



**UNITY
FEDERATION**

Finance Policy Handbook

Drafted	Ratified by Governing Board	Frequency, timing and level of review	Next review due
April 2025		Annually Autumn term Resources Committee	

	<i>Print Name</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
Strategic Director	John Cooper		
On behalf of Governing Board	Sue Duffy		

Circulation	Date
Circulated to Staff	
Made available on school website	

Finance Policy Handbook

Contents

Section:

- A. Introduction
- B. Responsibilities
- C. Best Value
- D. Planning and Budgeting process
- E. Financial Monitoring and Reporting
- F. Income
- G. Purchasing
- H. Income, Cash and Banking Procedures
- I. Credit Card
- J. Budget and Expenditure Reconciliation
- K. Inventory and Security of Assets
- L. Disposal of Assets
- M. Insurance Cover
- N. Payroll Checks
- O. Computer Security
- P. Charging and Remissions
- Q. Lettings of the Premises
- R. Crisis Support

Glossary of terms

Appendices:

- 1. Terms of Reference for Resources Committee
- 2. List of Service Level Agreements
- 3. Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) return
- 4. List of people authorised to sign cheques for the school
- 5. Form to request write-off of debt
- 6. List of registered holders of the school credit card
- 7. Checklist for third party providers and users of the premises
- 8. Scale of charges for letting of the premises
- 9. Lettings application form
- 10. Information for users of the premises
- 11. (a) to (c) Model letters for using in communication with potential users of the premises

A. Introduction

This Handbook sets out the responsibilities of the Governing Board, Resources Committee and officers of the school for all financial matters. It defines the discretion that the Strategic Director may exercise under delegated powers without further reference to the Governors and sets out working practices and lines of accountability for staff working on behalf of the Strategic Director and Governors. It includes the policy of the Governing Board in relation to:

- Best Value
- Credit card
- Disposal of Assets
- Charging & Remissions
- Lettings

Unless otherwise specifically stated in the document, all officers of the school are expected to abide by any relevant regulations that Bradford Council deems to be in force at the time and to follow guidelines laid down by that board including but not limited to complying with:

All relevant statutory provisions including the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, competition law and Public Services Acts (eg Social Value, Care Act 2014)

The Council's Financial Regulations for Maintained Schools

The Scheme of Financing and

The Schools Contract Standing Orders

This Handbook will be reviewed annually by the Resources Committee, at its first meeting of each Spring Term.

B. Responsibilities

Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- ensuring that the school plans and conducts its financial affairs in a manner that ensures the school remains solvent;
- ensuring that all funding is used only for the purposes for which it has been allocated;
- setting the school's annual budget and approving its staffing structure, taking account of the recommendations of the Resources Committee; and approving amendments to the budget or staffing structure;
- ensuring that resources are deployed to promote the vision and values of the school and meet the objectives set out in the school's development plans;
- ensuring that credit card expenditure incurred by the School is clearly linked to the business of the School and the records kept are sufficient to satisfy audit requirements;
- securing the best possible outcome for all pupils in the most efficient and effective way, at a reasonable cost;
- providing all information that the LA may reasonably require to be satisfied that the Governing Board is able to fulfil its financial obligations; and
- ensuring individuals and organisations provide quality/suitable service to parents and pupils.

- Ensuring that best quality and value is provided by school across the following areas:
 - staffing
 - use of premises
 - use of resources
 - quality of teaching
 - quality of learning
 - purchasing
 - pupils' welfare
 - health and safety

The Governing Board is required to ensure that it has sufficient financial skills from within its membership to guarantee that its responsibility for monitoring of the school's financial security can be carried out adequately. In this respect, the Governing Board will always consider its financial monitoring capability when co-opting new governors. Any new members of the Resources Committee are expected to undergo financial training by the Governor Service.

Resources Committee

The Governing Board has delegated financial powers to the Resources Committee as set out in the Terms of Reference for that Committee [Appendix 1]. In addition to the responsibilities set out in that document, the Committee is also responsible for:

- recommending the draft opening budget and staffing structure to the Governing Board in late April to early May each year;
- monitoring income and expenditure throughout the year and advising the Governing Board of any significant departures from the approved budget;
- making comparisons with other/similar schools using data provided by the LA and the Government, e.g. financial benchmarking data;
- challenging proposals, examining them for effectiveness, efficiency, and cost;
- ensuring that the school requires suppliers to compete on grounds of cost, and quality/suitability of services/products/backup (The list of current contracts and Service Level Agreements is attached at *Appendix 2*);
- ensuring the allocation and use of teaching areas, support areas and communal areas, to provide the best environment for teaching & learning, for support services, and for communal and community access to central resources;
- ensuring that use of the school premises by external bodies balances the operational needs of the school, the needs of the community and potential revenue; and
- approving long-term lettings of school premises

The Chair of the Resources Committee is responsible for reporting on the state of the school's accounts compared to budget to the Full Governing Board on at least a termly basis

Strategic Director

The Governing Board has delegated day to day control of the budget under the Education Reform Act of 1988 s36 (5) (b) to the Strategic Director, supported by the Bursar and Business Manager. The Strategic Director is responsible for:

- strategic and operational management of the school's finances in line with the decisions of the Governing Board and the priorities set out in the School Development Plans;
- effective management of internal control systems and other financial issues within the law and the policies of the LA and the Governing Board (supported by the Bursar and Business Manager);
- authorising the ordering of goods, other expenditure and the certification of invoices for payment, and delegating such authority to other school officers;
- deploying staff to provide best value in terms of quality of teaching, quality of learning, adult-pupil ratio, and curriculum management;
- ensuring proper management of the school credit cards;
- authorisation of remission of charges for individual families; and
- management of short-term lettings.

