



# TRAVEL AND EXPENSES POLICY

**Including guidance on:**

**Travel, subsistence, entertainment and  
hospitality, gifts and other expenses claims**

**This is a Trust-Wide Policy  
which applies to all the schools within the Trust**

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## TRAVEL AND EXPENSES POLICY

The vision of Bright Futures Educational Trust is to create a world class education to enable every young person to reach their full potential, and in particular, their full academic potential. In order to ensure fairness, transparency and appropriate use of public funds, this policy details the Trust's approach to expense claims.

### What is the Policy for?

The over-arching purpose of this Policy is to make sure the Trust's money is used properly and efficiently:

- This policy sets out specific guidance on the principles that should apply to expenses;
- Staff must only be reimbursed for expenses which they actually and necessarily incur in the course of official business; and
- All expenses should be authorised before the expenditure and once claimed; verified and authorised.

### Who is the Policy for?

The policy applies to all staff employed by the educational establishments which form part of Bright Futures Educational Trust (BFET), as well as members of the Local Governing Bodies of those establishments, Trust Head Office staff, Members and Directors and any consultants undertaking work on behalf of the Trust.

## POLICY STANDARDS

### General Principles

1. Only costs which are necessary and additional to normal daily expenditure should be reimbursed.
2. BFET will only reimburse actual costs once the cost has been incurred.
3. All claims for expenses should be receipted and independently approved. All claims must be record sufficient detail to verify the nature of the expense. Minimum requirements are:
  - Date of expense
  - Nature of expense
  - Detail of expense (e.g. why, where, who you have seen, etc)
4. Schools should manage reimbursement by exception rather than by reference to entitlements, i.e. policies should not cover every eventuality (which risk setting precedents that are later difficult to address), but require explanations of out-of-policy actions for the circumstances of a particular claim.

5. Claims should include a clear business reason where travel is other than standard class.
6. BFET reserves the right to cease or amend any part of this policy where it has reasonable grounds to do so. The policy is not deemed to form part of the contractual terms and conditions of employment.
7. BFET will reimburse staff for expenditure necessarily incurred on travel and expenses (T&E) in the course of official business which include:
  - Attendance at meetings in pursuit of official BFET business.
  - Attendance at agreed training courses.
  - Journeys made on recall to duty from annual leave.

### Claims: Criteria for Claiming Expenses

1. Ahead of incurring expenses, staff should ask themselves “Do I need to make this journey / incur this expense?”
2. Travel claims cannot be made for:
  - Travel between a person’s home and normal place of work.
  - Travelling between home and a second work place.
3. Staff are responsible for the cost of their daily travel between their home and their normal place of work. If reimbursement of home to office travel expenses had been agreed by exception for a particular reason, claims must be settled via the payroll in order that PAYE tax rules may be adhered to. Such claims should be submitted to Finance, with a Principal’s prior authorisation, on a T&E expenses claim form for verification before being passed to HR for processing.
4. Within this framework, Line Managers are free to decide the best course of action for the performance of their business. All expenditure incurred will be met from their budget.
5. It is BFET policy that, wherever reasonable to do so, public transport should be used in order to reduce congestion and pollution. Nonetheless, it is still the responsibility of Line Managers to ensure their staff use the most efficient and economical means of travel, taking into account the cost of travel, subsistence and savings in official time. More expensive means of travel may only be authorised when justified as a business benefit, or to meet the needs of staff with disabilities, and should be explained.
6. Under the dispensation, reimbursement of expenses claimed is on a receipted actual basis (please see below). All receipts in support of a claim must be attached firmly to the submission page and sent to Finance. Credit card slips alone are not a substitute or replacement for the full receipt. If a credit card slip is attached to the claim form without the associated receipt, Finance retains the right to return and refuse to pay the claim.
7. Actuals will also be paid to staff that stay in subsidised accommodation.
8. The exception is that VAT receipts will always be obtained as a matter of course and forwarded to support the T&E claim. A full VAT receipt enables VAT to be reclaimed. Obtaining a receipt is a strict HM Revenue & Customs rule. Sometimes it may be impossible to get a receipt e.g. for refreshments bought from a vending machine, toll charges and

parking fees which were paid at a parking meter. If the reason for obtaining a receipt is insufficient, Finance reserves the right to disallow that part of the claim pending a resolution of the matter.

