to ensure payments are appropriate

- The MA should download the 'BACS/Faster Payments – Payment Audit Trail Report' from Lloyds on the last working day of each month. The report provides audit evidence of all first & second approvals of BACS payments in Lloyds.
- No cheques will be issued under any circumstances. A cheque book for the central account is no longer held.
- Any change to existing supplier bank account details or any new supplier bank accounts details must be verified with the supplier over the phone by the FO. The Change of Supplier Bank Details form in Appendix I should be completed and signed by the FO and then passed to the FM or MA to process the change in Access. A review of all supplier bank changes will be carried out by the MA or CFOO on a termly basis using the audit report in Access.
- The Trust bank accounts must only be used for valid business purposes. The bank accounts must not be used for the purposes of collecting monies for a personal reason such as leaving gifts for staff or gifts for birthdays or other occasions.
- This provision applies to all accounts, public or private, operated by or on behalf of the Trust Board.

Administration

- The school FM must ensure bank statements are retrieved regularly from Lloyds Commercial Online and that reconciliations are performed at least on a monthly basis. Reconciliation procedures must ensure that:
 - All bank statements are reconciled to the cash book in Access;
 - Reconciliations are captured on the month end checklist as complete and are routinely reviewed by the MA or CFOO (central account);
 - Notes are provided around reconciling items greater than one month old
 - Adjustments arising are dealt with promptly and advice sought from the CFOO for any outstanding items greater than six months' old.
- The CFOO and MA have the only access to the Lloyds bank accounts online to be able to:
 - Add/remove users (all leaver account must be immediately deactivated & cards disposed of);
 - Adjust user permissions in alignment with this manual
 - Reset passwords on locked accounts
 - Amend direct debits

8.2. Petty Cash Accounts

Schools do not hold petty cash accounts. Cash may only be held on site as received by parents for reasons such as trips or clubs. Refer to Section 9.3 for details on holding and banking cash. Onsite cash **MUST NOT** be used to pay staff expenses. All staff expenses should be in accordance with the Trust staff expenses policy and processed via the payroll system.

Payments and Withdrawals

8.3. Cash Flow Forecasts

The cash flow forecast for the Central CLP bank account is prepared by the Management Accountant. Cash flow forecasts are not required for the 7 school bank accounts as only parental income flows through here and minimal payments. The majority of the banking transactions are now via the CLP Central bank account. Any transfers of monies required between bank accounts will be processed by the CFOO and authorised by the CEO.

The move towards one single bank account will be complete by April 2025. . The school bank accounts are expected to be closed by June 2025 with just the one Trust bank account remaining.

8.4. Investments

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

8.4.2. 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.

8.4.3. The Trust has signed up to use Insignis to manage any investments using surplus cash from the central bank account as determined by the cash flow forecast. All details of any investment activity are held in the Insignis portal. The CFOO, with the second approval of the CEO have the authority to place funds of up to £250,000 within the portal. Any larger investments must be approved by the Resources Committee.

9. Income

- The main sources of income for CLP and its schools are the grants from the ESFA. The receipt of these sums is monitored directly by each school FM via the management accounts process, who is responsible for ensuring that all grants due to CLP are collected. Any non-receipt of ESFA funding should be immediately raised with the CFOO.
- All grants should be appropriately coded in the finance system as either restricted or unrestricted income to ensure this can be accurately tracked and reported in the financial statements.
- CLP's schools also obtain income from:
 - The local authority – mainly for special needs and nursery funding
 - Parents - mainly for trips, hot school meals (Junior schools and Primary Key Stage 2 only), wraparound care/clubs, music lessons and uniforms;
 - The public - mainly for lettings.
 - Parent Teacher Associations – by means of fundraising

All sums collected via the parent payment systems must be reconciled between the sums received into the bank and the reports from the payment system. This reconciliation must be completed per payment received, or at least at month end for all payments received.

9.1 Trips

- A lead staff member must be appointed for each trip to take responsibility for the collection of sums due. The staff member must prepare a record for each pupil intending to go on the trip showing the amount due.
- Parents should make payments to the school via the online payment tool if applicable where a receipt

can also be downloaded. All cash received must come via the school office where a receipt must be issued and the value of the receipt and the number of the receipt recorded against the pupil making the payment.

- The school FO or Admin Officer should maintain an up-to-date record for each pupil showing the amount paid and the amount outstanding. This record should be sent to the lead teacher on a regular basis and the lead teacher is responsible for chasing the outstanding amounts.
- The FO or FM is responsible for ensuring that all monies received either online or in cash are accurately recorded in Access against the correct trip cost centre.
- A central Educational Visits policy provides further detailed guidance of the other considerations necessary.

9.2 Lettings

- The school FM/FO at each school is responsible for maintaining records of bookings of facilities and for identifying the sums due from each organisation.
- Details of organisations using the facilities will be held by the school FM/FO who will establish a sales ledger account and produce a sales invoice from the finance system in advance of the facilities being used.
- Debts of up to £250 can be written off with authorisation by the HT. Write off of debts > £250 must be approved by the CFOO.
- Organisations using the facilities should be provided with the Trust's bank details so monies can be paid directly into the central bank account.
- Each school FO/FM will hold a record of all regular letting arrangements for each school as agreed by both parties.
- The Trust hiring and letting policy provides further detailed guidance of the other considerations necessary, especially with regard to safeguarding. It also contains a booking form which should be completed and signed to accompany any sales invoices.

