

October 2021

Inspira Academy Trust
CEO – Dean Jones



Charge Card Policy

Committee	FAR
Author	Samantha Sage
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Signature	K Foulkes
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1. Introduction

Academies within the Trust have the option to use Business Charge Cards through NatWest bank only.

2. Cards

Academies may have up to three Charge Cards with an overall purchase limit of £2,000 per month. The limits may be increased if appropriate with the authorisation of the Chief Finance Officer. Business charge cards are generally held by:

- Headteacher and School Business Manager – in academies
- Chief Executive Officer and Chief Finance Officer for the Trust

3. What a charge card can be used for

Use is intended for purchases where it is impractical to use the preferred purchasing route. Examples of where a business charge card may be a suitable alternative are for Internet purchases, and for authorised business travel and accommodation bookings (e.g. school trips). While it is recognised that there can be advantages in using business charge cards, such as improved efficiency, saving time and reduction of transaction costs, business charge cards are not intended to operate as an alternative to the School's usual purchasing arrangements. The majority of purchasing should go through Access Education Finance and the usual purchasing processes and invoicing must be followed.

The principles of Best Value and Value for Money must be used with all business charge card purchases. Business charge cards should only be used for online e-purchasing when there is a clear and demonstrable advantage to be obtained.

Business charge cards are non-transferable as they are issued in the name of the individual cardholder. Each cardholder is personally responsible for the safe custody of their card. The card should be held securely at all times and any loss of cards should be reported immediately. The cardholder is liable for the integrity of all transactions and proper and controlled use of the business charge card. Breaching these terms and conditions may result in withdrawal of the card.

All receipts must be produced and reconciled monthly to the monthly statement by the Finance staff. Authorisation Charge card transactions can only be made once a purchase order has been raised and authorised by the appropriate signatory.

Cardholder Transaction Authorisation –

Chief Executive Officer - Chief Finance Officer

Chief Finance Officer - Chief Executive Officer

Head Teacher - Chief Finance Officer

School Business Manager - Head Teacher

Each authoriser will check each Academy's monthly reconciliation to ensure that the business charge card system is operating correctly.

4. Card Security

The Business charge card should be kept with the card holder at all times. Cardholders must follow the following rules:

- NEVER display your card Number around your work area
- NEVER give your card Number to someone else
- ONLY the cardholder should place an order using his or her Card Number.
- When off the Academy premises the business charge card should be held securely, and due care taken against it being lost or stolen.
- When the card is no longer required, or the member of staff leaves school employment, arrangements should be made immediately with the Chief Finance Officer for the card to be destroyed and cancelled.
- The use of the card for any purpose that is not in accordance with the guidelines in this document will be dealt with under the formal disciplinary procedure.
- If fraud is detected the card will be immediately cancelled and necessary measures taken including recovery of funds and any additional costs incurred.
- Fraudulent usage will be viewed as gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal.
- Business charge cards should not be used for personal purchases under any circumstances.

The following purchases are expressly prohibited:

- Alcoholic beverages/tobacco products
- Items or services on term contracts
- Any other items deemed inconsistent with the values of the Academy

Cash advances on Charge cards are not allowed under any circumstances. This includes the use of any form of cash withdrawal or cash back facility. Cardholders will be required to sign a Cardholder Agreement indicating they accept these terms.

5. Procedures

Charge cards may be requested for prospective cardholders by written request to the Chief Finance Officer in the first instance, subject to a maximum of two per academy. Additional cards to be approved by the Chief Finance Officer.

Charge cards to be issued subject to the requirements of the bank signature mandate for the academy.

Recipients of Charge cards to sign Card-holder Agreement Form (attached) confirming adherence to this policy.

Monthly Charge card statements to be printed and receipts to be provided by the card user. The Headteacher is to approve and sign the Charge Card Monthly Statement Cover Sheet (attached), supported by the Charge card statement and receipts.

The Head teacher's Statement Cover Sheet is to be signed by the Chief Finance Officer. In the event of the absence of the required post-holder, approval signature must be obtained from the CEO of the Trust.

VAT receipts must be retained and attached to the monthly statement.

All Academy Charge cards shall be paid in full monthly by the Academy so as not to incur interest charges.

Appendix 1

Cardholder Agreement Form

I, _____ hereby acknowledge receipt of the following Charge card:

____ - ____ - ____ - ____ (insert card number)

I understand that improper use of this card may result in disciplinary action as well as personal liability for any improper purchases. As a cardholder, I agree to comply with the Trust Charge Card Policy and other applicable policies.

I will strive to obtain the best value for the Academy when purchasing merchandise and/or services with this card.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Cardholder)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Chief Finance Officer)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Chief Executive Officer)



Appendix 2

Charge Card Monthly Statement - Cover Sheet

Name of cardholder	
Month/year	
Statement attached	Yes / No
Amount for travel and subsistence expenses	
Amount for other purchases	
Total bill per attached statement	

I confirm that:

The Charge card has been used in accordance with the Trust Charge Card Policy

The purchases represent best value for the academy

Signature: _____ Date:

(Cardholder)

Signature: _____ Date:

(Approver in line with policy)