9. Actual accommodation costs above the indicative ceiling rates will be reimbursed where, exceptionally, it can be demonstrated they could not be contained within the published ceiling. In these circumstances, staff will be required to annotate their T&E claim that no suitable accommodation was available within the ceiling rate.
10. The act of approval certifies that claims are accurate and ready to process. Finance accepts no liability for inaccurate claims but will 'spot check' claims on the basis of a statistical sample. Where Finance finds inaccuracies, missing receipts etc. the claim may be rejected for correction/completion before it is paid. Finance will retain all paid claims. Auditors (Internal, External and HM Revenue & Customs) will have access to these records as and when required.
11. Novel or contentious applications of these principals remain subject to specific prior agreement and should be referred to Finance in the first instance.

#### **Claims: Timing and Protocol**

1. Claims should be made as soon as possible on completion of the travel and always within one term.
2. Claims can be made after each journey.
3. Any claims submitted after two terms may be declined for payment and will, in all cases, require an explanation for the delay in submission.
4. VAT receipts must be kept with the claim, without them a claim may be refused. In the event a VAT receipt has been mislaid or it has not been possible to obtain one, the reason for absence must be clearly stated.
5. Claims may be rejected (and payment delayed) if they are not properly authorised.
6. Payments will be made through payroll and, therefore, the monthly payroll cut-off dates apply.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

1. Audit processes should be in place to review claims on the basis of risk, amount, nature of expense or random selection.
2. Line Managers should oversee the frequency of travel and associated expenses.
3. The claimant's Line Manager or designated alternate must, in all cases, approve the claim. The expectation is that a more senior grade within the claimant's department will approve the claim. Where this is not possible, alternative arrangements will be put in place subject to Finance's prior agreement.

4. All staff are expected to adhere to the content of this policy. Any breaches of policy could be deemed a disciplinary matter.
5. In any cases of doubt as to how the rules apply in a particular case, staff should seek advice from Finance before expenditure is incurred. Any exceptions to the requirements set out must be agreed in writing with Finance. Otherwise, any incurred expenses may not be reimbursed.
6. Finance is responsible for the framework of rules and the specific rates payable are set in accordance with BFET's T&E dispensation agreed with HM Revenue & Customs. (The dispensation exempts BFET from the requirement to produce, for each person claiming T&E reimbursement, an annual P11D statement.) To lose the dispensation by lax application of the guidance would result in additional work for BFET as an organisation and for the individual who would be responsible for validating the P11D. It is the responsibility of Line Managers to ensure that claims submitted comply with these rules and apply the rates correctly. Claims which result in payments outside BFET's T&E dispensation will result in the Department becoming liable to an income tax charge.
7. Staff are responsible for ensuring that no unnecessary costs are incurred and that BFET receives good value for money.
8. Responsibility for accuracy of claims rests with the claimant and line management. The role of Finance is to process claims in accordance with the guidelines and provide management information.

## TRAVEL EXPENSES

Staff must make maximum use of travel facilities that offer best value for money, e.g. timed trains, cheap day returns, booking single tickets where these are more cost effective and/or season tickets.

The approved method of payment for independently booked tickets is personal credit card because of the additional cover this provides. Reimbursement can be claimed in the usual way.

If tickets have to be purchased locally, receipts should be retained and submitted.

Where travel arrangements are outside the policy, or under an exception, Line Manager approval must be sought before travel.

## Travel by Rail, Air, Taxi or Sea on Official Business

### Rail Travel

1. When travelling by rail, standard class would be the usual choice, taking advantage of the most economic fare available, e.g. day returns, fixed times, weekly returns. Tickets should preferably be pre-booked to travel on specific (times) trains. An open ticket may only be booked if there is no way of knowing what time a meeting will finish. In this case, a restricted (set time) ticket for your outward journey should still be booked.
2. Exceptionally, first class travel can be booked if the following apply:
  - The train journey is longer than three hours. This does not include any time spent waiting for, or changing, trains or time spent travelling to the train station, even if this is from your home.
  - Where there are no standard class facilities to accommodate disabled or other special needs requirements under reasonable adjustment guidelines.
  - Where there are serious security concerns regarding materials if working on the train.
  - Where the overall cost of the first class ticket is less than the overall cheapest ticket for standard class. Evidence (such as a screen shot from the booking page) must be retained for audit purposes.