9.3 Custody

- Official, pre-numbered school receipts (or appropriate signed supporting documentation) should be issued for all cash and cheques received where no other formal documentation exists. All cash and cheques must be kept in the school's safe prior to banking. The insured limit for cash on site is £5,000 per school but it is Partnership's policy to bank all cash at least once every 2 weeks either at a bank branch or via secure transport. If cash is held on site longer than 2 weeks i.e. over holidays, then a risk assessment should be completed and mitigations put in place where necessary.
- Monies collected must be banked in their entirety in the appropriate bank account. The school FM/FO is responsible for preparing reconciliations between the sums collected, the sums deposited at the bank and the sums posted to the accounting system.

9.4 Gifts and Hospitality

- Occasionally the school itself or members of staff may be offered gifts or hospitality from third parties such as suppliers. The situations in which acceptance is permitted and the procedures needed to enforce the policy are detailed in the CLP Anti-fraud and Corruption policy. If there is any doubt guidance should be sought from the CFOO.

9.5 Debt Collection

- The Aged Debtor report for each school is checked by the FM at month end and debts of greater than 3 months queried with the school and then the debtor directly. Any debts of greater than 6 months

must be escalated to the CFOO who will advise on next steps and agree any write offs where applicable in accordance with the authorisation levels in Appendix A.

10. Capital Spend

- Schools receive Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) direct from the ESFA. This funding is for the school to use locally as it sees fit and should align with the 'MUSTS' in the budget parameters around school condition surveys and ICT audits and its own school Planned Preventative Maintenance/Repair and Maintenance schedule.
- If in setting the budget in accordance with the budget parameters, the school has an in-year surplus or accumulated funds to use then a school Capital Development Plan can be completed to be approved alongside the budget. A template of this plan can be found in the Budget Parameters documents. Once approved, if the quoted spend is more than £5,000 of the estimated amount in the budget and cannot be covered within the tolerances of the management accounts then this should be escalated to the CFOO for further approval at Resources Committee.
- If any urgent or emergency capital needs arise in the year outside of the capital development plan then a business case may be raised (Appendix H). These cases are for capital spend > £10,000 which can't be managed within the tolerances of the management accounts. These are for extraordinary circumstances only and should be discussed with the CFOO before the case is completed. Business cases will be approved by the Resources Committee with documents to be submitted to the CFOO 2 weeks prior to the meeting date.
- As well as DFC the Partnership receives a school Condition Allocation (SCA) from the ESFA. This is allocated to the Partnership and is centrally managed by the CFOO and the Central Operations Manager with oversight from the Resources Committee. SCA spending will align with the priorities in the Partnership Asset Management plan.
- All orders and invoices using SCA funds should be placed by the CFOO or MA within the central establishment in Access.
- Any capital needs arising should always be discussed with the Central Operations Manager and FM to ensure all funding sources are explored and any spend in is alignment with Trust projects and policies.

11. Fixed Assets

11.1 Asset register for insurance purposes

An asset register is not required to be held for insurance purposes. In the event of an incident where assets are damaged or stolen, the RPA will assign generic values from their own databases.

An inventory of IT equipment is maintained by our ICT partner, Schoolcare.

11.2 Asset register for accounting purposes

A fixed asset register for accounting purposes is maintained and updated on an annual basis with additions, disposals and depreciation factored into the register at year end. The purpose of this register is to ensure appropriate valuation of assets on the Trust balance sheet.

Fixed asset additions are recorded on the finance system as capital and captured in the monthly

management accounts as they occur, as with proceeds from disposals. The capitalisation level for the Trust is £5,000. On a monthly basis the FM's review their school finances to ensure capital has been recorded correctly i.e. only items over £5,000 and that all other potential nominal ledger codes such as ICT or premises related codes are reviewed for incorrectly recorded capital.

Depreciation is posted at year-end only, this does not impact on the school reserves for the purposes of the monthly management but only on the fixed asset reserve shown in the financial statements at year-end. The depreciation rates are calculated on a straight line basis over the following periods:

Long-term leasehold property	50 years
Furniture and equipment	5 years
Computer equipment	3 years
Motor Vehicles	5 years

The full fixed asset policy can be found in the Trust's financial statements

11.3 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 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 Trust 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.

11.4 Disposals

- Items which are to be disposed of by sale or destruction must be authorised in accordance with the Financial Authorisation limits in Appendix A. The Partnership must also seek the approval of the ESFA in writing if it proposes to dispose of any asset which originally cost more than £20,000. This approval will be sought by the CFOO.
- Disposal of equipment to staff is not encouraged as it may be more difficult to evidence the school obtained value for money in any sale or scrapping of equipment. In addition, there are complications with disposal of computer equipment as the school would need to ensure licences for software programmes have been legally transferred to a new owner. Schools must take comprehensive, auditable steps to cleanse all Trust and personal data from any ICT devices that are being disposed of.
- 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 or grant originator a proportion of the sale proceeds.
- All disposals of land must be agreed in advance with the Secretary of State.

