Business Travel and Expenses Policy

Status: To be reviewed every 2 years

Delegated to: Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

This policy is non contractual in nature and may be revised at any time. Before travelling you should check what expenses you may reclaim in the latest version of this policy.

1. **Method of Travel**

a. Before determining the method of business travel for a particular journey, employees should carry out a simple cost-benefit analysis, taking account of the cost, time, business disruption and environmental impact of the journey. Every employee has a responsibility to minimise travel costs by such activities as advanced planning, or consideration of alternatives such as audio or video conferencing whenever possible.

b. All travel should be agreed by the relevant line manager before being booked.

c. The school is committed to ensuring that everyone who travels on business does so in a professional and comfortable, yet cost effective way. The policy framework is intended to balance flexibility with consistency, and to encourage environmentally friendly modes of travel whilst ensuring value for money.

2. **Travelling by Car**

a. The school will reimburse the cost of business travel incurred through the use of personal cars at the rate shown in Appendix 1 below, or for the costs of a hire car and fuel costs where appropriate in accordance with this policy.

b. The shortest most practical route must be used for all journeys, giving consideration to both distance and anticipated travelling time. Detours from the route to collect or drop off authorised passengers may be claimed. Car sharing should be considered wherever practical, when an additional mileage rate may be claimed if another employee is conveyed as a passenger on the car journey in the employee's car.

c. The school does not require employees to use their own vehicle for business purposes and does not have in place any insurance covering staff who choose to use their own vehicle for business purposes. In the event that an employee chooses to use their own vehicle for business purposes, the employee should ensure that their own insurance policy provides appropriate cover as the use of the employee's own vehicle for business purposes is at their own risk and their own responsibility.

Use of Hire Cars

d. Hire cars may be used when this is a cost-effective means of travel, and provided the decision to use a hire care is approved in advance by the Headteacher or School Business Manager, who will verify that this is the most cost effective solution.

e. The school will reimburse employees for rental charges of compact or intermediate class vehicles only. Special conditions requiring the use of larger or more expensive vehicles must be justified and approved in advance.

f. An employee renting a vehicle for business purposes is required to ensure sufficient insurance cover is obtained when hiring the vehicle.

g. Hired vehicles are not to be used for private purposes. However, incidental private use is permitted e.g. to obtain a meal whilst working away from home.

h. Fuel costs associated with the running of a hired vehicle for business purposes will be reimbursed by the school. Hired vehicles should normally be refuelled before they are returned to the rental company to avoid surcharges. Claim for fuel costs must be accompanied by a valid VAT receipt.

Parking, Tolls etc.

i. Additional costs of parking, tolls and other expenses will be reimbursed only where they relate to business travel and where appropriate supporting documentation is provided. In instances where receipts are not normally provided (e.g. road tolls) a brief description of the expense will suffice for reimbursement.

Traffic Offences

j. Charges relating to traffic violations or other vehicle offences (i.e. speeding or parking tickets) will not be reimbursed. This applies to any vehicle used on school business.

3. Taxis

a. Taxis should only be used in exceptional circumstances, where due to time of travel, nature of the journey, luggage considerations or personal safety, public transport is not a reasonable alternative. The cost of the fare, including a reasonable level of gratuity, will be reimbursed on production of a valid receipt.

4. Rail Travel

a. Rail travel will normally be in standard class. No 1st class rail travel will be allowed except in exceptional circumstances or evidenced with train line documentation showing standard class to be more expensive or where the employee is happy to contribute the difference in cost. Exceptional circumstances will be determined by the Headteacher for all other staff and by the Chair of the FAR committee for the Headteacher..

b. The cost of all fares should be kept to a minimum by making as much use as possible of the savings available from pre-booking.

5. Air Travel

a. Air travel will be in economy class and must be approved in advance.

b. Excess baggage costs will only be reimbursed where they arise as a direct result of business requirements.