The Strategic Director may delegate all or part of this responsibility to other members of staff, whilst still retaining overall responsibility for the lettings process.

The Strategic Director and Chair of the Resources Committee will work together in all matters of finance

Head's of School

Each Head of School will hold budget holder responsibilities as delegated by the Strategic Director by virtue of paragraph 6 above. In addition, they may sub-delegate all or part of their budget holder responsibilities to other members of staff.

Bursar

The Bursar is the Principal Finance Officer (PFO) of each school. The Bursar is responsible for:

- advising the Governing Board, Resources Committee and Strategic Director on financial matters;
- advising the school's Administration team on all finance aspects of their work;

- ensuring that the school's adhere to agreed financial procedures;
- finalising the accounts at the end of the financial year and submitting them to the LA;
- agreeing the school's final year-end position with the LA and Business Manager; and
- informing the staff of any changes in the financial procedures.

C. Best Value

All school employees shall have regard to the duty of Best Value under the Local Government Act 1999. Governors will apply the four principles of best value:

- **Challenge** - Is the school's performance high enough? Why and how is a service provided? Do we still need it? Can it be delivered differently? What do parents want?
- **Compare** - How does the school's pupil performance and financial performance compare with all schools? How does it compare with LA schools? How does it compare with similar schools?
- **Consult** - How does the school seek the views of stakeholders about the services the school provides?
- **Compete** - How does the school secure efficient and effective services? Are services of appropriate quality, economic?

In addition to the purely financial aspects of Best Value which are incorporated elsewhere in this Handbook, Governors and school leaders will:

- review the quality of curriculum provision and quality of teaching, to provide parents and pupils with:
 - a curriculum which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the needs of pupils;
 - teaching which builds on previous learning and has high expectations of children's achievement;
 - Innovative, broad curriculum to broaden experience;
 - remote learning;
- review the quality of children's learning, by cohort, class and group, to provide teaching which enables children to achieve nationally expected progress, e.g. setting of annual pupil achievement targets with the expectation of 2 national curriculum levels between Years 2 and 6;
- review the quality of the school's environments and the school's ethos, in order to provide a supportive environment conducive to learning and recreation; and
- review the quality of the school's environment and equipment, carrying out risk assessments where appropriate, in order to provide a safe working environment for pupils, staff and visitors.

Monitoring of best value

Best value will be monitored through:

1. In-house monitoring by the Strategic Director and curriculum managers, e.g. classroom practice, work sampling – reviewed in termly meetings with Link Governors for Quality of Education;
2. termly target setting meetings between the Strategic Director and curriculum managers - reviewed in termly meetings with Link Governors for Quality of Education;
3. annual performance plan meeting to set targets for improving pupil achievement;
4. annual Appraisal – reviewed at annual Pay Committee meeting;
5. annual Budget Planning – Budget planned with and recommended by Resources Committee, and approved by Governing Board annually;
6. the Strategic Director’s monthly nominal financial review;
7. annual completion of the LA’s Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) – reviewed by the Resources Committee and approved by the Governing Board by 31 March each year (A copy of the latest SFVS return for each school is attached at *Appendix 3*);
8. visits by the Primary Achievement Officer from Bradford, reported to Governors;
9. analysis of school pupil performance data, e.g. SATs results, standardised test results, against all schools, LA schools, similar schools – reviewed by Link Governors for Quality of Education;
10. termly Link Governor meetings, reported to the Governing Board;
11. analysis of LA pupil performance data – reviewed by Link Governors for Quality of Education;
12. analysis of LA financial data against benchmark data for all schools, LA similar schools – reviewed annually by governors and reported to Resources Committee;
13. analysis of DfE pupil performance data, e.g. *Analyse School Performance (ASP)* – reviewed by Link Governors for Quality of Education;
14. Ofsted Inspection reports – reviewed by FGB;
15. Governors’ committee meetings; and
16. full Governing Board meetings.

D. Planning and Budgeting Process

The school’s draft budget for each financial year is prepared in March/April.

- a. The Bursar collates the draft budget based on:
 - the priorities identified in the School Development Plan agreed by the Governing Board (GB);
 - consultation with the Strategic Director, Head of School and Business Manager;
 - experience of historical costs;
 - knowledge of future requirements;
 - a five-year analysis of income and expenditure at the school; and

- financial benchmarking data available on the DfE website and provided by the Local Authority.
- b. The Strategic Director presents the draft budget to the Resources Committee, which will request amendments and/or recommend that the draft budget be approved by the Governing Board.
- c. **The budget can only be approved by the Governing Board.**
- d. The approved budget must be submitted by each school to the Local Authority, usually by 15 May each year.
- e. The Governing Board retains responsibility for ensuring that any variations in expenditure from budgeted levels are explained and understood.
- f. The Resources Committee benchmarks out-turn data each year against that of similar schools. This data is provided by the LA and DfE.
- g. The Governing Board will be consulted in relation to possible major alterations to the budget plan.
- h. Minor changes within and across budget areas may be implemented at the discretion of the Strategic Director in consultation with the Resources Committee.
- i. In emergency situations which may have implications for the overall financial wellbeing of the school the Chair of Governors will be consulted and can act accordingly on behalf of the Governing Board. In the absence of the Chair of the Governing Board, the Chair of the Resources Committee will be consulted. Any actions of this nature that are taken will be reported to the next full meeting of the Governing Board.