11.5 Loan of Assets

- Items of CLP property must not be removed from premises without the authority of the respective HT or CEO. A record of the loan must be documented and signed back in when it is returned.
- If assets are on loan for extended periods or to a single member of staff on a regular basis the situation may give rise to a 'benefit-in-kind' for taxation purposes. Loans should therefore be kept under review and any potential benefits discussed with CLP's auditors.

11.6 Leasehold or Tenancy Agreements

As per the CLP's Funding Agreements any new leasehold or tenancy agreements that are entered into for a term of seven or more years must have ESFA approval in advance and must be signed by either the Chair of Trustees or the Chair of Resources Committee.

11.7 Finance and operating leases

- Finance leases are a form of borrowing and must be approved by the ESFA in advance with prior approval required from the Resources Committee.
- Operating leases do not require ESFA approval but value for money, regularity and propriety must be ensured. All operating lease agreements must be signed by the CFOO and updated on the centrally held leases schedule along with a copy of the lease agreement. All lease payments should be agreed back to the schedule at year end by the CFOO as part of the audit process.

12. Related Party Transactions

- A related party include persons and entities with control or significant influence over the school Trust, and members of the same group (e.g. parent and subsidiary companies). Full criteria can be found in the Financial Reporting Standard 102 as linked in the Academy Trust Handbook.
- The Partnership should hold a Statement of Assurance for any supplier they deem to be a related party
- Any transaction deemed to be with a Related Party as defined by the Academy Trust Handbook must be reported to the ESFA via the online portal prior to the transaction taking place. If the transactions are via invoice and amounts are not known in advance, then at the start of each academic year an estimated amount for the year for that related party should be logged on the portal. The CFOO is responsible for logging all such transactions with the ESFA.

Appendix A – Financial Authorisation Limits

Delegated Duty	Value	Authoriser	Method/Comment
Out of Pocket Expenses	Up to £100	All staff expenses to be approved by the Headteacher or by the CEO/Head of Learning and Achievement for Headteachers. Line manager approves central team expenses (CEO expenses approved by Head of HR)	Staff expenses should be raised in the HR self-service portal in accordance with the Staff Travel and Expenses policy
Authorisation of routine orders and purchase invoices	Up to and including £1,000	Budget holder or school based Finance Officer	Consideration of value for money but formal quotes not required
Contracts and leases	Up to and including £3,000	school Finance Manager (CCP, SSM, WSM, OTI, HPA, WPS, STPS, SPS, SGPS, LWPS)	Minimum of 2 informal quotes evidenced by email confirmation or internet quotes
Value for money should be considered in all cases	Up to and including £4,000	school Finance Manager (CIS, LIS, OJS, STC, BET, QPIA, SLP)	
The different £ levels listed are reflective of the materiality level deemed appropriate for the size of the school	Up to and including £5,000	school Finance Manager (LPS, HPS, BPS)	
	Up to and including £10,000	Headteacher or Deputy (CCP, SSM, WSM, OTI, HPA, WPS, STPS, SPS, SGPS, LWPS)	
	Up to and including £15,000	Headteacher or Deputy (CIS, LIS, OJS, STC, BET, QPIA, SLP)	
	Up to and including £20,000	Headteacher or Deputy (LPS, HPS, BPS)	Over £10k - Minimum of three written estimates in response to a specification issued by the school/Partnership – see Appendix B
	Up to and including £50,000	CFOO or CEO	
All SCA payments		CFOO	
All SCA spend as per certified AMR invoices		Central Operations Manager and CFOO	Total spend in accordance with Trust Asset ManagementPlan
	Over £50,000 and up to public procurement threshold of £214,904 for services/£5,372,609 for contracted works (inclusive of VAT)	Resources Committee	CLP own tendering process

Delegated Duty	Value	Authoriser	Method/Comment
	Over procurement threshold of £214,904 for services/£5,372,209 for contracted works	Full Trust Board	Procurement process to be run in accordance with the UK Public Procurement Policy
Changes to staffing		As per Recruitment and Changes to Establishment survey	
Signatories for cheques and BACS payment	As per Banking Mandate Value of up to £250,000 for BACS runs. Transactions being paid to have been approved as per purchases and contract levels above	First signatory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance Officer • Finance Manager • Management Accountant (central only) • CFOO Second signatory (different to above) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance Manager • Management Accountant (excluding central) • CFOO (excluding central) • CEO (central only) • School SLT • 	Evidence of approval can be found on the audit trail in Lloyds online
Payroll BACS	Value as per payroll reports	CFOO, or: CEO	As per payroll reports
Internal bank transfers	Transfers up to and including £500,000	First signatory – FM/MA Second signatory – MA/CFOO	
Business charge cards	£5,000 school limit (transaction limit £500)	Headteacher/School SLT to authorise all credit card expenditure. Central team – CFOO to authorise all expense	See credit card form (Appendix G)
Raising sales invoices to collect income	Up to and including £1,000	Finance Officer	Online approval for sales invoices is not set up in Access so approval should be via email
	Up to and including £5,000	Finance Manager	
	£5,000 < value ≤ £25,000	Head teacher	
	Over £25,000	CFOO	

