Special Partnership Trust

PURCHASE CARD POLICY

Date Last Reviewed: September 2026

Review Date: September 2027

Purchase Card Policy

This policy should be read alongside the current Department for Education guidance on academy trust financial management, including the Academy Trust Handbook, and any applicable Schools Financial Value Standard or school resource management requirements. Purchase card use must support regularity, propriety and value for money in the use of public funds.

The governing body or delegated committee should approve the operation of purchase cards, including cardholder eligibility, individual card limits and any changes to those arrangements. Approval decisions and subsequent amendments should be recorded formally and reviewed at least annually.

The card should only be used for Trust business. Please refer to the Guidance Notes on using a Purchase Card for further information. The Guidance Notes are included as Appendix 1.

The Trust purchase order process must still be followed when using the Company Purchase Card to pay for goods or services. Authorisation must be obtained before the card is used, unless the cardholder is also the relevant budget holder and already has delegated authority to approve that spend.

Alcohol must not be purchased using Trust funds or a Purchase Card.

Purchase Cards must not be used to withdraw cash, make personal purchases, or buy items for personal benefit, even where the cardholder intends to repay the cost at a later date.

Wherever possible, the person authorising expenditure should not be the same person who reconciles the monthly card statement. If this is not practicable, the reconciliation must be subject to independent review by an appropriate senior member of staff or finance officer.
A card transaction slip or card confirmation is not sufficient evidence of purchase. For each purchase, the cardholder must obtain and retain a VAT receipt or invoice, where applicable, showing the purchase details, supplier name and address, VAT number, VAT rate applied and the net, VAT and gross amounts.

The cardholder must keep a record of each purchase and reconcile all transactions against the monthly statement, supported by receipts and the completed Purchase Card Expenditure Spreadsheet.

Suspected fraud, loss, theft, unauthorised use or compromise of a Purchase Card must be reported immediately to the Finance Team and the card provider. The card

should be cancelled or suspended without delay where there is a risk of further unauthorised use.

The cardholder must keep the Purchase Card securely and under their control at all times. The card should be treated with the same level of care as a personal payment card.

The Finance Manager, under delegated authority,will monitor cardcard use and may withdraw a card at any time if the cardholdercardholder fails to comply with thisthis policy. Persistent failure to provideprovide receipts, reconciliations or other evidence to support expenditureexpenditureexpenditure may result in cancellation of the cardcardcard.

Where a Purchase Card is used to buy goods or services on behalf of a department, the cardholder remains responsible for ensuring that the transaction complies with this policy and the Trust's financial regulations and processes. The cardholder must not bypass this policy, even where a line manager requests a deviation, and any concerns should be referred to the Finance Team.

TheThe current list of authorised Purchase Card holders and their approved limits is maintained by the Finance Team and reviewed in line with this policy..

Appendix 1 – Purchase Card guidance
Purchase Card Expenditure - Completion of spreadsheet.

- When you use the Purchase Card, **all** expenditure must be entered onto the Purchase Card Expenditure Spreadsheet, matched to the monthly Purchase Card statement from the bank and supported by receipts. You are advised to record this information each time you use the Purchase Card.

- Whenever expenditure is made using the Purchase Card, the user must obtain a VAT receipt where applicable. A VAT receipt should show the net amount, VAT amount, gross amount and supplier's VAT number. If the Trust does not hold a VAT receipt and VAT number, it will be unable to reclaim the VAT element. Some purchases will not include VAT, such as milk or postage.

- Please keep **all** receipts safely together until you are sent your monthly card statement by the Finance Team.

- When you receive your monthly Purchase Card statement, please complete the Excel spreadsheet using the relevant information from the receipts you have stored for this purpose. The entries on your spreadsheet must be in the same order as those listed on your statement. There is a column for you to state which budget or cost code the expenditure should be charged to, for example curriculum, catering or training. There is also a column for the supplier's VAT number. Where you have entered a VAT element against an item of expenditure, you must provide a VAT receipt and details of the supplier's VAT number.

- Once you have completed your spreadsheet (electronically), please check that the expenditure totals the same as that on the relevant Purchase Card statement from the bank. There must be one Excel spreadsheet for each monthly statement. Please ensure the net, gross and VAT values have been added up correctly.

- Once your spreadsheet has been fully completed, it should be signed by the Purchase Card holder and authorised by the budget holder or headteacher.

- Once completed, signed and authorised, please send the spreadsheet, statement and **all** accompanying receipts to the Finance Team for entry onto the PSF finance system. If the spreadsheet is incomplete or unauthorised, or if receipts are missing, it will be returned and cannot be entered onto the system. If this happens, the Purchase Card may be cancelled.

- Purchase Cards must never be used to withdraw cash.