### Air Travel

1. The class of air travel is governed by:
  - The airlines' fare structure on the various routes.
  - The duration of the flight.
2. It is expected on any journey, on value for money grounds, that staff will use economy or premium economy or world traveller plus fares if these are available on the required route. First class air travel and business class is not normally allowed.
3. Air miles and similar benefits earned through official travel should not be used for private purposes. Staff in receipt of air miles or other frequent flier scheme points can use them for official purposes to "purchase" enhanced facilities such as seat upgrades and, as members of

such schemes, may use certain facilities such as special departure lounges and priority booking arrangements.

### **Taxi Travel**

1. Use of taxis is not an entitlement and official journeys should be made by public transport, particularly in London.
2. Taxi fares may be claimed where no suitable public transport is available; where travelling in an unknown locality; public transport is infrequent or where the saving in official time is important.
3. Use of a taxi must be pre-authorized by the Line Manager who should ensure that these conditions are met and the reason for the use of a taxi is included by way of a note.
4. Only in exceptional circumstances, such as an urgent, unplanned need for late working may retrospective approval be obtained from the Line Manager. Such claims are likely to be a taxable benefit.
5. Taxi fares may also be reimbursed to/from home or to/from the office where the journey is either early in the morning (before 6:30 a.m.) or late at night (after 10:00 p.m.) and alternative methods of public transport are not available. This may also apply for reasonable adjustment cases (if an adjustment has been approved as a result of a disability), welfare reasons or issues of personal safety.
6. Where the use of a taxi has been pre-authorized in exceptional circumstances, staff should check if the school has an account with a local taxi firm, thus requiring no cash to be paid out and the cost will be charged to the school's account.

### **Sea Travel**

Exceptionally, staff may need to travel by sea. The principals of rail and air travel apply.

### **Overseas Visits**

1. Information about the rates of allowance and advances is obtainable from Finance.
2. Staff are responsible for ensuring their passport and visas are in order and any appropriate vaccination(s) is arranged.
3. A risk assessment must be completed ahead of each overseas visit.

### **Travel Insurance**

1. In the event of personal injury or loss of any personal effects whilst travelling on official duty, staff should submit a claim form to Finance. Claims will be considered on a case-by-case basis having regard to normal terms and conditions of service.
2. Staff travelling abroad are advised to complete a Letter of Assurance which confirms arrangements regarding payment of medical bills, repatriation, etc. This is to assist with the



provision of medical or dental treatment in countries where the authorities have concerns about payment of bills, e.g. North America. A discussion with the Chief Finance Officer should be undertaken before any such visits.

3. In the event of loss of any BFET property whilst travelling on official duty, staff should refer to the Finance contact or, in the case of BFET Head Office staff, the Chief Finance Officer.
4. Staff should not submit any T&E claims for reimbursement of medical, or any other, insurance premiums unless prior arrangement has been obtained.

## Travel by private vehicle on official business

### General

1. At all times, the following order of priority should be adhered to when travelling on official business:
  - Public transport.
  - Private vehicle (not hire car).
2. Staff will only be reimbursed for expenses which they actually and necessarily incur in the course of official travel using their own vehicle. Reimbursement of motor mileage allowances may only be made for travel on official business.
3. Payments may be made to allow staff to use their own vehicles provided there is a benefit to BFET and the mileage rate represents the most cost effective means of transport.
4. Wherever possible car sharing should be adopted.

### Reimbursement for the Use of Private Vehicles

1. Payment of motor mileage allowance will only be paid for travel on official business.
2. Mileage allowances are paid for the actual distance necessarily travelled in excess of your normal home to work journey. Payment for the cost of travel between home and the permanent work place (including at weekends) is fully taxable and should be omitted from any claim for motor mileage.  
Miles normally covered by a return trip between home and the permanent work place should reduce the distance included on the claim form. For example: If a normal journey to and from the permanent work place is 10 miles each way, when required to travel to an alternative temporary place of work, a claim can be made for the mileage less 20 miles which is the amount which will be reimbursed.
3. In cases where staff do not use a car to get to work the costs of the travel to work are nil or negligible. Therefore if using the car to drive to an alternative temporary place of work, motor mileage allowance can be claimed for the entire journey.
4. When claiming motor mileage all staff must ensure that:
  - They are in possession of a valid driving licence.