E. Financial monitoring and reporting

The Resources Committee meets at least every quarter to review the school's financial position. The Bursar is responsible for producing financial reports and submitting them to the Resources Committee quarterly.

On approval by the Committee, these reports (known as the Quarterly Budget Monitors) are signed by the Head's of each school and submitted to the LA.

Bank Account Returns must be submitted to LA on a quarterly basis. The reports must be signed by the Bursar and the Head's of each school.

F. Income

The principal source of the school's income is the funds delegated to it by the Local Authority, known as the "Formula Allocation". It is paid directly into Lloyds Bank (LB) Budget account.

Other income is received from:

Public sources – examples include:

SEND Funding	Monthly advances from LA
Educational Visits	Cash/Cheques/Parentpay/Card from parents/carers
Sale of Assets	Cash/Cheque/BACS/Card from purchaser
Income from Lettings	BACS/Cheque from organisation involved
Insurance claim payments	BACS by post from insurers
Interest (Budget account)	Credited directly to Budget account by the bank
<i>Non-public sources - examples include</i>	
Charity collections	Cash from parents/carers/staff/Parentpay/Card
Photograph commission	Cheque from photographer
Staff events	Cash/Card from staff
Other donations	Cash/Cheque/Card from donor
Interest (School Fund Account)	Credited directly to School Fund account by bank
Nursery hours/additional Lunch (Sandy Lane)	Payments are made by parents/carer through Parentpay/BACS
Breakfast Club and After School Clubs	Payments are made by parents/carers through the booking system using Ipal/Parentpay

As far as practically possible, the school prefers to receive payments direct through the bank account and Parentpay. It also has the facility to accept payments in cash or by cheque made payable to the School.

The Strategic Director shall ensure that robust and appropriate systems are in place, and used, to record all income.

Dinner Money Procedures

The school's preferred method of payment for school meals is through ParentPay.

G. Purchasing

The Strategic Director may make purchases up to the limit set out in the Terms of Reference of the Resources Committee. [Appendix 1]

The Strategic Director may delegate authority to spend up to this limit to members of staff ("budget holders"), so long as spending remains within budgeted levels and LA regulations on purchasing procedures, the receipt of goods and payment authorisation are followed.

Budget holders must use financial resources solely for the purpose they were identified in the budget and subject to the LA regulations on purchasing procedures ensuring 'Best Value'.

Governors and school managers will develop procedures for assessing need, and obtaining goods and services which provide "best value" in terms of suitability, efficiency, time, and cost. Measures already in place include:

- competitive tendering procedures (see paragraphs below);
- procedures for accepting “best value” quotes, which are not necessarily the cheapest (e.g. suitability for purpose and quality of workmanship); and
- procedures which minimise office time by the purchase of goods or services under £1,000 direct from known, reliable suppliers (e.g. stationery, small equipment).

For any item of expenditure up to £10,000 in value budget holders must seek three separate quotations by using price lists, catalogues and verbal quotations.

For expenditure over £10,000 and up to £75,000 four written quotations will be requested and obtained. In addition, the Federation must prepare a supporting business case to justify the proposed spend. The most commercially favourable quotation will always be used unless the Resources Committee authorises otherwise in writing. For this purpose, “In writing” includes the minutes of meetings of the Resources Committee or Governing Board.

For contract values of £75,000 or more, contractors must be appointed by one of the procedures under Contract Standing Order 8.

For any expenditure over £75,000 tendering procedures will apply. The Strategic Director must nominate a “responsible person” to undertake the tendering procedure. All tendering initiated by the school must comply with the LA financial regulations. The LA must be kept informed. There are 4 stages to competitive tendering:

i. **Prepare a specification** - this will include:

- tasks required, their volume and frequency
- the level of input or time
- the outputs required
- on-site facilities and access to them
- standards of performance/work expected
- length of contract
- any particular details.

The responsible person must:

- consider at the outset any equality and diversity implications that may require an equality impact assessment to be undertaken
- consider at the outset any TUPE implications.
- Consider at the outset any data protection, information security or data processing implications that may require additional schedules or terms and conditions and need the School’s SIRO and Data Protection Officer to be notified.
- Prepare and document an estimate of the whole life cycle costs including where appropriate any on going costs and/or disposal costs and ensure that the costs is within the approved current and future budget provision for both capital and revenue expenditure.
- compile a list of at least three four prospective suppliers who are to be invited to tender;

- draw up the specification including precisely what is to be tendered for, in what format and by what date the reply must be returned; and
- send a copy of the specification to each prospective supplier at the same time.

ii. Invite tenders - At least 4 tenders will be sought. They may be sought through adverts in press or by direct approaches to providers. Tenders will be required to show:

- cost;
- standard of service;
- qualifications of staff (where relevant); and
- management arrangements (where appropriate).

The responsible person will:

- deal with any enquiries relating to the tender;
- ensure that during the course of any such enquiry no comments are made that could be construed as helping one supplier more than another; and
- hold all replies unopened until the closing date for replies.

