



St. Gregory's Catholic High School

Debit Card Policy

Monitoring

The implementation of the policy will be monitored by the Director of Finance and Resources.

Evaluation

The policy was reviewed by the Director of Finance and Resources and Senior Leadership Team on 12th May 2025 prior to the submission of the policy to Governors' Resources Committee for scrutiny and recommendation to the Full Governing Board for approval.

Key policy dates:

Ratified by the Full Governing Board: 9th July 2025

Review frequency: Annual

Next policy review commences: Summer Term 2026

A School Debit Card is required to enable the school to purchase goods where the company being used provides the best value but an invoice cannot be raised or a credit account cannot be set up.

1. Debit Card Issue

- 1.1. A card will be issued to each member of staff as determined by the school and agreed by the Local Authority. The card will be personal to the individual and can only be used by the named cardholder. There is no charge to the school or individual for the provision of a card.
- 1.2. The Local Authority will determine the number of cards available to each school.
- 1.3. Each cardholder must sign an agreement and be countersigned by Headteacher and Chair of Governors, which states they understand the terms and conditions of use. A copy of each debit card agreement/indemnity should be kept on file in school for information. (See Appendix 1). Please note if the agreement concerns a Headteacher it should also be countersigned by another member of the Finance Committee (preferably the Chair).
- 1.4. Any member of staff who is found to be misusing their card in any way will have the card removed and disciplinary action will be taken.
- 1.5. A security PIN will be issued to each cardholder and under no circumstances should this be given to anybody else. Cardholders should never change their PIN to anything obvious (e.g. significant dates) or simple sequence (e.g. 1234)
- 1.6. Any cardholder who terminates their employment with the school, changes post, is no longer eligible to be a card holder or is requested to return the card, must surrender the card to the LA as soon as possible. School must take all action necessary to achieve this
- 1.7. Please note any charges incurred arising as a result of a card being misused will be charged to the schools delegated budget.

2. Limits

- 2.1. The expenditure limits are as defined by the Local Authority and subject to review at appropriate times. The current limits are detailed below:

Cardholder	School Transaction Limit	Monthly Limit	
Designated 1	£2,500	£10,000	approved by LA
Designated 2	£500	£10,000	approved by LA
Designated 3	£500	£10,000	approved by LA

3. Use of the Debit Card

- 3.1. The Debit Card can be used to purchase any goods or services relating to Local Management of Schools Delegated Budget activities ONLY i.e. not unofficial school fund activities. The debit card may be used for following types of purchases:
 - Online ordering (only use secure sites)
 - Telephone ordering
 - Face to Face transactions

All the above are subject to all the appropriate assessment and adherence to the terms and conditions regarding usage of cards.

Please refer to the 'Secure ordering online' guide for further advice/information – Appendix 2

3.2 Schools are not allowed to use the cards to purchase goods or services that fall into any of the following pre-determined merchant categories of expenditure:

- Personal Services
- Contractual Freight and Storage arrangements
- Any purchase by auction
- Financial Services
- Miscellaneous commercial supplies
- Restaurants and bars

3.3 No personal purchases are to be made on the card.

3.4 Cash withdrawals are not permitted. Schools should continue to use their current cheque books should they require monies for petty cash purposes.

4. Security

4.1. Each cardholder will be responsible for the security of their own card at all times.

4.2. Suspected fraudulent use of the card is to be reported to the Local Authority immediately.

4.3. Lost and Stolen cards:

If a card is lost or stolen the cardholder should immediately notify the bank of the theft to enable cancellation of the card

The cardholder should also report the theft to the police immediately and to the LA via e-mail at the earliest possible moment

If a lost card is subsequently found it must not be used under any circumstances. Its recovery should be notified, and the card forwarded to the LA immediately for disposal

In the case of a lost or stolen card, the LA will be responsible for arranging a replacement card

5. Procedure for Purchasing Goods

5.1. The schools ordering procedures must be followed as detailed in the school's internal financial regulations

Eg. Quotes must be obtained to demonstrate that value for money is being achieved

5.2. Supporting documentation must be provided for all purchases e.g. screen printout. For telephone purchases the details should be recorded in an appropriate manner determined by the school

5.3. Schools should ensure details of authorisations of transactions are maintained

5.4. Schools should note that some organisations may charge a small handling fee for using the card as payment

5.5. When purchasing on-line some providers will ask you to provide the cardholder's address; this is not always the school address – the school address should only be used for the delivery address. All cards are registered to the LA, as such the cardholder's address is: WBC, East Annexe, Town Hall, Sankey Street, Warrington, WA1 1UH

6. Record Keeping, Payment of the Bill and Reconciliation

6.1. The school is responsible for ensuring that appropriate systems are in place to accurately record and monitor all expenditure incurred on the card(s). Where possible schools should ensure that there is a segregation of duties between the cardholder incurring expenditure and the officer reconciling and authorising the monthly statement. If not

possible a third party should review the statement at the earliest opportunity and indicate compliance

It is highly recommended for each individual cardholder to maintain a manual logging record of all transactions.