Delegated Duty	Value	Authoriser	Method/Comment
Investments using Insignis portal	Up to and including £250,000	CFOO AND CEO	
	Over £250,000	Resources Committee	
Signatories for ESFA grant claims and ESFA returns	Any	CEO and/or CFOO	As defined by T&C's of the grant
Compensation or Severance Payments (non-contractual)	Up to and including £5,000	CEO/Headteacher	Along with Business Case
	£5,000 < value ≤ £50,000	CEO and then Resources Committee.	Along with Business Case
	Over £50,000	As above plus ESFA Approval	Along with Business Case
Write-off of bad debts	Up to and including £250	Headteacher	
	Between £250 to £1,000	CFOO	
	£1,000 < Debt ≤ £5,000	As above plus Resources Committee	
	Over £5,000	Board of Trustees plus ESFA Approval	ESFA approval where > 1% of GAG
Purchase or sale of any freehold property	Any	ESFA approval required	
Granting or take up of any leasehold or tenancy	Less than 7 years	Resources Committee	
	Over 7 years	ESFA approval required	
Acquisition/disposal of any freehold land and buildings	Any	Resources Committee and ESFA approval	
Disposal of assets with a purchase value of:	Up to and including £5,000	Head teacher	
	£5,000 < value ≤ £10,000	CFOO	
	>£10,000	Resources Committee	
	>£20,000	ESFA approval required	

Appendix B – Competitive Tendering Arrangements

1 Aims

These arrangements ensure that:

- The Partnership's funds are used only in accordance with the law, its articles of association, its funding agreement and the Academy Trust Handbook.
- The Partnership's funds are used in a way that commands broad public support.
- Value for money (economy, efficiency and effectiveness) is achieved.
- Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities as charitable Trustees and company directors.

2 Legislation and guidance

The Academy Trust Handbook states that the Trust is required to have a competitive tendering policy, and ensure that UK public procurement policy and thresholds are observed.

This Trust policy is based on the Academy Trust Handbook and [Department for Education \(DfE\) guidance on procurement](#).

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3 Central Trust considerations

For schools considering any localised procurement of goods or services it is crucial that consideration is given to any centralised contracts that may be in place or any centralised activity that may be ongoing. This is to ensure we are not doubling up on any contracts and also identifying the best possible opportunities for saving money.

The schools must inform the Central Operations team of any potential procurement in the following areas before proceeding to tender:

- Premises
- Health and Safety / Compliance
- ICT hardware, software, broadband and network development
- Staff training – premises and compliance linked
- Any products linked to centralised contracts already in place (e.g. potential MIS add-ons such as parent comms and parent pay systems)

If any uncertainty of impact on the Trust or other schools of any procurement decisions then please contact the Central Operations team for advice.

4 Decarbonisation Plans

Any procurement decisions, especially around premises and building repairs and improvements should be in alignment with any future planned works recommended in the school decarbonisation plan. Advice should be sought from the Central Operations team if there is any uncertainty around procurement meeting the requirements of the plans

5 Procurement Thresholds

The procurement process selected must be in accordance with the table below and documentation held on file:

Estimated Value of Procurement	Procurement process
£0 to £2,500	No quotes need to be obtained however value for money must be considered
£2,500 to £10,000	A minimum of 2 informal quotes with supporting emails to keep on file. Or 2 internet quotes with printouts from websites retained with the order. Liaise with school Finance Manager/central Operations Manager to determine any central considerations in the pipeline
£10,000 to £50,000	A minimum of 3 written quotes. These quotes should be based on a specification provided by the school/Partnership. If capital spend, see Section 10 of this document and Appendix H
£50,000 to regulated limits	CLP own tendering process as defined per tender
Regulated limits (currently £214,904 for services/£5,372,609 for contracted works inclusive of VAT))	Procurement process to be run in accordance with the UK Public Procurement policy and the Find a Tender database

For tenders > £2,500 the quote cover sheet in Appendix C should be used to document the process. The form should be held on record should it be required for review by the Finance Manager or CFOO or for audit purposes.

Any exceptions to the procurement process must be documented and agreed with the CFOO. An email trail must be kept demonstrating approval of any exceptions.

Notable exceptions would be instances where the conditions of a grant specify particular providers or expert services to be used. Or where the use of a particular provider is beneficial in the understanding of the school's operations and adherence to Trust policies.

6 Estimating the value of a procurement/contract

- The estimation of the value of the purchase/contract should be calculated on a whole-of-life basis. This is defined as the value of the goods/services provided, including any extension over the length of the contract period. The thresholds above should be applied cumulatively across all schools' in the Partnership where the contract is applicable
- For any contract length of greater than 4 years or an indefinite life a de minimus timeframe of 4 years should be applied.
- The whole-life cost of the contract includes:
 - The sale price of the goods, works or services
 - Delivery charges
 - Maintenance costs
 - Running costs
 - The cost of removing and disposing of an item or service once we no longer need it

7 Tendering procedure: Purchases of £10,000 to £50,000

When making purchases of £10,000 to £50,000 without a framework agreement, the Partnership will use the process outlined below. All purchases/contracts must be authorised in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation: Financial Authorisation Levels as per Appendix A

- a. **Create a specification** – a specification document will set out what suppliers need to understand what we are looking to buy, including the quality, quantity and delivery date.
- b. **Compare suppliers** – a comparison of different suppliers, including their reputation, will help the

Partnership develop a shortlist of at least 3 suppliers we want to approach for a written quote. Refer to the Trust's list of recommended suppliers on the Intranet to offer potential suppliers proven to be of good quality. This list is not exclusive but do observe the 'do not use' list within.