A period of 4-6 weeks will usually be adequate for the process of receiving tenders.

iii. Evaluate the tenders

- Evaluation of tenders must conform with LA rules.
- More than one person must be involved in the process.
- A member of the Resources Committee must also be present at the opening of tenders over £75,000.
- Expert advice from the LA will be called upon if it is deemed necessary by the Resources Committee.
- A copy of the tender specification, all replies and a document making a case for choosing one supplier over another will be kept and minutes of the discussions will be made available to the full Governing Board as appropriate.

iv. Accept/reject tenders

- The level at which the decision to award a contract will be taken will depend on the cost, in accordance with the levels of delegated authority set out in the Terms of Reference of the Resources Committee. [*Appendix 1*]
- All involved in the tendering process must be informed, in writing, of the school's decision.
- When a contract is awarded an order must be raised detailing monitoring arrangements, mid-term variations and payment details.

- All orders for the supply of goods and services must be submitted on an official school order form. Verbal orders may only be used in a case of extreme emergency. In instances where a verbal order is used, the official order form must be completed as confirmation (and for audit purposes) at the earliest possible time.

v. Contract Extensions, Variations or Novation

- The responsible person can extend a contract by any value subject to the extension being permitted within the scope and terms of the original procurement and contract and before the expiry date.
- An options appraisal must be undertaken to determine if it represents best value for money to extend the contract and any approval required must be sought in a timely manner.
- The responsible person must make every effort to negotiate improved terms with regard to the cost and quality of the goods and services.
- No extension shall be made until funding has been secured in accordance with the Financial Regulations for Maintained Schools (paragraph 9) or any other similar requirement.
- All contract variations must be carried out within the scope of the original contract and must not materially affect or change the contract.
- A new procurement will be required if the proposed variation has a material change where one or more of the following are not met:
 - The variation introduces new conditions, which had they been part of the original procurement procedure would have allowed other candidates to be selected to bid or the contract to be awarded to another tenderer.
 - The variation changes the economic balance in favour of the contractor.
 - The variation extends the scope of the contract considerably.
- In the event that a Supplier ceases to provide the work, goods or services whether as a result of insolvency, company restructuring, company purchase, termination of the contract or any other reason then the responsible person must be consulted before novating or assigning the contract to a new Supplier. The new Supplier must meet the requirements of the original tender.

vi. Written Contracts

- The responsible person must ensure every contact is in writing
- Every contract shall be signed by two Authorised Officers, other than when the basis of the contract is only an order recorded on an official order form when one signature will suffice.

vii. Professional Services, Consultants and Intermediary Employment

- In line with HMRC IR35 and CIS (Construction Industry Scheme), rules the responsible person must identify the employment status of workers providing works or services in instances including the following:
 - Consultancy work
 - Self-employed contactors
 - The engagement of a worker through a limited company or other body
 - The use of a Personal Services Company
 - The engagement of a CIS registered contractor

viii. Contract Conditions

- Schools are encouraged to use the Council's standard terms and conditions templates for contracts. In doing so, Schools must always amend these templates so that contracts are in the School's name.
- The above shall not apply to: -
The works, goods, services, materials, matters or things to be carried out or supplied
The price to be paid and/or the amounts and frequency or the method of calculation of contract payments with a statement of discounts or other deductions
The time(s) within which the contract is to be performed

ix. Payment for Work on Account

- Payment for goods, works and services should not be made in advance of delivery other than in low contract value and low risk situations.

A register of the pecuniary interests of all staff and all governors, will be kept and renewed each September. It is the responsibility of the Governing Board to ensure that no abuse of purchasing power takes place.

The Strategic Director, Bursar and Business Managers are responsible for ensuring that LA rules regarding the division of duties between separate members of staff for the receipt of goods and authorisation of invoices are followed.

Placing an order

1. Budget holders will prepare orders which must be approved and signed by the Head's of each School before any expenditure is committed
2. The order must then be emailed to the supplier, entered on the FMS system and filed in the Outstanding Orders file in the school office.

Deliveries

1. The Office Administrator deals with deliveries. As goods are delivered (or services are provided), the goods must be checked off against the order (or correct performance of the service confirmed). Ensure checking of deliveries and receiving invoices are done by different staff members.
2. On receipt, goods are checked off against the delivery note which is attached to the order and a stamp is printed on front of the order which is completed with the date of delivery and signed by Office Administrator. Any problems or deficiencies are noted on the delivery note.
3. In the absence of a delivery note, the order must be signed and dated. The delivery note must be attached to the order in the file.

Goods on Approval

1. Goods on approval, or inspection copies, can arrive completely unsolicited; as a result of a phone call; or as a result of a representative's visit with a member of staff.

2. Goods on approval usually arrive with an invoice and the supplier's instructions about how to return the goods if not accepted. The goods are kept in the office and the budget holder is informed of their arrival.
3. The budget holder must, together with other interested parties if appropriate, inspect the goods and decide whether to accept them or not. If the goods are accepted, an order is raised on the FMS SIMS system. Any additional orders based on the goods that have been accepted must be placed in the normal way. If the suppliers have their own method for placing orders then their paperwork must be attached to the school's order.
4. If the goods are not accepted then the Budget holder should inform the Office Administrator so they can arrange for the goods to be sent back to the supplier following the supplier's instructions for returning goods. If some goods are accepted and some rejected then an order must be raised as above for the goods that have been accepted and sent with the goods that are being returned.

Invoices

On arrival each invoice must be checked against the order file and confirmed as correct: that is, that the invoice is for the correct amount and that the goods (or service) have been received. The stamp on the front of the order is dated and signed by the office staff when the invoice is received. The invoice is then entered onto the FMS SIMS system.

