





LIGHTHOUSE

SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Non-Statutory

Policy Approved by the Board of Trustees	
Signed:  Name: Adele Haysom Chair of Board of Trustees	Date: 16 September 2025
Authorised for Issue	
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Document History

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3.0	Louise Malik	September 2020	Scheduled review
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This policy applies to all schools and employees within the Lighthouse Schools Partnership.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1. Aims

- 1.1. As per paragraph 2.125 of the Education and Skills Funding Agency's [Academies Accounts Direction 2024 to 2025](#), these accounting policies aim to set out the principles, bases, conventions and rules by which transactions and items are recognised, measured and presented in the Trust's accounts.

2. Legislation and statutory requirements

- 2.1. The Department for Education (DfE) requires academy trusts to prepare their financial statements according to UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (UK GAAP) and this assumption must be disclosed in the notes to the annual accounts under the heading of 'accounting policies'. The accounting policies have also been written in line with the requirements of:
 - 2.1.1. The Academy Trust Handbook
 - 2.1.2. The Academies Accounts Direction
 - 2.1.3. The Academies model accounts
- 2.2. The Academies Accounts Direction 2024 to 2025 is based on Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 2019, Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 and the Companies Act 2006.
- 2.3. A summary of the Principal Accounting Policies, which are applied consistently, except where noted, is set out below.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1. Academy Trustees

The Board of Trustees is required to approve the Trust's accounting policies, which are incorporated within the annual report and accounts.

As per the Academies Accounts Direction, the Trustees also review these policies regularly, and only implement new policies where:

- 3.1.1. This is required by FRS 102; or
- 3.1.2. This is judged to provide more reliable, appropriate and relevant information about the effect of transactions, other events or conditions on the financial position, performance or cash flows of the academy trust

The Board of Trustees ensures that the Trust's accounting policies are being applied consistently across the academies within the Trust.

4. Basis of preparation

- 4.1. The financial statements are prepared under the accruals convention using historical cost as the basis for asset evaluation.
- 4.2. In accordance with requirements, the financial statements reflect that the Trust is a public benefit entity and contain a balance sheet, a statement of financial activities and explanatory notes. The accounts are prepared and audited in line with:
 - 4.2.1. Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102
 - 4.2.2. The current regulations and requirements of the DfE, including the Academies Accounts Direction
 - 4.2.3. The Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 2019
 - 4.2.4. Applicable charity and company law
- 4.3. The Trustees are required to ensure that the Trust's accounts are prepared in compliance with the Companies Act 2006. A departure from any of these basic accounting principles will require disclosure notes in the accounts together with the reasons for the departure.
- 4.4. The Accounting Officer is responsible for ensuring that all reasonable controls are in place.
- 4.5. Overall, the accounts must always give a true and fair view. This will be determined by the appointed auditors.

5. Accruals concept

- 5.1. All income and expenditure for the period to which the accounts relate are included in those accounts.
- 5.2. At year end, a de-minimis of £100 for primary schools and £1,000 for secondary schools is applied for both sundry creditors and sundry debtors.
- 5.3. Where an individual invoice or receipt is less than the de minimis level then no provision is made. This is to minimise the number of sundry transactions.
- 5.4. In preparation for year-end an exercise is completed to ensure all invoices and debts are settled to minimise the necessity for provisions.

6. Liabilities

- 6.1. Liabilities are shown in the balance sheet where goods or services have been received but the payment has not been made during that period. Subject to the de-minimis value agreed, the value is that identified on the order or invoice or other contractual documentation.

7. Provisions

- 7.1. Provisions are shown in the balance sheet for obligations such as pension contributions, tax liabilities or other payments to similar funds or bodies where the payment has been deferred.

8. Financial instruments

- 8.1. The Trust only holds basic financial instruments as defined in FRS 102.
- 8.2. The financial assets and financial liabilities of the Trust are as follows:
 - 8.2.1. Cash at bank, including all current and deposit accounts belonging to the Trust
 - 8.2.2. Cash in hand, including any petty cash imprest and monies not yet banked
 - 8.2.3. Financial debtors, including all monies owing to the Trust
 - 8.2.4. Financial liabilities, including all current commitments of the Trust in terms of unpaid invoices and debts

9. Historical cost convention

- 9.1. The revenue, costs, and any assets bought by the Trust, are recognised in the accounts at the original cost regardless of present value.

10. Going concern

- 10.1. The accounts are prepared on the assumption that the Trust will continue to function in the future and is therefore a going concern.
- 10.2. The Trustees will assess if there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the Trust to continue as a going concern. The Trustees will make the assessment in respect of a period of one year from the date of the approval of the financial statements. If no such material uncertainties apply, then this will be stated.