- c. **Review accreditations** – any professional accreditations held by the supplier should be researched to ensure still valid and no breaches noted
- d. **Assess quotes** – award criteria will be developed to assess suppliers' quotes. Criteria may include:
- How well the supplier meets our specification
 - The whole-life cost of the contract (see criteria above)
 - Whether there will be price increases or decreases over the life of the contract
 - Value for money (Achieving the best possible educational and wider societal outcomes through the economic, efficient and effective use of resources, the avoidance of waste and extravagance, and prudent and economical administration)

Each aspect of the criteria will be scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest score. A record of how the quotes are evaluated will be kept.

The Headteacher will evaluate quotes with support from the school Finance Manager and other relevant staff within the school.

When we contact suppliers, we will send them:

- The specification
 - Deadlines for quotes and when decisions will be made
 - Instructions for how to ask clarification questions about the specification
- e. **Place an order** – when the best value quote is identified and approved as per the Financial Authorisation Levels in Appendix A, we will send the supplier a purchase order, which includes details of the:
- Goods, works or services we are purchasing
 - Price
 - Delivery address
 - Delivery deadline and any other important dates
 - Payment schedule
- e. **Appoint contractor** – a guide and checklist for appointing contractors can be found in Appendix D
- f. **Purchase of assets** – where assets have been procured these additions should be notified to the school administrator of Parago (see Section 11 – Fixed Assets)
- g. **Purchase of consultancy services** – A signed consultancy agreement should be in place as part of the procurement of services. If there is any element of data sharing, then the Data Protection Officer must be contacted to ensure it is compliant with GDPR regulations and whether a Data Protection Impact Assessment is required.

8 Framework Agreements

Where possible, we will use a DfE approved framework agreement to contract suppliers for purchases/contracts > £50,000. These are arrangements that a contracting authority, such as a public sector buying organisation, makes with suppliers. The benefits of frameworks are that they have already been through a competitive tender process and they have favourable terms and conditions. In addition, the framework provider may offer advice and support.

Depending on the framework we choose, we will either pick the best value supplier from a list or run a mini-competition between listed suppliers. In either case, we will follow the DfE guidance on procurement (see section 2 of this policy) to ensure good practice. The reasons for the choice of framework, and for the choice of supplier, will be clearly recorded.

9 Tendering Process: Purchases/CONTRACTS > £50,000

The Partnership will make high-value purchases without a framework only in agreement with the CFOO and with expert support. When this does happen, we will use the process below.

- a. **Create a specification** (see section 7)
- b. **Assess the market** – we will prepare for the tendering process by developing our knowledge of the market. We will find out how many suppliers are available and the best way to advertise our contract to a range of suppliers
- c. **Check the school's position in relation to the UK public procurement thresholds (see section 5)**
- d. **Develop a service level agreement (SLA)** – an SLA sets out the standards of service expected from a supplier. Some suppliers may have their own SLAs, which the Partnership will consider using on a case-by-case basis
- e. **Develop a contract** – a contract will include terms and conditions, a contract management plan and an exit strategy
- f. **Reduce the number of bids** – to reduce the number of bids the Partnership needs to evaluate, we will either use an expression of interest process to gauge interest in the contract or a pre-qualification questionnaire
- g. **Establish how we will assess quotes** – we will set out criteria that will allow us to evaluate which of the suppliers' bids best meets the requirements in our specification, and is the most economically advantageous tender that best combines cost and quality
- h. **Create a timeline for the tender process** – this will include the dates of the clarification period, the deadline for submitting tenders and the date we expect to award the contract
- i. **Prepare an invitation to tender** – this will include:
 - A covering letter with a timeline for the process
 - Instructions on how suppliers can ask clarification questions and submit their tender
 - The specification
 - A pricing schedule
 - Any SLA requirements
 - The contract's terms and conditions
 - Contract management requirements (see 'develop a contract' above)
 - Award criteria, including the scoring system and any weightings
 - If appropriate, an invitation for suppliers to give a practical demonstration of their goods, works or services
- j. **Advertise the contract** – the contract will be advertised where suppliers are likely to look, such as:
 - The Find a Tender Service (FTS) – this is a requirement if the contract is over the UK

procurement threshold

- The government's Contracts Finder service
- Local or national newspapers
- Education publications or websites
- Trade magazines

k. Run the tender process and provide clarifications

- **Review accreditations** – When appointing a catering contractor, we will seek advice from the local Environmental health Officer as to whether there are any outstanding notices or pending enforcement actions against the preferred supplier, before the final appointment is made.
- l. **Evaluate tender responses** – at least 2 people will independently score and evaluate each bid, and then compare notes after completing their evaluations; records of decision making and moderation decisions will be kept. For schools this should be the Headteacher and either/or the CFOO. In the case of Partnership contracts this should be the CFOO with a selected working group from across the Partnership ideally including a Headteacher.

m. Notify suppliers and award the contract

- n. **Appoint contractor** – a guide and checklist for appointing contractors can be found in Appendix D
- o. **Finalise the contract** (and advertise the award, if the contract was advertised in Contracts Finder or the FTS)
- p. **Abandoning the tender process** – on very rare occasions we may need to halt the tender process. Should this occur, we will notify suppliers who are preparing their bids as soon as possible

10 Data Protection

For any new procurement involving personal data that a Data Protection Impact Assessment is completed. If there is any uncertainty about whether an assessment is required, please contact the Partnership Data Protection Officer.

