



Business and Operations Handbook

2024-25

Our vision is to enable all to flourish.



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Yellow text indicates a change from last year

1. Introduction, purpose and responsibilities

This handbook is intended to be a practical and supportive resource for headteachers and business managers. The aim is to provide a clear understanding of what it means to be a custodian leader of one of the Trust’s schools and the responsibilities related to premises management, data protection, health and safety, procurement and compliance. It also provides an overview of the support, relationships, and lines of accountability within the Trust within these areas. Should you need clarification on anything in this handbook or any other area related to these areas please contact the Business and Operations team.

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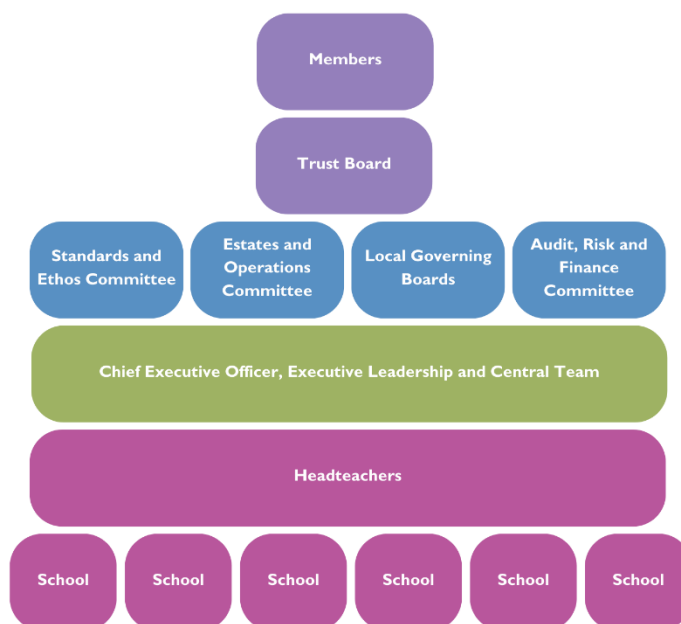
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The Trust Board, via the estates and operations committee, is ultimately responsible for the premises management, data protection, health and safety, procurement and compliance of each school. The Trust Board delegates several to each school (Headteacher and Local Governing Boards). The structure of the Trust is set out below.



The Local Governing Board in each school acts as a committee to the Trust Board. The Trust Board is of the view that there should be a balance between centralised and local decision making. The Board recognises the importance of ensuring that local context plays a key role in the organisation and running of each school. It also recognises the value in centralising a range of functions to support the whole organisation in terms of consistency, compliance, efficiency and cost.

The responsibilities delegated to schools are set out in the scheme of delegation. This can be found at Appendix I

Please ensure that you are familiar with the scheme of delegation (SoD), and with the responsibilities that are delegated to you. The SoD is reviewed annually therefore it is important to ensure you have the most up to date copy.

The Business and Operations team provides a range of support to schools as follows:

- Audit of the estate and prioritisation of actions

- Support in developing a strategic response to estate management and premises development
- Negotiation, set-up and liaison for all insurance arrangements, including land and buildings
- Tendering, procurement and management of all capital projects
- Support with health and safety compliance checks including an online compliance dashboard
- Support with emergency planning and implementation
- Efficiencies through the economies of scale of central procurement of premises compliance servicing
- Trust wide deals brokered for school supplies and services
- Centrally arranged and managed contracts.
- Carbon reduction and energy efficiency audit and strategic heat carbonisation plan
- Streamlined energy and carbon reporting (SECR)
- Annual GDPR audit and training
- Maintenance of a corporate risk register
- Oversight of all leases and contracts
- Oversight of insurance (RPA) and management of claims
- Support in the event of an emergency on site.

The following sections set out the responsibilities that are delegated to schools. Each section contains some background information and some guidance to support you in your work.

2. Policies

Several Trust policies have been created to support you in your work in this area of school life. These are compliant with the relevant legislation and are updated when the law changes or there are any good practice updates.

- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Estates Management Strategy
- Estates Funding Policy
- Finance policy
- Procurement policy (this is currently being developed and will be issued in October)

These can all be found on the members' area of the trust website [here](#). This area is password protected. Please contact your Headteacher or the Business and Operations Team if you do not have the password for your area.

3. Insurance

3.1 Risk protection Arrangements

All schools within the Trust are automatically enrolled to the DfE assurance scheme - the Risk Protection Arrangements (RPA). The cost for this scheme is taken at source (ie before the funding for each school is released to the Trust) from the DfE on a per pupil basis which for the 2024/25 academic year is £23 per pupil.

The RPA Covers:

Material Damage	Unlimited
Business Interruption	£10 Million any one loss
Employers Liability	Unlimited
Third Party Liability	Unlimited
Governors Liability	£10 Million any one loss and in one membership year
Professional Indemnity	Unlimited
Employee and third-party dishonesty	£500,000
Money	£5000
Personal Accident	Death and capital benefits £100,000
United Kingdom Travel	Baggage and money £2000 per person Cancellation £1000 per person
Overseas Travel	Medical £10,000,000 plus various see full details of cover
Full details of cover can be found here	

In the event that you need to make a claim please contact Rob Jones or Claire Morgan who will process the claim on behalf of the school.

3.2 Occasional Business Use (Motor Insurance)

The Trust provides occasional business use motor insurance via Marsh and a certificate with full details of cover is sent at the start of each academic year to each school.

Summary of occasional business use cover

Driving for business purposes must have the permission of the headteacher. For those using their vehicle for business use there should be a formal procedure for regular licence checks for all new and existing employees and/or drivers before allowing them to drive for business purposes.

These checks should include

- There are no driving convictions or prosecutions pending of any motor offence with conviction codes AC BA CD DD DR IN UT TT or XX.
- There has not been an occurrence of refused insurance or quoted an increased premium or had special terms imposed or a disqualification that prevents the individual from driving a vehicle.
- The individual should not suffer from any heart complaint, diabetes, fits or any other physical or mental infirmity that renders them incapable of driving an insured vehicle.
- The individual has not been regularly taking any prescribed medication that will impact on driving ability unless the condition has been notified to the DVLA and a licence to drive has been granted.
- That vehicles are in a roadworthy condition

4. Capital building projects

The Trust receives two income streams to fund capital building projects and to maintain all the schools within the estate. One is the School Condition Allocation (SCA) and the other is Devolved Formula Capital (DFC).

Details of the conditions of the grants can be found on the DfE website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-capital-funding>

4.1 School Condition Allocation (SCA)

The SCA is a grant that is paid directly from the DfE and is based on the number of pupils in the Trust. It is to cover all the major capital works across the estate. There is never enough funding to cover everything that would ideally be undertaken each year so the funding is prioritised.

The two policies that cover the way that this fund is prioritised and allocated are:

1. Estates Management Strategic Policy
2. Estates Funding Policy

In September and October of the academic year each school has a visit from the Business and Operations team to review the building survey data we hold for your school. At this meeting we will also discuss any concerns or plans you may have related to the building. This is so that we can identify and prioritise any works that may be eligible to be centrally funded. These proposed projects are then further developed and costed and presented to the Estates and Operations Committee for authorisation, this is usually in January /February. Centrally funded projects are over £5000 and are prioritised according the following.

- Health and Safety/Safeguarding
- Condition/compliance
- Suitability

Where possible projects take place during the school holiday period. Arrangements are made for the contractors to have access to the building without the need for school staff to be interrupted during their holiday.

In addition to the planned projects there may be occasions when an SCA funded project arises as an unforeseen circumstance. These issues will be dealt with outside the usual timeframe outlined above and the Business and Operations team will keep you informed as to the progress.

Please note that any works that you plan for the school that are funded directly from your revenue budget, that materially alter the fabric of the building, must be discussed with the Business and Operations team and the Head of Finance prior to planning. This is because school requires appropriate authorisation for this type of project.

