



## Plymouth Catholic Schools Trust Multi Academy Trust Notice 1705

### **TITLE: Central Funding and Appeals**

Sponsor: Interim Chief Executive Officer

The Academies Financial Handbook (2016) states in section 3.10.4 that a multi-academy trust has the freedom to amalgamate a proportion of general annual grant (GAG) funding from all its academies to form one central fund. This fund can then be used to meet the normal running costs at any of its constituent academies within the trust. The collection of a percentage of individual Academy GAG funding for a MAT's central fund is sometimes referred to as 'top-slice'.

For the financial year 2017/18 Plymouth CAST Multi-Academy Trust will retain 5% of a constituent academies GAG funding excluding funds allocated specifically for:

- Pupil Premium Funding
- Year 7 Catch Up Funding
- PE Sports Grants
- Nursery Funding
- Universal Free School Meals Funding
- Summer School Funding (if applicable)
- Top-Up Funding for special educational needs (SEN)
- Additional Educational Needs funding (AEN)
- Any income generated by individual academies
- Any PFI Income (if applicable)

Plymouth CAST Multi-Academy Trust will give consideration to the funding needs and allocations of each constituent academy. There is an appeals mechanism which is described within this policy document for academies who may feel that they are being treated unfairly by the Plymouth CAST Multi-Academy Trust top-slice.

A settlement statement, based upon individual academy budget submissions to the Education Skills Funding Agency (EFA) will be issued to constituent academies no later than 31 August for the next academy year detailing the funds to be retained by Plymouth CAST Multi-Academy Trust.

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

- Statutory External Audit Fees
- Internal compliance Audit Fees
- Accountancy Fees (relating to consolidation of accounts - monthly and annual)
- Statutory Education Skills Funding Agency Returns and directed reviews
- Banking Charges
- Annual actuary re-valuation fees
- Insurance brokerage fees
- Centrally provisioned School Improvement Support (also known as 'Interventions')
- MAT organised conferences and training events for schools and governing bodies
- Central staff costs
- Finance Management System Budgeting Software (Access Dimensions)
- HR Management System Software and Advisory Service
- Health and Safety Management System Software
- Legal advisory fees
- Main Board and Committee Clerking Service
- Payroll Administration & Pension returns (actual cost of payroll is charged back)
- Staff Recruitment coordination and advertisement through TES (silver service)
- Staff and Governors subscription to The Key
- A risk and contingency fund capped at 10% of top slice set aside to fund exceptional needs of individual academies

Academies will also be expected to use Plymouth CAST approved suppliers for ICT Services, Banking Services and Insurance Services and to comply with compliance and premises regulations through a preferred supplier. These will be notified as central contracts are arranged. Where an academy has a high quality and reliable service from a supplier this could be adopted Trust wide.

The Trustees of Plymouth CAST Multi-Academy Trust reserve 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 that financial year.

### **GAG pooling**

In addition to funding 'top slice'; GAG pooling can help to alleviate financial pressures within individual academies during periods of fluctuating income and expenditure. However Plymouth CAST will hold the pool in 'escrow' and will not retain any additional amounts to the aforementioned top-slice. Any decision to commit pooled GAG in favour of an individual academy must be recommended by the Plymouth CAST Finance Committee and then approved by the Plymouth CAST Board.

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Plymouth CAST will give consideration to the funding needs and allocations of each constituent academy. There is an appeals mechanism which is described within this policy document for academies who may feel that they are being treated unfairly by the Plymouth CAST Multi-Academy Trust Gag Pooling.

## **Appeals**

The 2016 Academies Financial Handbook states:

*"If a constituent academy principal feels that the academy has been unfairly treated, they should first appeal to the trust. If the academy's principle grievance is not resolved, they can then appeal to The Secretary of State, via the EFA, whose decision is final and who can dis-apply the provisions for pooling" (Section 3.10.6)*

The Plymouth CAST Appeals process is:

- Constituent Academies have 10 working days from the issuing of a settlement statement to appeal.
- Appeals should be in writing directly to the Plymouth CAST Chief Executive Officer.
- The Chief Executive Officer will consider the appeal and notify the academy within 10 working days of receipt of the written appeal.

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