11 Monitoring arrangements

The Resources Committee is responsible for the implementation of this policy. This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Resources Committee annually and when EU procurement thresholds change.

Appendix C – Quote Cover Sheet (Template can be requested from Finance Manager)

CLP - QUOTE COVER SHEET

Refer to **Appendix B - Competitive Tendering Arrangements** within the CLP Finance Regulation Manual for full details before completing this template. For all procurements under £2.5k this document does not need to be completed, but you must ensure compliance as per the procurement process

School Name:	
Project Title:	
Estimated Value of Project:	£
Brief Description of Project:	

Complete for Procurements between £2,500 to £9,999 (A minimum of 2 informal quotes required)				
Quote	Supplier	Date of Quote	Useful Details	Value
1	<i>Required</i>			£
2	<i>Required</i>			£
3	<i>Optional</i>			£
4	<i>Optional</i>			£

Complete for Procurements between £10,000 to £49,999 (A minimum of 3 written quotes based on specification required)				
Quote	Supplier	Date of Quote	Useful Details	Value
1	<i>Required</i>			£
2	<i>Required</i>			£
3	<i>Required</i>			£
4	<i>Optional</i>			£

Successful Quote/Supplier:	
Reason for Success:	<i>e.g. meets specification, price, value for money, availability for delivery within timeframe etc</i>

Sustainability considered in final decision:	<i>Detail how you have considered the sustainability aspect of the services or the appointed party</i>
---	--

Document Prepared by:	
Signed:	
Dated:	

All supporting emails, quotes and correspondence should be kept together alongside a copy of this completed document

Using contractors

(for premises projects – construction and building / maintenance works)

Part One: Introduction

Regardless of the size and scope of the project, the person responsible for appointing the contractor, must ensure that they are suitably qualified and can undertake the works safely. They must ask questions and request evidence to satisfy themselves that the contractor can undertake the works safely and properly, and they must consider the safety of both the school community, visitors, and the contractor themselves.

Relevant legislation and policies:

- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Working at Height Regulations
- Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015
- CLP Health and Safety Policy
- CLP Finance Regulation Manual

HSE guidance:

- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/managing/delivering/key-actions/key-actions-in-managing-contractors-effectively.htm>
- [Using Contractors A brief guide](#)
- [Need building work done? A short guide for clients on the Construction \(Design and Management\) Regulations 2015](#)
- Further [HSE guidance](#)

What is a contractor?

A contractor is anyone you ask to do work for you who is not an employee.

Frequently used terms and abbreviations:

- RAMS – risk assessment and method statement
- O&Ms – operation and maintenance manual

Checklist for using contractors

The checklist on the following pages is a summary of the actions you must take, actions you could take and best practice when appointing a contractor to undertake building or construction work, but does **not** replace the HSE guidance, legislation and expectations within our own policies.

Part Two: Checklist

Project Name:

--

Preparation and obtaining quotes:

- Write a specification outlining what needs to be done. Ensure this is shared with all the contractors who will be quoting for the works. It is only possible to properly compare quotes that are prepared against the same specification.
- Invite contractors to quote for the works. The scope, complexity and value of the project will decide how formal your invite needs to be.
- Use contractors recommended by colleagues or trusted partners.
- Obtain the necessary number of quotes as per the CLP Finance regs. You should use the finance cover sheet to summarise quotes and share with your finance assistant / officer and finance manager. Your Finance Manager can advise further on this process.

Appointing the contractor:

Have you obtained the right number of quotes?	Yes	No
Have you read the section Select a suitable contractor in this guidance and asked some or all of the suggested questions? Remember you need to be confident you are selecting the right contractor and that they can undertake the works safely and properly.	Yes	No
Is the contractor known to you or a colleague or trusted partner? If not, have you considered getting references before appointing them?	Yes	No
Have you reviewed the quotes and identified your preferred one? Do you need to consult with anyone else? Eg, HT, FM or central team.	Yes	No
Have you recorded your decision? This is good practice and can help with future queries. You should keep all the quotes and the decision together either in a paper or electronic file.	Yes	No

Successful contractor:

ContractorName			
Address (optional)			
Telephone No			
Email			
New supplier?	Yes	No	If yes, complete a new supplier form

Questions you should ask during the process of appointment and before work starts:

(Mostly taken from [Using Contractors A brief guide](#))