Invoice Payments

Invoice payments are produced fortnightly on the FMS SIMS system and cheques/BACS/faster payments are used by the Business Manager. Cheques are then passed to two of the authorised signatories to be authorised and signed accordingly. For BACS/faster payments an online banking system is used for authorisation by two signatories and paper copies are signed off.

H. Income, Cash and Banking Procedures

Each school will use two bank accounts:

- a Current Account; and
- a School Fund account.

Both accounts are currently held at Lloyds Bank, as agreed by the Resources Committee.

Cheque books are stored in the safe, to which only the office staff have access.

The following officeholders are authorised to sign cheques:

- Strategic Director
- Head of School
- Deputy Headteacher
- Business Manager

The names of the current holders of these posts are shown at *Appendix 4*.

All cheques must be signed by two of these nominated people.

1. The Business Manager must prepare a bank reconciliation statement each month and send to the local authority within set timetables. The reconciliation must be checked by the Bursar and Head's of each school, who should sign and date all documentation as evidence of the necessary checks having been made.
2. **At no time must the school enabling account become overdrawn and at no time must blank cheques be made available to authorised signatories.** A system is in place for ensuring that online payment and cheques are not prepared by either of the people who have signed them.
3. The Strategic Director, Bursar and Business Manager are responsible for ensuring that local authority rules regarding the division of duties between separate members of staff for the preparation and signing of online payments and cheques are followed.

Petty Cash

1. A Petty Cash transaction limit will be set by the Governing Board as part of the annual procedure for reviewing this policy document. For the next 12 months this is set at £30. This can be paid by cash or faster payment. In exceptional circumstances this may be exceeded, up to a limit of £75, if agreed by the Strategic Director beforehand.
2. There is one petty cash (PC) float which is administered by the Business Managers and locked in a cash box which is in turn locked in the office safe. Separate records are kept within FMS so each venture accounts for its own petty cash expenditure.
3. The size of the petty cash float is limited to £500.00. It is replenished as needed from the bank account. Replenishments are entered onto the FMS system.
4. All cash spent is accounted for in the enabling account.
5. Requests for petty cash are made on Petty Cash Claim Forms, which must have a receipt attached to them.
6. The Business Managers issue the amount of cash on the Petty Cash Claim Form in an envelope and enters the details of the transaction onto the FMS system. The person who made the request must sign the Petty Cash Claim Form to confirm receipt of the cash.
7. Any amount over £30 is paid by cheque/faster payment.
8. The petty cash is reconciled when the bank account returns are done.
9. Cash in hand is checked weekly as claims are paid out and when reimbursements are processed. Any discrepancies are investigated and resolved immediately.

Non-invoice cheque payments

For amounts that exceed the Petty Cash limit, the same procedure is followed as for petty cash payments except that the Business Managers raises a cheque /faster payment from the FMS system from the Current account. The details of the transaction are entered onto the FMS system as a manual journal.

Income

All income received is to be banked promptly in its entirety with a limit of £500 to be kept in the safe. (The school is insured to keep up to £1,000 total in cash and/or cheques, in the safe.)

Appropriate invoices must be raised and a record of any outstanding debt must be kept and debtors must be pursued regularly and consistently.

Write-offs and refunds

1. If a debt has been outstanding for six months or more and recovery is deemed to be impossible or no longer cost effective, a request may be made to write off that debt. If the debt is less than £500, requests for write-off must be submitted to the Governing Board for approval.
2. Debts over the value of £500 may only be written off by Bradford Council's Chief Financial Officer: advice should be sought from Bradford Council's School Funding Team on the procedure for submitting such a request.

All requests for write-off and approval of such requests must be documented using the form at Appendix 5.

Cash Handling

1. Cash is defined as any coins, notes or cheques which the school receives as income.
2. The school Administrator counts the cash and records the amount of cash received and its purpose in the receipts column of the relevant spreadsheet and keeps the cash in a safe within the school until it is taken to the bank. A second counting of cash is also undertaken by a member of office staff.
3. The school's normal levels of cash are such that it is usually only necessary to have one banking per month. This can fluctuate a little due to timings and the events that take place during the year.
4. When requested, receipts are issued by the Business Manager for cash payments made to the school, using the appropriate duplicate receipt books held in the school administration office.
5. Insurance covers each school for up to £1,000 in notes, coins & cheques locked in a safe outside of school hours. It also covers £250 in cash which is not in the safe but in a different lockable receptacle.

Receipts of parent contributions to educational visits

The Office Administrator collects the money in the office and keeps it in the safe. The money is paid into the enabling account and Bacs are drawn for transport and/or venue expenses. A separate record is kept detailing all visits, their costs and profit and loss details etc. Refunds will not be given if a child is unable to attend.

I. Credit Card

1. The school credit card is used:
 - a. to purchase school resources on the internet;
 - b. to purchase breakfast club food; or
 - c. when it is inconvenient for cash or an invoice to be issued.

Issue of Credit Cards

1. Credit cards may only be issued to individuals with the authorisation of the Resources Committee.
2. A register of cardholders must be maintained as an appendix to this Handbook. [Appendix 6]
3. The limits set for credit card use must not exceed the individual limit of £1,000 or the overall financial delegation of the cardholder as set out in the Schedule of Delegation. Any variations require Governors approval.
4. Prior to the card being issued the recipient must be given a copy of this Handbook.