- The vehicle has insurance for business use which covers bodily injury to or death of third parties; bodily injury to or death of any passenger; damage to the property of third parties and which permits the use of the car either in connection with the owner's business or the business of the employing department or agency. (There may be a BFET Policy in place but this should be checked with Finance before use of a private vehicle if business insurance is not held.)
- Private vehicles are in a roadworthy condition and, where appropriate, possess a current MOT certificate.
- Vehicles are serviced and maintained according to the manufacturer's schedule.

### Mileage Limits and Allowances

1. Motor mileage allowance is payable if a member of staff uses their car for their own convenience and there is benefit to BFET in doing so.
2. The allowance covers the full cost, inclusive of fuel.
3. As with all such decisions, the full range of Value for Money options must be considered before using a personal vehicle.
4. Rates of Allowance (HMRC Recommended)

Transport Method	Miles	Rate (per mile)
Motor Cars	1 to 10,000 miles	45.0 p
Motor Cars	Over 10,000 miles*	25.0 p
<i>* business miles in any one tax year</i>		

If staff are about to reach the point of over 10,000 business miles in a year, they should contact Finance as there may be HMRC implications.

### Health and Safety

1. When opting to drive on BFET business, it is important to remember the following health and safety best practice:
  - On long journeys ensure you take a break of between 15 to 20 minutes every two hours.
  - Never use a mobile telephone whilst driving. Mobile devices should be switched off to avoid the possibility of distraction.
  - Hands-free devices should be used with caution.

### Two Places of Work

1. Most staff will have one place of work where they spend the majority of their working time. In the unlikely circumstances where members of staff regularly carry out the duties of their role at more than one BFET location, they will be deemed to have two places of work for tax purposes.

Two places of work - key criteria:

- The attendance has to be regular (although not specified by BFET, this will usually apply if the attendance at one site is at least 40 % of availability).
- The work at both locations has to involve the substantive duties of the role (visits to another location to attend a meeting or a seminar would not count but the act of logging on to the computer network would).
- Any expenses incurred in these cases would not be subject to tax.

2. For staff that fit the above criteria and are claiming reimbursement of expenses incurred in travelling to the second workplace a taxable benefit will apply. In order for BFET to meet this tax liability an appropriate claim should be made. Finance should be contacted in order to advise in the first instance.
3. A personal tax liability is likely to arise if the above guidance is not followed. If staff are in any doubt regarding their work arrangements or work pattern, they should refer to the Flowchart (Appendix A) and discuss with Finance.
4. In most circumstances BFET will consider meeting the tax liability, but this should not be assumed.

## SUBSISTENCE EXPENSES

### Day Subsistence

- Day subsistence expenses may, with prior authorisation and appropriate receipts, be claimed on an actual costs basis within the following indicative limits:

SUBSISTENCE TABLE	
Period of Absence	UK (£)
More than 8 hours and no official food provided - Lunch taken away from office premises	6.00
More than 12 hours and no official food provided - Dinner	20.00
Late working in the office - provision of an evening meal in the office	10.00
Breakfast - pre 6:00 a.m. start of official journey	6.00

- Travel between BFET locations is classed as attendance at an alternative place of work and there will be no entitlement to reimbursement for any food, unless you are required to stay overnight when Dinner and Breakfast can be claimed as part of the cost of the overnight stay.
- The limits are mandatory and can only be exceeded with prior Line Management approval.
- Late working in the office applies to after 9:00 p.m. Pre-approval by Line Management is required and staff should take notice of the potential for any payment to be classified as a taxable benefit. Only in exceptional circumstances, such as an urgent, unplanned need for late working may retrospective approval be obtained from the Line Manager.
- If breakfast cannot be taken at home because of an early start when travelling on official business other than between BFET offices, a claim may be made provided the journey from home starts before 6:00 a.m.
- The period of absence should be calculated on the actual time of absence based on departure time from home or office and time of arrival back at home or office, less the usual journey time from home to office. Multiple periods of absence in any one day may be aggregated where separated by less than one hour spent back at the office during which no meal could be taken.
- If a meal is necessarily taken on a train (or other transport) during a period qualifying for Day Subsistence, the actual cost of the meal may be reimbursed up to the limits set out above. In exceptional circumstances, should it be necessary to exceed the limit, the Line Manager must authorise the additional expenditure. Failure to provide the authorisation as part of a claim will result in the claim being capped at the limit.