Should any incidences of emergency repairs of a capital nature occur at any point in the year please contact the Business and Operations team for support and assistance.

4.2 Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)

The Trust receives an additional capital grant from the DfE annually, (DFC). The purpose of the grant is to enable premises maintenance projects, small capital projects, and ICT purchases.

The Trust retains this fund centrally and is released into school budgets to fund planned essential projects that are discussed with the Head of Business and Operations during

the annual premises visit in the Autumn term and are authorised centrally. This model has been adopted in line with Good Estates Management strategic advice from the DfE.

The benefits of central strategic oversight of DFC are:-

- Economies of scale through joint procurement. *Whereby works of a similar nature can be jointly procured to obtain best value for money.*
- Release of time resources at school level through central procurement.
- Assurances that the priorities at school level are aligned to the overall Trust premises development plan.
- Resources will be used strategically and timely – (to minimise unallocated DFC in the Trust reserves).

Good strategic estate management can deliver both financial and non-financial benefits. It will help all our schools to be:

- safe - poorly maintained schools are likely to be more hazardous.
- successful - well-designed facilities can be linked to levels of attainment.
- financially sustainable - an effectively managed estate improves the efficiency of estate expenditure and will minimise surplus space and revenue costs, optimise revenue generation, prioritise investment and maintain asset value.
- operationally efficient - planned repairs and maintenance can minimise emergency works, prevent failures and loss of facilities, and save money.
- appealing – a well-maintained school will help create a positive impression and attract pupils and staff.

The projects that should be prioritised for consideration for this funding should be informed by your premises development plan and in discussion with the Business and Operations team at the start of each year.

5. Premises management planning and minor maintenance repairs

It is important that the school site is well maintained and kept safe for staff and pupils. To best achieve this, you should maintain an up-to-date premises development plan. The Business and Operations team will assist in the review or creation of the plan at the visit at the start of the academic year.

The plan should outline what regular maintenance is required at the school, what areas of concerns you may have regarding a particular area of the site and how you plan to address them. The Trust proforma for a premises management plan will be sent out with this document and can be found on the members' area of the trust website in both the leaders' and the admin and finance sections.

Another good resource can be found at the DfE's website called Good Estates Management for Schools (GEMS).

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/good-estate-management-for-schools>

Minor repairs

For any routine minor repairs (broken window, leaking tap, blocked toilets, leaking roofs) schools should arrange the works directly as this is a school responsibility, but contact the Business and Operations team where there is a concern that there is a potential health and safety risk, or the works uncover a wider issue with the fabric of the building. The team can then assist with any technical guidance that is required.

The Business and Operations team can support in identifying recommended companies to carry out repairs.

In addition, a handyperson scheme is available for schools to use. This a service that is chargeable by the hour without any call out charges and is for routine maintenance tasks. The quality of the work is overseen by the Business and Operations team. Please contact Rob Jones or Claire Morgan for more information or to book in some time.

6. Health and Safety

The schools' responsibilities for health and safety are outlined in the Health and Safety policy. This document is centrally issued but has sections that must be completed at school level to give contextual information. It is very important that you read and understand the processes and procedures that are required within your individual school. It is also important to use this policy to inform your decision making.

Appendix 1 and 2 of the Health and Safety Policy must be completed and returned to the Business and Operations team in September at the start of each academic year.

In addition, all schools within the Trust must purchase the SHE unit traded service from Gloucester County Council.

The traded service can be accessed via the GCC Plus website:

<https://www.businesssupportservices.org/AboutUs> after you have logged in. Every three years you must ensure that you purchase a health and safety audit and a fire risk assessment via the SHE unit. These services may not be included in the traded service you buy so please check.

7. Data protection

The protection of data is everyone's responsibility and the Data Protection Policy provides detailed information about how to look after personal data. It also includes some helpful background information to the law. This policy can be found in the members' area of the Trust's website.