Use of Credit Cards

1. The credit card may only be used for purchase of goods for school use.
2. The credit card is not used for any personal expenditure under any circumstances.
3. All expenditure charged to the credit card must be supported by an invoice or receipt to confirm that the expenses are properly incurred for school business.
4. The credit card statement must be certified by the cardholder as evidence of the validity of expenditure.
5. All purchases must be accounted for within a reasonable timely manner (usually 3 weeks of receiving a credit card statement).
6. Cash advances are not permitted.
7. Any benefits of the credit card such as a membership awards programme are only to be used for the benefit of the school. They must not be redeemed for personal use.
8. The cardholder should never allow another person to use the card.
9. The cardholder must protect the PIN (Personal Identification Number) of the card.
10. The cardholder must only purchase within the credit limit applicable to the card.
11. The cardholder must notify the credit card company and the school immediately if the card is lost or stolen.
12. The cardholder must return the credit card to school upon ceasing employment there or any time requested by the Governors.
13. The total monthly credit card spend is taken directly by direct debit from the school budget account. All receipts must be put through the FMS financial system, coded appropriately by the Business Manager.

The Bursar and Deputy Headteacher check the receipts and credit statement on a monthly basis and ensures any relevant back up is attached to each payment.

J. Budget and Expenditure Reconciliation

The school will ensure that the budget data held on FMS is reconciled each month. This is the responsibility of the Heads of school, supported by the Bursar and Business Manager. The Business Manager is required to investigate any discrepancies with the School Funding Team at the local authority.

K. Inventory and Security of Assets

The school is required to maintain an inventory which contains details of significant equipment and capital items. The register should be kept up-to-date and include the information as detailed in Section 4.5.3 of the Guide to Financial Procedures in Schools with a physical check to be undertaken annually. The inventory will be open to inspection by the Resources Committee on request. All school property will have an inventory code.

Should the School loan any assets to another school in the partnership a record of this must be kept with a timescale of how long the item will be on loan. The asset loan will be signed for and agreed by the Strategic Director.

L. Disposal of assets

The schools will undertake regular reviews to ensure that stocks, equipment and other assets are being properly managed and used to their full potential. The disposal of surplus or scrap items should be considered as part of this process for the purposes of:

- income generation;
- reduction in management and maintenance costs; or
- more effective use of space.

Proper management of disposals is essential to minimise the risk of:

- waste of public or charitable funds;
- fraud;
- liabilities arising from defective items; and
- breaches of obligations under Waste Disposal or Health & Safety legislation.

Proposals for disposal of assets valued at more than £500 must be supported by a business case documenting the reason for the disposal, the costs and benefits, and the proposed method of disposal.

Before disposing of any asset, the school will establish who owns the asset and whether there are any restrictions on its disposal. This is particularly important where the asset has been purchased from a grant or other organisation. The terms and conditions of any grant funding should be checked for details.

Disposal of assets usually takes place in one of two ways:

- sale or donation; or
- scrapping.

Before disposing of any item, including waste material, the school must consider the potential for recovering valuable components or materials including, for example, potential spare parts.

Within each school:

- the disposal of assets with a disposal value expected to be in excess of £500 must not be made without the prior approval of the Heads of school;

- the disposal of assets with an expected disposal value between £50 and £500 may be made at the discretion of the Business Managers, but the Heads of school must be informed prior to the disposal; and
- the disposal of assets with a value below £50 may be made at the discretion of the administration team, who need not inform the Heads of school

Sale of Assets:

In this context “sale” includes the donation or free transfer of assets to other organisations. Ways of selling items include:

- offering the item back to the original suppliers;
- seeking bids from interested parties (more than one if possible); or
- advertising.

The schools will aim to maximise the return from the sale of assets. As part of this maximisation, the cost of arranging the sale should be appropriate to the value of the assets being sold.

All goods sold must be recorded in the asset log.

Invoicing:

The school must issue an invoice in respect of a disposal of assets in accordance with the normal school procedures, whether or not payment is made “on the spot”. Any VAT on the sale must be properly accounted for.

The proceeds and/or costs of disposals are accounted for in the enabling account as “other” income.

Scrapping

In some circumstances it may be desirable to scrap defective goods or goods that have come to the end of their useful life. Even for goods that are not defective, scrapping may be more cost effective than trying to sell the goods.

Goods for scrapping should either be destroyed in-house, or by a third party employed to do so. All reasonable care should be taken in making safe any hazardous features prior to disposal.

It is essential that the disposal of scrap and/or waste material is undertaken in accordance with Health & Safety and Waste Disposal legislation. This may mean employing a specialist contractor. Further details are available from the administration office.

All scrapped goods must be recorded in the asset log, with justification of the decision to scrap them.

M. Insurance Cover

The schools will take out “All Risks” insurance cover. This will include provision for school equipment that has been taken home for school use provided it has been signed for, and liability cover.

In addition, the schools will take out supply teacher insurance for all members of the teaching staff. In the event of staff absence the schools will endeavour to seek the services of supply staff with the cost to be met from the supply insurance scheme.

The Heads of school has nominated the Bursar and Business Manager to liaise annually with the school's insurers to review all relevant arrangements and cover.

The Governing Board must approve the level of insurance cover in force and document its approval, for example by means of the minutes of its decisions.

The schools are not obliged to insure the personal possessions of staff and is not responsible for the possessions of children whilst they are at school. Any claims for negligence will be directed towards the LA.