## Alcohol

1. There will be no reimbursement for the purchase of alcohol as part of subsistence. The purchase of any alcohol will be at staff's own expense.
2. When travelling, circumstances may arise, for example when taking a meal with external colleagues, in which hospitality will need to be reciprocated. In these circumstances, a claim for the purchase of alcohol must be accompanied by a full explanation of the circumstances and be specifically approved by a Line Manager. (See also Official Entertainment.)

## Overnight Expenses

Overnight expenses are paid where staff cannot be reasonably expected to make the return journey to and from a meeting or other detached duty workplace in the same day. There are two elements to this: overnight accommodation and overnight allowances.

### Overnight Accommodation

1. Repayment of overnight accommodation is paid on a bed and breakfast basis, based on actual expenditure with the following criteria:

London	Elsewhere in the UK	Overseas
£150.00	£110.00	20% uplift on the London rate is allowed

2. Rate depends on the location of the hotel, not the meeting.
3. Expenditure to cover the cost of the remaining meals within the 24-hour period as per the Subsistence Table.
4. The 20% uplift provides cover for movement in exchange rates.
5. Accommodation provided within five miles of the member of staff's normal place of work will qualify as a taxable benefit under HMRC regulations and, therefore, claims for reimbursement must be processed through payroll. If this means the member of staff may be out of pocket due to exceptional circumstances, approved by the Principal, Finance should be contacted for guidance.

### Overnight Allowances

1. Minimal incidental expenses will be allowable on a receipted actual cost basis to cover items such as a telephone call home or to purchase a toiletry item that has been forgotten, for example. This also applied to attendance at training courses. Indicative limits for spend remain at £5 in the UK and £10 overseas. These are classed as subsistence allowances.
2. Subsistence allowances are intended to cover all subsistence costs incurred within a 24-hour period, i.e. bed, breakfast, lunch, dinner and other out-of-pocket expenses. If meals are provided free (e.g. conference lunches) no claim should be made for that meal. Where the period of absence exceeds 24 hours, but does not justify a further overnight stay, residual day subsistence may be additionally claimed in accordance with the normal criteria.

3. Staff are entitled to accommodation standards as detailed and three meals a day. There may, exceptionally, be occasions when it is not possible to reach these standards within the set limits. On such an occasion, staff will need to record circumstances on claim forms and explain the steps taken to keep costs to a minimum. Line Manager approval must be obtained prior to travel if it is known limits are going to be exceeded.
4. In exceptional cases where the cost of overnight accommodation exceeds the limits shown on the table on page 11, staff may claim actual expenditure. Line Manager approval should be obtained in advance and receipts, together with a note explaining why the limit was exceeded, should be included with the expense's claim.
5. Where meals are claimed on an actual expenditure basis and exceed the limits, receipts, together with approval from the Line Manager confirming agreement for the limit to be exceeded, should be included with the expense's claim. Failure to provide this will result in your claim being capped at the limit.
6. Where gratuities are a recognised part of the cost (e.g. in restaurants) they are reclaimable and should be included in the receipt for expenditure. A reasonable amount in this instance is deemed to be 10%.

### **Accommodation Standards**

1. Subsistence allowances adopted should ensure all staff can stay in accommodation which meets the following minimum standards:
  - A single en suite room (with shower and/or bath), television and tea and coffee making facilities.
  - Space should be adequate and, where necessary, working facilities (e.g. a desk) should be available. A telephone is considered to be desirable.
  - Personal security and emergency procedures should be adequate.
  - The surrounding area should be as safe as it is reasonable to expect.
  - Adequate and reasonably priced restaurant facilities should be available either in the hotel or nearby and should offer an affordable table d'hôte menu.

