



## **Central Services to Academies 2019/20**

***Our Ambition: To be the highest performing MAT in the country  
Our Mission: To improve the communities we serve for the better***

## **Vision**

The purpose of the Trust's central services to academies is to support them in delivering the Trust's mission:

### ***Vision:***

*Challenging educational orthodoxies so that every child makes good progress in core subjects;  
all teachers are committed to personal improvement and fulfil their responsibilities;  
all children receive a broad and balanced curriculum;  
all academies strive to be outstanding.*

## **Aims**

Across The Forge Trust, we aim to maintain a caring, supportive and disciplined learning environment where children benefit from the best possible education. All staff are committed to this aim. We would like Principals to feed back to the CEO and FD if you think we are not meeting your expectations, so that we have an opportunity to respond. We would also like to know your opinion on the things we do well.

## **Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities**

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their age, gender, race, religion, belief, disability or ability. We plan work that is differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals. We also ensure that children receive a broad and balanced curriculum. The Forge Trust is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential. Policies are available on each of these that expand on this further.

All staff have equal access and inclusive rights to their work regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, belief, disability or ability. The Forge Trust is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential. Policies are available on each of these that expand on this further.

## **Introduction**

This document sets out the services which will be provided by the central team (CEO, Finance Director, Consultant Principal and Deputy CEO) to academies and what responsibilities academies will retain in each area.

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Outstanding	<b>4%</b>
Good	<b>6%</b>
Requires Improvement	<b>7.5%</b>
Special Measures	<b>9%</b>

*If an academies results dip or the SEF grade is adjusted, then the trustees can at its discretion review the percentage of central service charge to reflect the current SEF judgement.*

### **So what do Academies get for their Money?**

1. Leadership support from CEO/NLE and ESLT Forge team providing QA and audits in key areas;
2. Access to all policies and expertise through network group collaborative working;
3. Financial support and the provision of HCSS online accounting and budgeting systems and a School Money Cashless System;
4. Access to Principal peer support bi-weekly;
5. NQTs and ITT trainees across the trust are able to access a programme of tailored CPD;
6. GDPR support through the provision of a trust level DPO, annual audits, shared documents and procedures and access to advice;
7. Safeguarding support through access to training materials; provision of CPOMS online monitoring system, access to support and advice from the trust safeguarding lead and audits;
8. Access to onsite IT service and support to include remote monitoring and maintenance.

The central services provided by the trust will include the following:

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## Education

	<b>Academy</b>	<b>Central</b>
Standards		
	<p>To ensure effective leadership and management deliver a curriculum where teaching, learning and assessment are of the highest quality.</p> <p>To ensure quality personal development, behaviour and welfare for all children.</p> <p>To ensure accelerated progress in core subjects resulting in appropriate outcomes for all children.</p> <p>To work effectively with members of the central team ensuring high quality working practices for all areas of educational support and challenge.</p> <p>Ensure that all staff understand the ethos and vision of The Forge Trust and that staff practice reflects and supports this ethos and vision.</p> <p>To ensure that all stakeholders are kept informed about the work of the academy.</p>	<p>To work constructively, positively and collaboratively with the CEO, Deputy CEO and Consultant Principal to develop outstanding practices via support and challenge.</p> <p>To ensure that the Principal is seen as the lead professional within the academy.</p> <p>To ensure that each academy delivers, or is working towards delivering, outstanding outcomes for all children.</p> <p>To chair any type of local or area based Academy Advisory Board Meeting, and to develop professional and effective working relationships with members of each partnership.</p> <p>To co-ordinate all central team service support.</p> <p>To communicate academy issues relating to risk to the CEO and COO (Chief Operating Officer).</p> <p>To ensure that all academies adhere to The Forge Trust assessment policies and procedures.</p>

Physical Education		
	<p>To ensure PE is a core subject and that a minimum of 2 hours per week is taught.</p> <p>To provide a lead practitioner who will co-ordinate PE, lead assessment, monitor standards and provide CPD for staff across the school</p>	To provide a network group PE Leader for the trust and hold termly meetings for PE leaders across the trust.
Forest Schools, Outdoor Learning and Wider Curriculum	<b>Academy</b>	<b>Central</b>
	Ensure curriculum offer takes into account outdoor learning and life skills	To provide a lead practitioner who co-ordinates the curriculum offer in this area.