Have you identified all aspects of the work you want the contractor to do?	Yes	No
Have you included the health and safety implications of the work in the job specification?	Yes	No
Is the work construction or building work? If so, do you know what more you need to do to comply with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007?	Yes	No
Have you made enquiries about the competence of the contractor? If so, have you checked for evidence before they get the job? Is the contractor registered with a trade association or professional body?	Yes	No
Have you assessed the risks of the work and agreed action to control the risks with the contractor? Have you thought about how you will control the risks?	Yes	No
Have you established contact and communication channels? What is you have concerns during the work, do you know who to contact?		
Have you provided the contractor and their employees with information about the risks?	Yes	No
Have you provided the contractor and their employees with your emergency procedures?	Yes	No
Have you provided instructions, information and training for your own employees? Do you know how the work will impact them and do the arrangements you have made remove the likelihood of harm to them and to pupils? Is signage needed? A completed risk assessment will enable you to provide evidence that you and the contractor were aware of risk and had made arrangements in the event that these are ignored and an injury occurs.	Yes	No
Have you considered the impact of the works on members of the public, visitors and other contractors? Is signage needed? Again, a risk assessment can demonstrate this.		
Have you put in place arrangements with the contractor to coordinate your activities during the work?	Yes	No
Have you consulted your employees about the work and how they can raise any concerns?	Yes	No
Have you identified who will be responsible for the work and what you will expect them to do?	Yes	No
Have you identified who will supervise the work and how? Arrangements will vary depending on the type of job and size of contractor.	Yes	No
Have you put in place arrangements to keep a check on how the work is going against what you have agreed with the contractor?	Yes	No
Have you agreed how the job will be reviewed to learn any lessons from it?	Yes	No
Have you asked for RAMS? It is good practice to ask for RAMS. Even for a smaller job, a contractor should be able to describe how they plan to undertake the work and if this is agreed in an email it could be regarded as a method statement. Some contractors will outline the work to be done on their quote, again this could suffice as a method statement. The size of the works and their complexity is very relevant when considering what is needed from a method statement.	Yes	No
Have you asked for evidence of insurance, accreditations and professional qualifications?	Yes	No
Have you asked about warranties and guarantee periods? On larger scale projects you should expect to receive O&Ms – check with the contractor.	Yes	No
Have you checked for Safeguarding compliance?	Yes	No

Contractors are required to meet the Safeguarding requirements set out in our H&S policy which refers to the CLP Single Central Record Guidance for Schools found on the CLP Intranet.		
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After the works are complete

Have you received your O&Ms or completion certificate or report – as required?	Yes	No
Have you reviewed the work and shared feedback, with the contractor but also with colleagues?	Yes	No
Would you recommend this contractor? Sharing experience is invaluable.		

New Supplier Checklist

Supplier Name:

Address:

.....

.....

.....

Telephone Number:.....

VAT Number (if applicable):

Description of goods / services:

Payment method: **BACS**
 (BACS is preferred method)

Bank Account Name:.....

Account Number:..... Sort Code:.....

Payment Term (e.g. 14 days):.....

Email address for remittance (must be populated to pay by BACS):
.....

Is the phone number a landline?	Yes/No
Complete a reverse check on the phone number (type into online search engine)	
Does it link to a connected website?	Yes/No
Check the company website - Does it have a contact page / details?	Yes/No
Does the address and phone number on the website correspond to the above details?	Yes/No
Is there unnecessary advertising on the website?	Yes/No
Does it have a https tag?	Yes/No
For limited companies, check it appears on Companies House website? https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/	
Does the Companies House Registered address correspond to the address detailed above?	Yes/No
Check the VAT number is valid using this web-link – Check a UK VAT number - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	Yes/No
Are the payments terms for invoices / BACS payment less than 7 days?	Yes/No
Have you confirmed the bank account details via a phone call?	Yes/No
Is the supplier a related party (i.e. are the responsible persons of the supplier connected to the Trust in anyway? If yes, please provide details?)	Yes/No

.....

.....

Is the supplier a CLP employee? If yes, provide details and contact the Chief Financial and Operations Officer before setting up the supplier Yes/No

.....

.....

Is the supplier a self-employed individual? If yes, the HMRC IR35 checklist must be completed to determine employment

status ([Check employment status for tax - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)). If the result is 'Employed' then contact the Chief Financial and Operations Officer for advice. Please keep an electronic record of the completed checklist.

.....
.....

If you have answered 'No' to any of the above please provide further explanation as to the validity of this supplier (e.g. personal recommendation, used by another school in the Trust)

.....
.....
.....
.....

Have you researched other suppliers to ensure value for money? (Brief description required)

.....
.....
.....

I have completed all the above checks and am satisfied this is a valid supplier:

..... Sign off by Finance Officer/Finance Assistant
..... Date

I have reviewed this checklist and am satisfied this is a valid supplier:

..... Sign off by Finance Manager
..... Date

(If required) I have reviewed the exceptions above and am satisfied this is a valid supplier:

..... Sign off by Chief Financial and Operations Officer
..... Date

COASTAL LEARNING PARTNERSHIP



CREDIT CARD EXPENSE FORM

school:

Date:

Cardholder:

Supplier	Description of goods	Net	Vat	Gross	Cost Centre/Nominal (to be completed by Finance Officer)
Total					

Signature:

Date:

Headteacher or delegated member of SLT

Name:

Appendix H – Capital Business Case

Estate, IT and Infrastructure Projects – Business Case Approval Process – FOR EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY

Before using this template contact the Chief Financial and Operations Officer (CFOO) to ensure the criteria of 'extraordinary' have been met.

When to Use This Template

Schools should use this template for:

- Items **not** included on the school Capital Development plan or otherwise in the budget as approved by the Full Trust Board
- Spend of more than £10,000 on a single Estate, IT or Infrastructure project where the management account tolerance of -1% between budget and forecast has been breached

The £10,000 total relates to the whole life (i.e. including ongoing costs) value of the project, including its component parts. Example projects (this is not an exhaustive list) include:

- CCTV
- copiers or other devices procured through a lease
- building projects, including those to support school development, indoors and outdoors
- IT developments/replacements

This document should not be used to put forward proposals to use the Trust's Annual School Condition Allocation (SCA) capital funding. SCA is managed through a separate, centrally led process.