### **Training Course Expenses**

Claims can only be considered for expenditure that was necessarily incurred in the performance of any official duty undertaken during the duration of the course. The following are considered to be acceptable:

- Transport costs to and from the course centre if the course provider has not made arrangements.
- Costs incurred on official telephone calls, internet connections or fax transmission costs.

### **Miscellaneous Expenses**

Incidental expenses incurred as part of official travel, e.g. phone calls (including use of personal mobile phones supported by itemised bills), tolls and parking fees may be claimed.

Under no circumstances may other miscellaneous office expenses be claimed by T&E.

## WORKING LUNCHES AND OFFICIAL ENTERTAINMENT

### Working Lunches or the Provision of Refreshments

The following are guidelines as to when refreshments can be provided and should be used at the Principal's discretion.

1. When promoting the smooth running of official business. The meeting would normally include external guests and be in excess of two hours, one hour of which should be in the period 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m.
2. Principals and the BFET Executive Team may approve working lunches. They are responsible for defending the expenditure if challenged and should ensure that meetings are not timed solely to justify working lunches.
3. In-house catering facilities should normally be used for working lunches where this is available. However, purchase can be made from other suppliers if shown to be better value for money. The amount that will be reimbursed, inclusive of soft drinks, is subject to a limit of £10 per head, inclusive of VAT.
4. As a general principle, the purchase of refreshments for staff during working hours will not be made. However, Principal's discretion will apply as there may be circumstances where this is acceptable.

### Official Entertainment

1. Hospitality at BFET expense normally takes the form of lunch or evening meal; casual drinks do not qualify for reimbursement. Only functions with external guests present qualify for reimbursement.
2. Staff in attendance at lunches or evening meals should be dependent on a necessary business requirement to attend and there should be no element of reward in staff attending a function.
3. The amount that will be reimbursed to Senior Managers extending hospitality to official guests is normally subject to a limit of:
  - £25 per head for Lunch
  - £35 per head for Dinner

## GIFTS

### Expenditure on Official Gifts

1. The purchase of gifts, using public money, should only be considered in exceptional circumstances. The cost of any such gifts should involve only modest expense. The purchase of gifts will normally only be appropriate where they are to be presented by Senior Leadership when it is anticipated that a gift may be offered and it is considered necessary to reciprocate.
2. Occasionally it may also be appropriate to present a gift to a visitor or to someone who has made a significant contribution to a piece of work sponsored by BFET who is not an employee.
3. Expenditure on official gifts must be pre-authorised by the Principal or BFET Executive Team. The following information should be provided as soon as practicable after the expenditure has been incurred:
  - The amount spent.
  - The date of payment.
  - The name and position of the recipient.
  - A description of the gift.
  - The reason for presenting the gift.
  - A statement from the donor to confirm the gift was given to the intended recipient.
4. Current limits on expenditure on official gifts is £35.
5. Expenditure on official gifts should not be confused with expenditure on non-pay awards.
6. As a general principle, the purchase of gifts for colleagues is not usually permissible. Such expenditure is personal and should be funded by way of a collection e.g. flowers, wedding gifts, cakes, etc. However, Principal's discretion will apply as there may be circumstances where this is acceptable e.g. bereavement, hospitalisation of a member of staff.

### Accepting or Agreeing to Accept a Reward or Gift

1. If staff receive a gift or reward of any nature from any person or body outside of BFET they must declare it to the Principal immediately or, in the case of the BFET Executive Team, to the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operations Officer or Trust Board. Gifts or rewards would include free accommodation, educational resources, equipment etc as well as the more obvious ones such as a personal gift. Failure to do so could result in the action being deemed as "acting improperly" under the Bribery Act 2010.
2. It may mean that, in order to protect the member of staff, the Trust will not allow the individual to retain the gift. If the gift is retained, there are potential HMRC implications for the member of staff and potential for the individual and/or Trust to be accused of bribery.
3. It is acknowledged that parents and pupils may choose to provide staff with modest gifts including inter alia, bottles of wine, books and vouchers. These should be recorded but are unlikely to be of any concern under the Bribery Act of 2010 unless their value is significant, in which case the employee is advised to consult the Principal.



## APPENDIX A : TWO PLACES OF WORK FLOWCHART