N. Payroll Checks

The staffing structure must be approved annually by the Governing Board, as must any subsequent amendments. It will be advised in this by the Resources Committee.

The Heads of school, Bursar and Business Manager are responsible for ensuring that all relevant payroll related data is maintained and that no payments to staff are made outside the payroll system. The Bursar and Business Manager will check the salary payments from the tabulations and take action on discrepancies as appropriate.

O. Computer Security

Access to finance IT systems is limited to the Strategic Director, Heads of school, Bursar, Business Managers and administrative staff.

All systems will be backed up on a daily basis by the provider of the school's ICT support service (LA Comms).

All computer equipment must have an individual asset number that is recorded, and this number must be attached to each computer. A physical check is made on an annual basis.

The Strategic Director/Heads of school is responsible for ensuring that a firewall for internet security is in place at all times.

P. Charging and remissions policy

This section sets out:

- the charges that schools will make for activities that it organises and other costs;
- the circumstances under which these charges may be set aside (eg in cases of hardship); and
- the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested from parents.

The Governing Board has discretion to charge for some activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours provided that:

- no charge is made for education provided during school hours; and
- parents on low incomes and in receipt of relevant benefits are informed of the support available to them.

The Governing Board is committed to adhering to legal requirements regarding charging for school activities, and meeting all statutory guidance provided by the Department for Education (DfE)¹.

¹ Education Act 1996; The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007; DfE (2014) 'Charging for

Participation in any optional activity is a matter of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Therefore, parental agreement is a pre-requisite for the provision of the optional extra.

Voluntary contributions

The schools may ask for voluntary contributions towards the cost of activities or educational visits. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the school will make this clear to parents at the outset. It will also make it clear that there is no obligation for parents to contribute, and notify parents where assistance is available.

In line with the “No-one left behind” element of the Governing Board’s vision, no child will be excluded from an activity on the grounds that their parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal opportunity to take part in the activity.

If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity, and the school cannot fund it via another source, the activity will be cancelled. **In this case parents who have already paid will be reimbursed.**

If a child is unable to take part in a school activity, for which voluntary contributions have been requested, due to proven sickness or difficult circumstances, then a refund will be considered at the discretion of the Heads of School.

Residential Trips

The schools aim to offer Key Stage 2 children residential visits to places where they can experience a range of educational activities that cannot be offered in school.

The cost of the visit is calculated by the Visit Organiser (VO)/ school administrator (generally the teacher, who decides whether a voluntary contribution should be requested from parents.

The anticipated cost of any visit is divided equally among the children. The board and lodging cost is separated from the additional activities, entrance fees, insurance and transport, and charges will not exceed actual cost of providing board & lodging for that pupil. Children registered for Pupil Premium funding may be subsidised through Pupil Premium funding.

The Visit Organiser informs parents by letter of any money required to cover the cost of the visit. Arrangements can be made for parents to pay in instalments to spread the cost. Where the school is able to reclaim VAT on elements of the costs of the visit, the benefit will be passed on to parents.

Non-residential trips

A proportion of the cost of non-residential visits will be requested as a voluntary contribution. The cost will cover travel, insurance, employment of non-teaching staff and entrance fees. Refunds for absence will be at the discretion of the Heads of School.

No charge will be made to any pupil for alternative provision if they do not participate in a residential or non-residential visit.

Broken windows, equipment, books

Wilful damage or breakages that are caused by inappropriate behaviour must be paid for by the child/parent. Loss of school books will incur a replacement cost.

Musical Instrument Tuition

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. There is no charge for this.

Charges are made for:

- individual or group tuition; and
- individual or group instrumental tuition.

The schools will inform parents at the start of each academic year of the additional music tuition available and the charges that will apply.

The charges will not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff providing the tuition.

Some instruments may be loaned free of charge.

Artwork, Design & Technology projects, cookery, fabric work

No charge is made for any of these materials or ingredients. The cost is covered by Curriculum within the school budget and the completed projects are taken home.

Incidentals to the provision of education

Children like to bring their own equipment, pencils, erasers, rulers, coloured felt tips, etc. in Year 5/6. Parents are invited to provide their children with these basic items. This is encouraged so that children develop organisational skills, which are essential in school and future life. However, the schools do provide a whole range of basic classroom equipment for all children.

Private Individuals

Private individuals may be invited to lead dance, drama or sports activities. A small nominal charge will be made to all children taking part to cover some of the costs. Pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding may be subsidised through Pupil Premium funding.

Swimming Lessons for pupils

No charge is made for the transport to and from the swimming pool or for tuition or rental fee for the pool. This is considered part of the curriculum and is funded from the school budget.

Transport to events

The community minibus is used for football tournaments and running events. A small charge will be made to all children taking part to cover some of the costs. Pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding may be subsidised through Pupil Premium funding.

Remission of charges

Children whose parents are in receipt of the following support payments will, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, also be entitled to the remission of charges for board and lodging costs for residential school trips taking place within school hours.

The relevant support payments are:

- Universal Credit with an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for the four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Child Tax Credit (with no Working Tax Credit) with an annual income of no more than £16,190

Costs of Freedom of Information Requests

The schools may make a charge for the provision of information, as set out in the Freedom of Information section of the Governance Conduct & School Information Policy Handbook.²

Private Reports

Any report or data that is requested on a child for the purpose of a third party private assessment, requested by a parent (eg. for solicitors) will be charged at a rate agreed by the Strategic Director or Heads of School, in discussion with the Chair (or, in the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair) of Governors. This rate will include a cost for collating the relevant information, as well as photocopying charges and postage.