Approval Process

Once completed by the school, this document, together with any supporting evidence, should be emailed to the CFOO **at least two weeks prior** to the next Resources Committee meeting. Schools are of course encouraged to discuss the project earlier with the central team (finance and/or operations) if that is helpful, as this will reduce the chance of the form **being** referred back to school. If this deadline is missed, the project will be considered in time for the following meeting. Dates of meetings are published on the homepage of the CLP Intranet.

Prior to the Resources Committee decision, the Central Operations Manager will add to the template to assess the project by reviewing:

- Business cases received from other schools – are there opportunities for joint action.
- The needs of this and other schools as highlighted on Planned Preventative Maintenance/Repair and Maintenance (PPM/RandM) schedules and identified during audits/inspections.
- CLP Asset Management Plan (Premises and IT).

The CFOO will also add to the template to assess the project against the school's budget and financial position. The impact on the Trust's financial position will also be considered, before the template is forwarded to trustees. It will be copied back to schools at the same point.

Schools must not commit to, or proceed with any business case projects until approval has been granted by the Resources Committee. The CFOO will communicate the Resources Committee decision to either approve, reject or defer the project back to the school after the meeting.

Requirements:

1. School Completion

NB: Fields will expand as populated.

School name:	
Key Contact:	
Project Title:	
Project outline: <i>Provide a high level overview of the project and the outcome desired. Attached Design brief.</i>	
Proposed timeframe:	
Benefits to School/Trust: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Include who will benefit – pupil / staff / visitors / other – and explain how.</i> <i>Is the project in the school Improvement Plan?</i> 	
Estimated whole-life cost of project: (provide a breakdown of cost components if required, as a minimum this should show initial cost and subsequent annual running costs e.g. RandM, licences for the life of the project) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>This should be in accordance with the tendering process within the Finance Regulations manual requiring 3 written quotes be provided.</i> <i>Incidental costs must be included, e.g. planning application, structural survey.</i> <i>It is expected that recommended and preferred partners will be used; where this is not proposed, explain why. (Partners' names are shown on the Premises Management pages of the Trust intranet)</i> 	
Funding proposal: how is it intended that the project is funded – this could be a combination. <i>EG:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Surplus revenue reserves</i> <i>External grant, e.g., Talbot Village Trust, lottery, other local or national schemes.</i> 	TO BE COMPLETED BY FINANCE MANAGER

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If a grant application will be made, to what value and does it include match funding?</i> • <i>Operating lease –attach proposal documents.</i> 	
<p>Asset Management Plan/Priority: <i>Is this project on the CLP AMP (which is available via the Trust intranet)?</i> Yes / No; Add priority rating from AMP or explain why not. Contact the CLP Operations Manager if unsure.</p>	
<p>How is Value for Money demonstrated? EG:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Following trust tendering process.</i> • <i>Use of expert knowledge and advice.</i> • <i>What long term savings might be generated?</i> • <i>Any other considerations.</i> 	
<p>Impact/cost of doing nothing: <i>Will ongoing costs be incurred if nothing is done? What will the extent of the impact be on pupil/staff etc. if nothing is done?</i></p>	
<p>Have alternative options/costs and associated impacts been considered? Yes / No <i>e.g. rolling maintenance program over X years costing X per year</i></p>	
<p>Headteacher approval given:</p>	
<p>Date of approval:</p>	
<p>LGB approval given on date: <i>Provide copy of minutes if available.</i></p>	

2. Central Operations Manager

<p>Project proposal checked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLP AMP • Project brief and technical supporting evidence • Opportunities for economies of scale? • Estate and ICT Strategies 	
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<i>Note comments</i>	
Referred back to school? <i>Note comments</i> OR Forwarded to CFOO with Recommendation to RC: <i>Note priority against other projects</i>	

3. Chief Financial and Operations Officer

Checked against school and trust budget: <i>Note comments</i>	
Comments: <i>e.g. on proposed funding and quotes obtained, lease paperwork, grant application...</i>	
Referred back to school? <i>Note comments</i> OR Referred to Resources Committee on date:	

4. Resources Committee

Approved/Rejected/Deferred (e.g. more information required) on date:	
Comments or feedback from RC Chair:	

5. Returned to school on date:

Should the scope of the project change, or a decision be made to use any element of the proposed funding in a different way, then the project must not proceed and this form must be completed and submitted again with revised details

Appendix I – Change of supplier bank details

Change of Supplier Bank Details

Ensure when calling the supplier to verify details, that the phone number has been independently verified by checking their website or looking at a previous invoice

Supplier Name.....

Account Reference on Access.....

Previous Bank details:

Account Name.....

Sort Code..... Account number.....

Revised Bank details:

Account Name.....

Sort Code..... Account number.....

Bank details verified by phone call (Finance Officer to sign to confirm):

Signed.....

Name.....

Date.....

Pass the form to the school Finance Manager along with a copy of the invoice/other documentation noting the changed bank details.

Revised bank account details checked to supporting documentation and changes processed on Access (Finance Manager/Management Accountant to sign):

Signed.....

Name.....

Date:.....

A copy of the signed form should be kept in the folder:
CLP Central/Finance/Suppliers/Change of bank details