6. Overnight Accommodation

a. When duties require overnight stays away from home, the school will pay for or reimburse the employee for accommodation costs when out of town work, including travel, cannot be reasonably completed within the same working day.

b. All employees can claim the actual receipted cost of reasonable overnight hotel accommodation, up to the authorised rates. As a guide, the accommodation type should be a standard single room with en suite facilities. Facilities should include a TV, tea/coffee making facilities, and adequate space to work (where necessary) including a writing surface and telephone.

c. When booking accommodation, staff members should use a comparison service such as Booking.com to obtain best value and ensure the accommodation is well located and suitable.

d. Hotels for any overnight accommodation should be good value for money. Employees should use a service such as Booking.com to find the best value. Outside London it should not be necessary to pay more than £90 per night and in London no more than £125 per night. If suitable accommodation is not available within these price limits, colleagues should consult with the Headteacher or School Business Manager. (These limits are set by the trustees in the school's Finance Manual)

e. Actual costs up to these amounts will be reimbursed on production of valid receipts. Only in exceptional circumstances will amounts in excess of these rates be reimbursed to employees.

f. A copy of the hotel bill is required to support reimbursement requests. The school will not reimburse charges incurred for the use of hotel mini-bars, hotel movies, or other special services provided by the hotel that are not business related.

7. Meals

a. When work requires travel away from the employee's regular place of work, spanning a normal meal time, the school will reimburse the cost of actual reasonable expenditure incurred, as supported by receipts.

b. Alcoholic drinks may not be claimed on expenses.

The actual, reasonable cost of breakfast, lunch and evening meal may be claimed up to the limits of HMRC allowances. Maximum subsistence rates will be £10 (breakfast and lunch) £25 for a late meal when staying overnight (current HMRC guidance).

Reasonable expenses for non alcoholic drinks taken with the employee's evening meal will be reimbursed. Personal bar bills will not. All expenses must be supported by receipts. Reasonable meal-related gratuities (tips) are reimbursable.

c. Incidentals such as other drinks, newspapers and hotel videos will be for the employees' own account.

d. The actual amount claimed should not exceed the limits notified to you. Other than in exceptional circumstances, claims will be reduced accordingly before payment is made.

e. Reimbursement will not be permitted when a meal is provided as part of the travel arrangements or business being attended including, but not limited to:

i. the meal is included as part of the cost of accommodations, such as the breakfast provided at some hotels;

ii. the meal is served during a business conference or training course at no additional charge to the attendees;

iii. the meal is served at a business lunch or other meeting at no charge to the employee; or

iv. the employee completes travel prior to the recognised 'regular meal period'. (For example, an employee returning home before 6:00 p.m. is not eligible to reclaim dinner expenses for that day). For this intent, 'regular meal periods' are defined as:

Breakfast 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.

Lunch 12.00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Dinner 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

8. Any Other Expenses

a. Any other expenses will be approved on a case-by-case basis by the school. As always, prior approval must be requested of the line manager before any expenses are incurred.

9. Expense Reporting

a. All reimbursement of expenditure should be claimed on the Expense Form and be supported by receipts or invoices. The employee must sign the claim before onward submission for authorisation; an email will suffice where no receipts are required. The employee is responsible for complying with this policy. Any attempt to submit a false claim form will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

b. School credit/ charge cards will not be issued to most staff members; it is expected that individuals will use a personal credit card and receive reimbursement. Individuals will be responsible for settling their own credit card bills.

c. All claims must be authorised by the relevant line manager. The authorising manager has the responsibility to ensure that all claims for business expenses follow school policy, are accurately recorded, and are supported by receipts where applicable. The school assumes no obligation to reimburse employees for expenses that are not in compliance with this policy or have been incurred without the appropriate authorisation.

d. Expense claims should be completed on at least a monthly basis.

10. Payment of Claims

a. The online claim form is here and should be completed promptly after expenses are incurred. Supporting documentation, should be forwarded to the Finance Department. Incomplete claims will be returned to the employee.

b. Expenses will be reimbursed on a monthly basis, by BACS transfer direct to employees' bank accounts (note: expenses are not paid through payroll).

Appendix 1: Approved Mileage Rates

Rates per mile will be determined by the Business Manager in line with Inland Revenue guidance. The table below shows HMRC's current approved mileage rates, which are published on the HMRC website.

TYPE OF VEHICLE	FIRST 10000 MILES IN A YEAR	ABOVE 10000 MILES
Cars and vans	55p	25p
Motorcycles	24p	24p
Bikes	20p	20p