11. Consistency

11.1. The Trustees have agreed on suitable accounting policies for depreciation of business assets, foreign exchange transactions and accounting for stock valuation. These are applied consistently across the Trust and over comparative financial years.

12. Prudence

12.1. The accounts are prepared prudently. This means that only realised transactions are included in the income and expenditure statements. For example, income is included only where it is either received or its receipt is certain and applicable within the period.

12.2. Debts are considered and only written off in accordance with DfE regulations.

13. Netting off

13.1. Items are not netted off in the accounts. The accounting system identifies all transactions and the financial procedures require that income and expenditure are fully recorded and not subject to netting off.

14. Accounting treatment of income

14.1. All income is on a receivable basis.

14.2. All incoming resources are recognised when the Trust has entitlement to the funds, the receipt is probable and the amount can be measured reliably.

14.3. Grants receivable

Grants are included in the statement of financial activities on a receivable basis. The balance of income received for specific purposes but not expended during the period is shown in the relevant fund on the balance sheet. Where income is received in advance of entitlement of receipt, its recognition is accrued and included in creditors as deferred income.

Specific references are made for the receipt of the General Annual Grant (GAG), capital grants and any other grants with specific conditions.

Capital grants are recognised in full when there is an unconditional entitlement to the grant. Unspent amounts of capital grants are reflected in the balance sheet in the restricted fixed asset fund. Capital grants are recognised when there is entitlement and are not deferred over the life of the asset on which they are expended.

14.4. Sponsorship income

Sponsorship income provided to the Trust which amounts to a donation is recognised in the statement of financial activities in the period in which it is receivable (where there are no performance-related conditions).

14.5. Donations

Donations are included in the statement of financial activities on a cash received basis or on an accruals basis where they are assured with reasonable certainty and are receivable at the balance sheet date (where there are no performance-related conditions).

14.6. Donated services and gifts in kind

The value of donated services and gifts in kind provided to the Trust is recognised in the statement of financial activities as incoming resources and resources expended at their estimated value to the Trust in the period in which they are receivable, and where the benefit is both quantifiable and material.

14.7. Interest receivable

Interest receivable is included within the statement of financial activities on an accruals basis.

14.8. Other income, including catering income and fees for breakfast and after school clubs, is recognised in the period it is receivable.

15. Accounting treatment of resources expended

15.1. All expenditure is recognised in the period in which goods or services are received.

15.2. All expenditure is classified in the accounts under an appropriate heading to the type of goods or services purchased.

15.3. Generating Funds

In relation to the costs of generating funds, where a fundraising activity incurs expenditure in order to raise the income, this is clearly shown in the accounts. Large activities (e.g. wrap around care or educational visits) are given a discrete cost centre for income and expenditure to enable a trading account to be extracted for monitoring purposes.

15.4. Allocation of costs

In accordance with the Charities SORP, expenditure has been analysed between the cost of generating funds, the Trust's charitable activities and governance. Items of expenditure which involve more than one cost category have been apportioned on a reasonable, justifiable and consistent basis for the cost category concerned.

Resources are recorded net of VAT, with the exception of business costs where VAT is identified as irrecoverable. They are classified under headings that aggregate all costs relating to that activity.

Where applicable, costs incurred centrally on behalf of the schools of the Trust are recharged for their proportion of those costs. The basis of proportion is determined for each type of cost incurred.

Where the expenditure is shared between more than one school within the Trust, the cost is apportioned on a basis consistent with the use of those resources.

Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent on each activity. Where specific chargeable support is given to an individual school, but the initial cost is borne centrally, then the whole cost is charged to the beneficiary school.

15.5. Governance costs

Governance costs include the costs attributable to the Trust's compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements, including audit, strategic management and governors' meetings and reimbursed expenses. Such costs include both direct and allocated support costs.

16. Fund accounting

16.1. Restricted general funds comprise of income from any source where the funding is intended for a specific purpose. This includes all grants received from the DfE and from any other funding body.

16.2. Unrestricted income funds represent those resources that which may be used towards meeting any of the charitable objects of the Trust at the discretion of the Trustees.

16.3. Restricted fixed asset funds refer to income that is to be applied to specific capital purposes imposed by the DfE or other funders where the asset acquired is for a specific purpose.

16.4. The trust will review the balance on restricted general funds (excluding pension reserves) plus the balance on unrestricted funds annually, as required. Where there is a deficit, the required disclosure will be made.

17. Reserves Policy

17.1. The Trustees are responsible for the effective and efficient use of available resources. These responsibilities are outlined by the Charities Commission in their published guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-andreserves-cc19> and the Academy Trust Handbook.