**Finance, assurance and regulatory**

	<b>Academy</b>	<b>Central</b>
Transaction processing	<p>Responsible for all purchasing and sales accounting transactions from the order through to the payment/ receipt.</p> <p>With assistance from central services where required the processing of journals, expense claims, petty cash transactions and depreciation.</p> <p>Monthly reconciliations of balance sheets items to supporting documentation on a timely basis to agree to the management accounts.</p>	<p>Authorisation of transactions in line with the scheme of delegation.</p> <p>Transaction processing to be centralised when it is considered to be more efficient. e.g – monthly payroll journals.</p> <p>Provide training to academy staff to ensure transactions and reconciliations are carried out accurately.</p> <p>Review academies monthly reconciliations and provide feedback where necessary to aid improvement.</p>

External reporting	Academy	Central
Year-end Statutory accounts.	<p>Ensure that all ledgers are kept up to date within required timescales.</p> <p>Provide information that is requested by central services.</p> <p>Provide information requested by external auditors within a reasonable timescale.</p>	<p>Prepare consolidated accounts and provide these to the external auditors.</p> <p>Liaise with the external auditors and arrange dates for the audit of each individual academy.</p> <p>Provide any necessary schedules not prepared at academy level.</p> <p>To directly communicate with the auditors throughout the audit and respond to any questions or queries.</p> <p>Review and agree adjustments and recommendations to the consolidated accounts.</p>
EFA accounts return.	To provide any information requested from central services.	Prepare the accounts return and submit to the EFA.
EFA budget forecast.	To prepare an annual budget in the required format and forward onto central services for review and agreement.	<p>Assist with the preparation of budgets where required and agree individual budgets.</p> <p>Prepared consolidated budget and submit to EFA.</p>
VAT returns.	Ensure that all source documents (i.e. sales and purchases invoices) are inputted onto the accounting system in a timely manner.	<p>Check and review individual academy data.</p> <p>Prepare and submit monthly consolidated VAT returns to HMRC and update accounting system accordingly.</p> <p>Review VAT thresholds to ensure compliance with VAT registration.</p> <p>Keep up to date with relevant legislation to ensure compliance in this area.</p>

Internal Reporting	Academy	Central
Teacher's Pension (TPS)	<p>Ensure that all teachers are included in the pension scheme correctly.</p> <p>Provide details to central services for any changes on a monthly basis.</p>	<p>Submit consolidated monthly contribution returns to TPS.</p> <p>Pay over any contributions due and update the accounting system accordingly.</p>
LGPS	<p>Ensure that all support staff are included in the pension scheme correctly.</p> <p>Provide details to central services for any changes on a monthly basis.</p>	<p>Submit each academies monthly contribution returns to LGPS.</p> <p>Pay over contributions as necessary and update the accounting system accordingly.</p>
Trustees	<p>Provide information as requested to central services.</p>	<p>Produce and provide for approval consolidated annual budgets and 3 yearly budgets.</p> <p>Produce KPI's in an appropriate format as requested by the trustees.</p> <p>Organise approval of the consolidated year – end financial accounts at the AGM.</p> <p>Liaise with the trustees to ensure that there is appropriate communication regarding significant changes effecting the trust.</p>