Q. Lettings of the premises

The Governing Board regards the school buildings and grounds (which belong to Bradford Council) as a community asset and will make every reasonable effort to enable them to be used as much as possible. However, the overriding aim of the Governing Board is to support the Schools in providing

² Governance Conduct & School Information Policy Handbook: recommended to the Governing Board 12th May 2022

the best possible education for their students, and any lettings of the premises to outside organisations will be considered with this in mind.

All lettings are at the ultimate discretion of the Governing Board. No letting should be regarded as “booked” until approval has been given in writing. No public announcement of any activity or function taking place should be made by the organisation concerned until the booking has been formally confirmed.

The Governing Board will not approve any long or short term lets from any faith group and/or political party.

The School’s delegated budget (which is provided for the education of its pupils) cannot be used to subsidise any lettings by community or commercial organisations. A charge will be levied to meet the additional costs incurred by the schools in respect of any lettings of the premises. As a minimum, the *actual* cost to the Schools of any use of the premises by an outside organisation must be reimbursed to that School’s budget.

Definition of a Letting

Short-term lettings are classified as the hiring of the premises for a day and up to half a school term.

Long-term lettings are classified by hiring the premises on a continuous basis for more than half school term. Decision on long term and community lettings are at the discretion of the Full Governing Board and will require all documentation to be presented ie. Risk Assessments, DBS’s and Public Liability Insurance. See Appendix 7

Charges for a Letting

The Governing Board will set the charge for the letting of each Schools premises that covers the full cost to the schools. This may include:

- Cost of services (heating and lighting)
- Cost of staffing (additional security, caretaking and cleaning) - including “on-costs”
- Cost of administration
- Cost of “wear and tear”
- Cost of use of school equipment (if applicable)
- Profit element (where appropriate)

In general, the letting of rooms for non-sporting activities is exempt from VAT, whereas sports lettings are subject to VAT (although there are exemptions under certain circumstances).

The specific charge levied will be reviewed, as part of the annual review of this Policy Handbook, during the Spring Term, by the Resources Committee. The agreed charge will be implemented from the beginning of the next financial year for new lettings. In the case of ongoing long-term lettings, the agreed charge will take effect from the following 01 September to allow the user time to prepare for the change. Current charges are shown at Appendix 8.

Where there are multiple lettings taking place at the same time, the costs for services and staffing will normally be shared between the organisations involved.

Application to let the premises

Organisations seeking to hire the Schools premises should approach the Business Manager, who will advise on the facilities and dates available.

A Lettings Application Form (Appendix 9) should be completed by the hirer. Hirers will be issued with a copy of the terms and conditions.

Once the completed forms have been received by the Schools and signed by the Heads of School in the case of a short-term let or by the Governing Board in the case of a long-term let, a copy of the Lettings Application Form will be returned to the hirer as confirmation, setting out full details of the letting, including information for users of the premises [Appendix 9]. The hirer will be invoiced for the cost of the letting, in accordance with the Governing Board's current scale of charges [Appendix 8].

The hirer confirms that adequate and appropriate public liability and accidental damage insurance cover is in place for the activity to be carried out.

The hirer must be a named individual and the agreement should be in their name, giving their permanent private address.

All lettings fees which are received by the Schools will be paid into the School's individual bank account, in order to offset the costs of services, staffing etc (which are funded from the School's delegated budget). Income and expenditure associated with lettings will be regularly monitored to ensure that the schools are at least recovering the costs it incurs through lettings.

R. Crisis support

The Governing Board has agreed to make small sums available, under strict criteria, to support families in immediate crisis.

The criteria for funding are:

- Children and families are discovered to be in critical need.
- Families are either new to the area or new to the country.
- Families are not in receipt of funding from usual government sources and are thus living in extreme poverty.
- Children are unable to attend school due to transport issues associated with lack of funds.
- Children are not able to access adequate food due to lack of family funds.
- Children do not have access to adequate clothing due to lack of family funds.

School actions:

- Schools will make a crisis support funding assessment of each case in which they recognise a family in critical need.
- A home visit will be carried out (with interpreter if necessary) to assess the extent of family need.

- If appropriate an immediate injection of food & essential household cleaning and toiletries will be provided to a maximum of £100.00.
- Schools will work with the family and local foodbanks to help secure continued and future support.
- If necessary schools will provide bus fares for school bus or service bus for a period of one term maximum. If children have to travel on a service bus because the school bus route is inaccessible, the cost of one travelling parents can be reimbursed.
- Children will be provided with free school meals at the school's expense. Schools will aid the family to make an immediate application for free school meals.
- School staff will also help the family to apply for benefits.
- Total funds released under this protocol will not exceed £400.00 per family, after which the protocol will be reviewed.
- In the event of a crisis support grant being issued, schools will email the Chair of Governors to indicate that the above protocol has been invoked and the next Finance & Resources committee be informed.

Glossary of Terms

<i>LA</i>	-	<i>Local Authority (City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council)</i>
<i>Ofsted</i>	-	<i>Office for Standards in Education</i>
<i>SFVS</i>	-	<i>School Financial Value Standard</i>
<i>SIMS</i>	-	<i>Schools Information Management Systems (computer database)</i>
<i>FMS</i>	-	<i>Financial Management System</i>
<i>FM</i>	-	<i>Facilities Management (Bradford Council)</i>