DGAT employs SchoolPro TLC Ltd to act as its Data Protection Officer (DPO). The Trust's named Data Protection Officer is Richard Morley who can be contacted on rmorley@schoolpro.uk or via telephone number 0203 2909093.

SchoolPro support schools in several ways:

- an annual support visit to each school to assist with and ensure compliance with the data protection regulations
- to manage and support with subject access requests (SARs)
- to manage and support with freedom of information requests (FOIs)
- to manage and advise on data breaches

The Data Protection Policy sets out what do in case of a SAR or FOI request and what to do in the event of a data breach however the rule of thumb is in the event of any of these situations contact SchoolPro and the Business and Operations team as soon as possible. They will then guide you through each step of the process. SchoolPro has an online portal that is used to manage requests for data and data breaches (<https://app.schoolpro.uk/login>) – each school will have access to this.

All staff in school should be made aware of the Data Protection Policy and it should be included in the induction of all new staff.

8. Premises compliance management

There are many legal responsibilities that apply to the safe and compliant management of the school. Some of these are completed by the central team and some are the responsibility of the school. The following table indicates the frequency of the action required and who is responsible.

Servicing, testing and inspection overview										
Compliance activity	Frequency							Arranged by		
	Weekly	Month	Quarterly	6 Months	Annually	Every 3 years	Every 5 Years	School	DGAT	Central
Water Hygiene & Safety					★			☆		
Lightning conductors					★			☆		
Gas safety (Kitchens)								☆		
Fire alarm Points test	★							☆		
Fire Alarm System test				★					☆	
Firefighting equipment Inspection					★				☆	
Emergency Lighting				★					☆	
Fixed Wiring test							★		☆	
Portable Appliance Test (PAT)					★				☆	
Boiler Servicing				★					☆	
Insurance Inspection Boilers					★				☆	
Display Energy Certificate.					★ new					

There are also two very helpful resources to assist with the management and arrangements of these activities.

1. CIPFA provide a very detailed guide with all requirements listed in both alphabetical and frequency of activity order. The guide can be obtained at the following link:

https://www.cipfa.org/policy-and-guidance/reports/compliance_monitoring_for_school_premises

2. Further resources to assist in the planning and maintenance of your compliance management are available at the GEMS website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/good-estate-management-for-schools>

Central contracts

To further support schools, the Trust is now centrally procuring some core premises compliance contracts. This will save time for school staff and also be more economical.

The servicing contracts provided centrally are:

1. Boiler insurance inspection
2. Boiler Servicing
3. Fire alarm servicing
4. Fire extinguisher servicing
5. Emergency light testing
6. 5-year fixed wire inspection
7. Portable appliance testing
8. Display energy certificate.

The companies that are contracted to carry out the services are as follows:-

1	Boiler Insurance Inspection	British Engineering Services
2	Boiler Servicing	P & R
3	Fire Alarm servicing	A & E
4	Fire extinguisher servicing	A & E
5	Emergency Lighting testing	A & E

6	5-year fixed wiring	EIS
7	Portable Appliance test	Calbarrie
8	Display Energy Certificate	Inspired efficiency

The above services are centrally managed, and service visits will be arranged with the schools by the companies contracted to deliver the service.

We aim to increase the number of statutory testing and servicing contracts that are delivered centrally, and these will be communicated to you as they are procured. This is to secure better value for money and to reduce the administrative burden on each school. Further, it enables the Trust Board to have clear oversight of the compliance across the estate.

Please contact Claire Morgan or Rob Jones with any queries on this service.

A new software system of compliance management will be rolled out to schools in the Autumn term so that schools can access information on the centrally managed services including documents, due dates and remedial works all in one place

The system will also allow local management of services and contracts that are not managed centrally if schools find this helpful.

9. Trust negotiated discounts

Whilst schools can purchase supplies and services from their supplier of choice using their delegated budget, the Trust is constantly striving to work with an increasing number of suppliers to deliver savings through Trust wide discounts. This is to ensure we maximise the funding that is available to each school

Currently the discounts available to schools is set out in the table below and as further agreements are made, they will be communicated.