Internal Reporting	Academy	Central
<p>Budget monitoring</p>	<p>Produce an accurate annual budget based on prior year actuals and known factors.</p> <p>Ensure that the annual budget has been approved by the Principal.</p> <p>Update the budget for any significant changes and inform central services.</p> <p>Prepare monthly management accounts with the assistance of central services if required and monitor against the budget.</p> <p>Inform central services immediately where results indicate substantial deviation from the original budget.</p> <p>Provide central services with information as required</p>	<p>Provide budget tools (HCSS) to enable the academy to produce an accurate budget.</p> <p>Review annual budgets and where there has been a deficit set ensure that this has been adequately explained and the academy is still operating within its means.</p> <p>Review expenditure to ensure that funds are being spent in line with their original intentions for the benefit of the academy.</p> <p>Review monthly management accounts produced and make enquiries where actual results vary from the budget, ensuring any variations are addressed.</p> <p>Provide consolidated data to the board of trustees and highlight any issues.</p>

System support	Academy	Central
Finance (HCSS)	<p>Utilise the system and maintain in line with the software provider terms.</p> <p>Contact central services in the first instance for any accounting or technical queries.</p>	<p>Provide appropriate access levels to finance staff across the trust and ensure that the system is adequate and effective.</p> <p>Provide advice where possible for any accounting queries. Technical queries to be handled by HCSS via central services.</p> <p>Take ownership of the chart of accounts (nominal and cost centre structure).</p>
Banking	<p>Ensure only designated individuals have access to online banking.</p> <p>Ensure that all banking transactions are processed in accordance with agreed authorisation limits.</p> <p>Ensure that any cash held on site is secure and does not exceed the limits imposed within the insurance policy.</p> <p>Ensure that academy specific accounts (i.e. used for trips and fundraising etc.) are reviewed and kept up to date regularly, at least monthly.</p>	<p>Provide access to online banking to appropriate individuals at various levels to allow adequate segregation of duties within the authorisation process.</p> <p>Maintain relationships with the trusts bankers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Opening and closing accounts.</li> <li>➤ Manage bank mandates.</li> <li>➤ Upload bank transactions for main trust accounts to allow bank reconciliations to be performed.</li> </ul>

Financial Regulations	Academy	Central
Finance Policy	Ensure that the Finance Policy is made available and everyone within the academy is aware of and adhering to.	<p>Provide the Finance Policy and update on a timely basis.</p> <p>The policy needs to be updated to ensure that the Trust is following the latest regulations, to include The Academies Financial Handbook, the Governance Handbook, and the Academies Accounts Direction and any other relevant legislation.</p> <p>Random checks to ensure that each academy is acting in accordance with the Finance Policy and procedures.</p>

## **Operations**

	Academy	Central
Procurement	<p>Ensure that academy purchasing activity is compliant with trust's financial policy, procedures, guidance and scheme of delegation.</p> <p>Making sure all procurement processes and procedures adhere to the principles of probity, accountability and value for money.</p> <p>Providing accurately and timely information including sufficient detail to specify requirements to support the procurement process.</p>	<p>Providing strategic and operational procurement and contractual guidance, advice and support to the Trust and individual Academies.</p> <p>Developing, implementing and maintaining procurement policy, strategy and procedures, in conjunction with the CEO and Finance Director, and providing a framework for ensuring their efficient and consistent application throughout the Trust.</p> <p>Undertaking all procurement activity with a value in excess of 50K, sign off of academy purchases over 25K in line with the trust's finance policy.</p>

