TOP-SLICE STATEMENT & APPEALS POLICY

Section 5.30 of the 2026 Academies Trust handbook makes clear that a Multi Academy Trust can amalgamate and direct funds to meet improvement priorities and need across the trust's schools can be integral to a trust's successful financial operating model. A trust with multiple schools can amalgamate GAG for its schools to form one central fund. This practice can enhance a trust's ability to allocate resources in line with improvement priorities and running costs across the trust's constituent academies. This is referred to as 'top slicing.'

For academic year 2026-27 we propose retaining 6.5% of each individual schools GAG funding.

The top-slice will be used to fund the following expenditure on behalf of the schools within the Trust:

- Strategic management
- Central team support staff costs
- Strategic and operational HR Support
- Financial management
- Estates management
- Permanent full-time Governance Manager to coordinate governance and deliver full clerking services, including support for Local School Boards
- External school improvement partnership support, including review and improvement visits
- Safeguarding support, training, and audit costs
- 2 FTE fully qualified counsellors
- Educational psychology services
- External assessment and trust-level data analysis
- Employee assistance scheme
- Trust wide (high speed fibre) internet provision & telephony services
- Annual external audit & teachers' pension audit (TPA)
- Internal assurance services
- Professional external legal services
- External health and safety (H&S) support (incl. fire risk assessments)

- Completion of all legal and statutory returns, i.e. ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency), ONS (Office of National Statistics) Charities Commission
- Bank fees
- Annual pension re-valuation fees (actuarial fees)
- Financial software hosting fees
- In-house leadership & staff development training, access to external professional development opportunities
- National College (continuous professional development) CPD subscription
- Comprehensive Governors training and support package, skills audit, and development planning.
- Payroll administration and teachers' pensions return
- Support in training and up-skilling of administration and finance staff to meet trust-wide procedures and standards
- Trust Website design and compliance
- Data Protection Officer (DPO) services
- School to school support costs
- Risk management system
- Access to several professional subscriptions

Outside of the top-slice, the Trust will work collaboratively to use its purchasing power on all high-value purchases and services to ensure we provide best value for taxpayers and to ensure we target as much money to the front-line.

Separate accounts relating to the running of the Trust will be maintained and made available to all Galileo MAT schools in the annual statutory report.

The Trust reserves the right to amend this policy on an annual basis at the beginning of each financial year. Where appropriate the top-slice may be adjusted to reflect the costs relating to the current financial year, the increasing services provided directly by the Trust, or cost savings generated through the streamlining of back-office functions.

The top-slice will be kept under regular review by the trust's executive team. As the trust's work develops, recommendations from the executive team will be considered by the Finance & Resources Committee, a sub-committee of the Trust Board,

Appeals Policy

Section 5.31 of the Academies Trust handbook states:

The Multi Academy Trust must consider the funding needs and allocations of each constituent school and must have an appeals mechanism. If a constituent school's headteacher feels the school has been unfairly treated, they should appeal to the

Trust. If the grievance is not resolved, they can appeal to the Secretary of State, via ESFA, whose decision will be final and who can dis-apply the pooling provisions.

As such our appeals process is:

- Constituent Schools have ten working days from the issuing of a top-slice statement from the Chief Financial and Operating Officer (CFOO) to appeal.
- Appeals should be made in writing in the first instance directly to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who will consider the appeal and notify the school of their decision within ten working days of receipt of the written appeal.
- If the school is dissatisfied with the decision from the CEO, they are entitled to appeal against this to the Board of Trustees. A group of three Trustees, minimum, from the Board will investigate the original appeal from the school and come to a decision and advise the school accordingly.
- If upon this decision from the Board of Trustees, the school is still dissatisfied with the outcome, they are entitled to appeal further to the Education and Skills Funding Authority. This is stage three and the final stage in the appeals process.