Each individual transaction should be supported by a request for debit card purchase form and filed by the finance officer within the school. The cardholder monthly report sheets must be maintained in schools for internal audit purposes

A record of debit card transactions (copy of the logs, bank statement etc) should be reported to the Finance Committee on a termly basis

- 6.2. The school shall maintain a summary record of debit card holders including limits
- 6.3. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that the statements received are reconciled
- 6.4. Further to the statement, as per 6.3 above, the school will also have access to all individual transaction details via the Smart Data Online website
- 6.5. Schools are required to access Smart Data Online on a regular basis to authorise and code all transactions. Should the school not complete the authorisation and coding element on Smart Data Online those transactions will be automatically charged to a debit card holding account on the school cost centre and may not be treated correctly with regards to VAT. The school is then required to clear this holding account via a journal
- 6.6. Schools are required for audit purposes when updating the Smart Data Online to include a description as to what the transaction was for
- 6.7. The school must ensure that expenditure incurred via the card(s) is accurately recorded and reflected with the Schools FMS as per the information provided from the Councils financial system
- 6.8. The school should make all arrangements to correctly account for VAT on debit card purchases

7. General

- 7.1. The card(s) will remain the property of Warrington Borough Council at all times. The Local Authority reserves the right to cancel any card, refuse permission to distribute to any requested cardholder and demand return of any card at any time.
- 7.2. The provision of debit cards to the school will eradicate the need for any employee to use their personal debit/credit cards to make purchases on behalf of the school. Please refer to Scheme for Financing Schools Section 3 – Banking Arrangements
- 7.3. Should any school wish to request a review of the current limits of a cardholder within their school, all such requests must be made in writing and submitted to the Local Authority (See Appendix 3)
- 7.4. The Schools Governing Board is required to formally minute an agreement to approve the issue of the card(s), to accept responsibility of its use and to accept all the preceding terms and conditions.
- 7.5. The above procedures are to also be formally incorporated into the Schools Financial Regulations
- 7.6. Any issues, items or queries not covered by the above, shall be dealt with by the LA as appropriate.

Debit Card Agreement / Indemnity

For School:

Name of Cardholder:

Job Title:

I am an authorised Debit Cardholder and I agree to the following conditions of use: -

1. As a cardholder I agree to comply with the terms and conditions as stipulated by the School and Local Authority regarding my use of the card.
2. My debit card limit is £(*amount*)
3. I understand that I am being entrusted with a corporate procurement card (debit card) and will be making financial commitments on behalf of the school.
4. I agree to use the card for official school business purchases only and agree not to charge personal purchases. I understand that the use of the card will be subject to Internal Audit.
5. I agree to abide by the established procedures for the use of the card. I understand that failure to do so may result in either removal of the card or any other appropriate disciplinary actions, including termination of employment.
6. Receipts/vouchers must be obtained for all transactions with the card, including a full VAT receipt where possible, and passed to the Schools Finance Officer. Any VAT costs not supported by invoices/receipts will be met from the schools budget.
7. If the card is lost or stolen it is my responsibility to report it to the bank immediately, giving details also to the Local Authority.
8. Under no circumstances will I give the PIN allocated to the debit card to anybody else.
9. I understand that if I terminate my employment with the school or change post such that I am no longer eligible to be an authorised card holder I must surrender the debit card to the School or Local Authority immediately.
10. I understand that I will be responsible for the security of my own card at all times.
11. I will always follow the school's ordering procedures when making card purchases.
12. I will provide supporting documentation for all card purchases e.g. screen printout. For telephone purchases I will record the details in the appropriate manner determined by the school.

Statement

I acknowledge the terms and conditions applicable to the school debit card as stated above.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Headteacher*: _____ Date: _____

Chair of Governors: _____ Date: _____

Finance Governor: _____ Date: _____

Shop Safely Online

If you want to use your debit card on a website, then you should use these simple safeguards:

- Make sure that your card details will be encrypted securely before being sent across the Internet – look for an unbroken key or lock at the bottom of your browser window or check the web-site address, which should begin https://
- Use the latest version of your browser's software and check to be sure your computer's operating system software is up to date.
- Shop with retailers you know about, or research them first to ensure they are reputable and reliable
- Keep a record of your Internet transactions, including the retailer's website address. Many online stores send customers e-mails summarising the purchase details – make sure you save or print these
- Before buying, read the delivery and return policies that should be on the retailer's website. Can unsatisfactory items be sent back? If the items are faulty, can you get a refund or a credit note?
- The retailer's website should also have information about delivery arrangements and costs, currencies they accept and taxes that apply.
- Look for a telephone number or e-mail address and note them down in case you have any queries.
- Consider the VAT implications
- Do not register your debit card with Paypal

Appendix 3

School Debit Card – New Card or Amendment Request

School Name:

New Card Request

Name	Post	Limit*

*Please refer to Paragraph 2 of the School Debit Card Policy

Amendments*

Name:

Post:

Amendment	Y/N	Requested Limit	Temporary/ Permanent?	Reason/Comments
Increase in limit				
Decrease in limit				

*All amendment requests with regards to limits will be reviewed by the LA and school will receive confirmation if authorised

Please note that a request for a temporary increase in limit must be followed up with a decrease request when required. If it is a permanent increase then a new debit card agreement / indemnity must be completed and the increase discussed/minuted at a Finance committee before the request is submitted. Any new limits (permanent) should also reflect the School Debit Card policy (paragraph 2). (Please amend if necessary)

Agreed by _____ Date _____
Headteacher

Agreed by _____ Date _____
Chair of Governors

Please note if the request for a new card or amendment refers to a Headteacher then the request should be countersigned by a finance Governor, preferably the Chair.