	<p>Ensure that appropriate guidance is adhered to when seeking quotations.</p> <p>Checking and certifying the receipt of goods and services where appropriate.</p> <p>Identify training requirements and release staff for training.</p>	<p>Making sure all procurement processes and procedures adhere to the principles of probity, accountability and value for money.</p> <p>Establishing and maintaining supplier list(s) for the Trust and individual Academies, including ensuring that the necessary financial and other checks are undertaken on prospective and existing supplier details.</p> <p>Checking and certifying the receipt of goods, services and works, where appropriate.</p> <p>Liaising with insurers regarding the day to day management of insurance matters and claims handling.</p> <p>Facilitate and/or deliver training to cover the trust financial regulations, processes and procedures and procurement legislation.</p> <p>Ensuring compliance with Trust competitive quotation and tendering policies, procedures and regulations, as well as relevant Public Contract Regulations and EU Procurement Directives.</p>
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Safeguarding	Academy	Central
	<p>Ensure all employees comply with Trust policies and that all information is available to staff.</p> <p>Ensure that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met.</p> <p>All academies have robust safeguarding arrangements in place at all levels, including: safeguarding children, staff and effective safer recruitment practice.</p> <p>Key documentation will be current and all academies have the support and expertise to be safeguarding compliant.</p> <p>Ensure all employees have access to the latest safeguarding training and are up to date.</p> <p>Provide each academy with Induction materials and ongoing support when making social care referrals which include: escalation procedures and other key safeguarding guidance.</p> <p>Ensure the academy website is safeguarding compliant.</p>	<p>Provide a FORGE Safeguarding network so all academies have a range of Safeguarding documents and are up to date with current practice e.g. Policies, Information, Guidance, learning from Serious Case Reviews on the NCSB website, etc. to help them manage child protection and safeguarding.</p> <p>Provide a FORGE Safeguarding team to lead and assist with Safeguarding audits, develop a current Safeguarding Compliance Checklist and review safeguarding arrangements in line with the latest guidance.</p> <p>Attend Designated Focus Groups, Family Support Networks and other key safeguarding training so that FORGE protocols are always in line with latest guidance, e.g. SCR format, Safer recruitment policy and guidance.</p> <p>Monitor training plans and the needs across the trust providing training materials on Keeping Children Safe In Education and other key areas e.g. FGM, Prevent and ensuring all academies are compliant.</p> <p>Provide CPOMS and training for this online reporting system.</p> <p>Ensure that Induction policies are robust and there is a clear understanding of escalation procedures and to support academies within the Trust to escalate concerns where there is dissatisfaction with the response from social care.</p>

		<p>Manage The Forge Trust website, ensuring it is up to date with all relevant safeguarding policies.</p> <p>Prepare and provide reports for the Board.</p>
<b>Health and Safety</b>	<b>Academy</b>	<b>Central</b>
	<p>The Principal has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with Health and Safety legislation in the day to day running of the Academy but delegates the responsibility for implementation to the Health and Safety Lead and Site Manager</p> <p>Ensure that suitable and sufficient funds, people, materials and equipment are provided to meet all health and safety requirements</p> <p>Ensure that all recommendations from Fire Risk Assessments are completed and that fire safety deficiencies identified are actioned within an appropriate timeframe.</p> <p>Ensure that a positive health and safety culture is promoted within the academy.</p> <p>Ensure that a system of communication and consultation with employees is established</p> <p>Ensure that a health and safety plan of continuous improvement is maintained and progress towards targets monitored.</p>	<p>Provide recommendations regarding providers or expert advice and support for Health and Safety.</p> <p>Share good practice across the trust and offer peer support where required.</p> <p>Carry out annual checks to ensure the academy is fulfilling its responsibilities.</p> <p>To provide a forum for Principals to discuss health and safety issues and solutions.</p> <p>Advise and assist in accident investigations reducing the risks of future occurrence where required.</p> <p>Provide support with CIF bids to improve the safety of the premises.</p> <p>Ensure that the academy has access to professional advice and expertise and has all statutory documentation in place.</p> <p>Ensure that an effective Health and Safety Policy is implemented, monitored, developed, communicated effectively, reviewed and amended as required.</p> <p>Ensure that a positive health and safety culture is promoted within the academy.</p>

	<p>Ensure that all accidents are investigated and results documented appropriately including assessing whether they are RIDDOR reportable.</p> <p>Ensure that risk assessments are up to date and in place.</p> <p>Ensure that an annual report on the safety performance of the academy is presented at the Academy Partnership Meeting.</p>	
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Updated 26.09.19 L. Hessey