17.2. The Trust's Reserves Policy provides further information.

18. Investment Policy

18.1. The aim of the Investment Policy is to enable funds to be placed on deposit to generate interest income for the Trust in order to support its ongoing charitable objectives, whilst ensuring that the Trust has the liquidity required to carry out its day to day activities. Further details are available in the Investment Policy.

19. Accounting for fixed assets

19.1. Assets received on conversion or on transfer of an existing academy are valued at fair value, where available based on the valuation provided by the DfE, and recognised in the balance sheet at the date of transfer.

19.2. Land and Buildings that are held under relevant Diocese are not included as tangible fixed assets within the Trust.

19.3. Donated fixed assets are measured at fair value on the date of receipt.

19.4. Tangible fixed assets valued at £5,000 or greater, and which add economic benefit to the organisation, are capitalised as tangible fixed assets and are carried at cost, net of depreciation. The value of assets is included in the balance sheet at cost and depreciated over their expected useful economic life.

19.5. Where tangible fixed assets are acquired with the aid of specific grants, either from the government or from other sources, they are written down in the year of purchase as fully funded to account for the receipt of the grant.

19.6. Intangible fixed assets of a value of £5,000 or greater are capitalised and recognised at cost and depreciated over their expected useful life.

19.7. Assets costing less than £5,000, or those which do not add economic benefit to the organisation are written off in the year of acquisition.

19.8. New freehold/leasehold buildings whose construction was overseen by the Department for Education (DfE) or a local authority (LA) and transferred to the Trust on completion - during the construction phase:

19.8.1. The DfE project team manages the site

19.8.2. Construction costs are funded by the DfE

19.8.3. There should be no recognition in the Trust's financial statements

If the Trust is partly funding construction of the site (e.g. additional assets outside of the DfE's minimum design specification) then these costs should be shown as assets under construction in the financial statements.

20. Depreciation

- 20.1. Depreciation is provided on a straight line basis on the cost of tangible fixed assets, to write them down to their estimated residual values over their expected useful lives. No depreciation is provided on freehold land.
- 20.2. The principal annual rates used for other assets are:
- 20.2.1. Freehold buildings 2% [50 years]
 - 20.2.2. Long leasehold property 2% [50 years or as long as the lease, whichever is shorter]
 - 20.2.3. Plant and machinery 10% [10 years]
 - 20.2.4. Furniture and equipment 20% [5 years]
 - 20.2.5. Computer equipment and software 20% [5 years]
 - 20.2.6. Motor vehicles 20% [5 years]
- 20.3. Assets in the course of construction are included at cost. Depreciation on these assets is not charged until they are completed.
- 20.4. Should an asset become damaged or lost without recovery, then this can be written off as disposed of. Where there is a remaining value then this is charged to the year of write off.
- 20.5. New freehold/leasehold buildings whose construction was overseen by the Department for Education (DfE) or a local authority and transferred to the academy trust on completion - when control of the site is handed over to the Trust, will be recognised as an opening value in its financial statements. The accounting entry will recognise:
- 20.5.1. Freehold and leasehold buildings
 - 20.5.2. The value within 'donations and capital grants' in the Statement of Financial Activities

The assets will start to depreciate from this point in accordance with FRS 102 (section 17) and the SORP (modules 6 and 10).

21. Stock

- 21.1. Unused stock such as stationery, uniforms and catering stores are recognised when they exceed £200,000 in a secondary school or £50,000 in a primary school or the Central Services. Stock is valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value.

22. Leased assets

- 22.1. Leased asset rentals applicable to operating leases, where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor, are charged to the statement

of financial activities on a straight line basis over the lease term reflecting the payment terms.

23. Taxation

23.1. The Trust meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

23.2. The Trust is, by definition, exempt from taxation in respect of income, capital gains and corporation taxes on the provision and understanding that all income and other gains are applied exclusively for educational purposes.

24. Pension benefits

24.1. Trust staff are members of one of two pension schemes. The two schemes are provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). These are defined benefit schemes and the assets are held separately from those of the Trust.

24.2. More details of the schemes are provided below:

24.2.1. Teachers' Pension Scheme

Full-time and part-time teaching staff employed under a contract of service are eligible to contribute to the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS).

The TPS is an unfunded scheme and contributions are calculated so as to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives. The TPS is therefore treated as a defined contribution scheme for accounting purposes and the contributions recognised in the period to which they relate.

24.2.2. Local Government Pension Scheme

Support members of staff are automatically enrolled in the Local Government Scheme (LGPS), with the ability to opt out. The LGPS is a funded scheme and the assets are held separately from those of the trust in separate trustee administered funds. The Trust is liable for the "deficit" payment based on the annual actuarial value.

Actuarial reviews of the LGPS are conducted annually and recognised as a separate fund within the accounts.