Product	Discount
Scholar Pack (Management Information System)	15%
School Advisory Service (Staff Absence Insurance)	15% increasing by an additional 1% with each new school that purchases

DJB and Gompels (Cleaning Supplies)	Between 7% and 15%
CPOMS (Safeguarding Management System)	10% off the first 2 years
TTS (Educational Resources)	Between 10% to 12%
Suez (Waste Management)	The lift price for general is now £11.10 60 kilos Recycling is £8.81 – 35 kilos
Can Do Maths	10%

Appendix I – Appropriate sections of the scheme of delegation

Premises and Insurance						
Decide		Decide - Has primary responsibility for decision making related to the decision or action.				
Consulted		Consulted - Will be consulted as part of the process of completing a task. Their contribution may inform the approach or decision.				
Deliver		Deliver - Accountable for: undertaking particular tasks; following agreed policies and procedures; ensuring appropriate training of staff.				
Monitor		Monitor - Responsible for reviewing whether a task or action is being carried out satisfactorily and, where appropriate, requiring action to be taken to ensure task is delivered appropriately.				
Decision/Action		Members	Trust Board	Executive leadership team	Local governing board	Headteacher
P.1	Procure buildings insurance and personal liability.			Decide		
P.2	Develop an estates strategy or master plan.		Decide	Deliver	Consulted for own school	Consulted for own school
P.3	Maintain buildings, including implementing a premises and development plan.			Consulted	Decide Monitor	Deliver
P.4	Determine Trust health and safety policy.		Decide			
P.5	Ensure that a compliant health and safety policy is implemented.		Decide Monitor	Deliver	Monitor	Deliver
P.6	Review security of school premises and equipment.		Monitor	Deliver Monitor	Monitor	Consulted Deliver

Premises and Insurance						
Decide		Decide - Has primary responsibility for decision making related to the decision or action.				
Consulted		Consulted - Will be consulted as part of the process of completing a task. Their contribution may inform the approach or decision.				
Deliver		Deliver - Accountable for: undertaking particular tasks; following agreed policies and procedures; ensuring appropriate training of staff.				
Monitor		Monitor - Responsible for reviewing whether a task or action is being carried out satisfactorily and, where appropriate, requiring action to be taken to ensure task is delivered appropriately.				
Decision/Action		Members	Trust Board	Executive leadership team	Local governing board	Headteacher
P.7	Draw up, agree and monitor an accessibility plan for the school.		Monitor	Monitor	Decide	Consulted Deliver
P.8	Determine a Trust lettings policy.		Decide	Consulted Deliver		
P.9	Ensure suitable local risk assessments are prepared and appropriate actions taken.		Monitor	Monitor	Monitor	Deliver
P.10	Monitor the accident book and agree appropriate actions.				Monitor	Consulted Deliver

Central Services

Decide	Decide - Has primary responsibility for decision making related to the decision or action.
Consulted	Consulted - Will be consulted as part of the process of completing a task. Their contribution may inform the approach or decision.
Deliver	Deliver - Accountable for: undertaking particular tasks; following agreed policies and procedures; ensuring appropriate training of staff.
Monitor	Monitor - Responsible for reviewing whether a task or action is being carried out satisfactorily and, where appropriate, requiring action to be taken to ensure task is delivered appropriately.

Decision/Action		Members	Trust Board	Executive leadership team	Local governing board	Headteacher
CS.1	Determine the scope of mandatory core services to be delivered by the Trust on behalf of its schools.		Decide	Deliver	Consulted	Consulted
CS.2	Determine a Trust-wide procurement policy and set the delegated levels of authority for such contracts.		Decide	Deliver		
CS.3	Approve contracts which constitute related party transactions.			Decide		
CS.4	Enter into contracts up to the limits of delegation, within an agreed budget and in accordance with the finance policy.			Decide Up to delegated limits within the financial procedures policy	Decide Up to limit of LGB delegation	Consulted

