



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 17th May 2021 prior to the submission of the policy to Governors' Resources Committee for scrutiny and recommendation to the Full Governing Body for approval.

Policy Review Dates:

Date last approved by Full Governing Body: 10th December 2019

Date submitted to Governors' Committee: 27th May 2021

Date submitted to Full Governing Body: 13th July 2021

Review Frequency: Annual

Start date for policy review: January 2022

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	£2,000	£10,000	Increased limit due to Covid expenditure – approved by LA
Designated 2	£500	£10,000	Increased limit due to Covid expenditure – 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. Suggested template Appendix 5

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 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, PO Box 13, Quattro, Buttermarket Street, Warrington, WA1 1 BN

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 – see Appendix 4

Each individual transaction should be signed by the cardholder and forwarded to the finance officer within the school. The cardholder weekly 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 (see Appendix 6) to be reviewed on at least an annual basis
- 6.3. A monthly statement is generated for each card holder and can be accessed at <http://www.rbs.co.uk/corporate.ashx>. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that this is reconciled on a monthly basis
- 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 weekly 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 Body 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.
Schools may consider recording the debit cards users' post title, rather than name, to avoid having to reauthorise each time there is a staff change
e.g The Full Governing Board authorises the use of the WBC debit card by the Deputy Headteacher and Director of Finance only

- 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.