



The Robert Carre Trust

Travel and Expenses Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the circumstances in which a Robert Carre Trust (RCT) employee may be able to claim allowances with regard to reimbursement of costs for travel /expenses incurred in the course of their employment.

RCT is funded from public money and is regulated by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). As such, RCT must follow the requirements of the Academies Trust Handbook and ensure that:

- Spending has been for the purpose intended and there is probity in the use of public funds.
- Spending decisions represent value for money and are justified as such.

Adherence to this policy will ensure that employees are reimbursed fairly for legitimate business expenses/travel and that such reimbursement is treated appropriately for tax purposes.

This policy covers all RCT contracted employees, including all contracted teaching and support staff. In addition, this policy covers any costs incurred by Governors and Trustees during their RCT roles as outlined within the policy. The policy sets out the limits of what colleagues are able to claim and also advises how such claims should be made and submitted.

The policy should also act as a reference for Budget Holders in determining the validity of such claims that may be submitted.

Travel and Expenses

- All employees must adhere to the Travel & Expenses Policy when incurring travel and associated expenditure on behalf of RCT.
- Employees should only undertake business journeys when they are absolutely necessary. Other options which are more efficient and cost effective (for example: email, telephone, video or conference call) should always be given full consideration before travel is undertaken.
- Where a business journey is deemed necessary, employees are expected to organise this using the most direct and effective route.
- The Trust will support necessary business travel and travel with regard to professional development/training, including reimbursement of costs arising from the use of the employee's own vehicle and the provision of other support.
- Use of environmentally sensitive travel is always encouraged by the Trust.
- Employees will be reimbursed the actual travel and associated expenses incurred solely and necessarily in the performance of their duties. Expenditure should be kept to the minimum consistent with the effective performance of work on behalf of RCT.
- Employees should neither gain nor lose financially with regard to expenditure and reimbursement on business travel arrangements.

- The mode of travel should be the most cost-effective consistent with the business needs of RCT.
- Employees should travel and be accommodated in safety and reasonable comfort.
- Line managers are responsible for ensuring that all travel on RCT business is justified and will certify that all claims relating to that travel are in accordance with the Travel and Expenses Policy.
- All expense claims should be authorised by the appropriate line manager. Claims should never be approved by subordinates.
- Wherever possible, and subject to business needs, travel reservations should be made in time to take advantage of cheaper fares or accommodation (e.g., off-peak).
- Claims for reimbursement should be made as soon as possible and in any case within one month after the expenditure has been incurred.
- Procedures for the payment of travel expenses will conform to H M Revenue & Customs requirements.

Definition of Business Travel

To determine which journeys may be regarded as business travel the following rules shall apply:

- A business journey is one necessarily undertaken by an employee to carry out his or her duties for the RCT, or to attend training courses or conferences necessary for the performance of those duties.
- Travel between the permanent workplace and a temporary workplace or travel between home and a temporary workplace or travel between two temporary workplaces are all considered business journeys.
- In contrast, the cost of travelling from home (or any other place the employee attends for personal reasons such as the home of a friend or relative) to a permanent place of work is generally not claimable as this is regarded for tax purposes as “substantially ordinary commuting” and therefore a private journey.
- Expenses incurred during a business journey may be reclaimed from RCT within the rules and limits of these Procedures.
- Claims for business journeys that start or end at home should be for the lesser of:
 - The distance actually travelled, or
 - The distance that would have been travelled if the journey had started or ended at the employee’s normal place of work.

Use of own vehicle

Employees who use their own car, van, motorcycle or cycle for official work purposes are entitled to be reimbursed in accordance with the approved mileage rates. Please see appendix 1 for mileage rates.

Members of staff who use their own vehicles on RCT business must have a valid licence and ensure that their motor insurance policy covers them for the relevant business use. It is the responsibility of the individual to ensure that their vehicle is legally roadworthy with the relevant insurance, tax, MOT certificate (when applicable) and is suitable for business use.

Drivers must also be aware of the restriction of mobile phone use when driving.

RCT will not be responsible for any traffic offence violation, speeding fines, parking fines or other costs incurred whilst on RCT business.

Where a number of employees undertake the same or a similar journey for official school purposes, they should always travel together (unless there is a clear justification for not doing so).

In addition to mileage rates, employees who take passengers in a car or van may claim a passenger mileage payment per passenger per mile, where such payment is likely to involve the Trust in less expense than would have been incurred by paying full travel expenses of the passengers.

To claim a passenger mileage payment any passenger must also be an employee of the RCT and must be travelling on the same school business. Where the passenger does not start or finish their journey at the same time as the driver, then the driver can only claim for the number of miles that the passenger was actually present in the vehicle.

Where it is more beneficial for employees to travel direct from home to an outside appointment or vice versa, rather than call in to the workplace first, they are only entitled to claim the number of miles over and above their normal home to work mileage. On this basis, all travel/mileage claims in any one day should always exclude the employee's normal home to office miles regardless of the reason e.g., training course.

Insurance

Employees who use their own vehicle for work purposes should ensure that they have the appropriate insurance to cover business travel. This is normally referred to as 'business, social and domestic cover'. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure they have the appropriate insurance cover and the Trust is not responsible for paying any additional premium for business cover, unless agreed by the Headteacher and the Director of Finance and Resources.

Car hire

Car hire should be considered for long road journeys as it may be more cost effective to use a hired vehicle rather than a private one. The Finance Office should be contacted at least two weeks in advance of the travel date so that arrangements can be made.

Where a hire car is used, fuel will be reimbursed based on actual spend, the receipt must be provided in all cases and only sufficient fuel for the journey purchased.

Drivers must be aware of the restriction of mobile phone use when driving.

RCT will not be responsible for any traffic offence violation, speeding fines, parking fines or other costs incurred whilst on RCT business.

Bus or rail travel

Bus or rail journeys should be arranged through the Finance Office, however, if this is not possible then authorised business journeys will be reimbursed in full on production of an appropriate receipt or record of travel; this is to be submitted with the monthly mileage claim submitted to the Finance Team following approval from an appropriate line manager.

If an employee requires a bus or rail ticket for business purposes, they must contact their department Budget Holder for approval and then the Finance Team who can organise this for them. With regard to rail travel, all employees are expected to travel standard class and to take advantage of off peak or other reduced rates if the circumstances allow. Any supplementary charge for first class travel will not be reimbursed.

If employees choose to undertake journeys by car when it would be practical and/or cheaper to travel by train, then the employee's claim should be limited to the equivalent of the train fare.

The Finance Office should be contacted at least two weeks in advance of the travel date so that arrangements can be made.

Authorisation of business journeys/mileage.

The formal responsibility of authorising business journeys/training rests with the department Budget Holder or in CPD related cases, the relevant SLT lead. Employees must seek approval in advance regarding any business journeys/professional development.

Accommodation

When employees are necessarily away from home on RCT business they are entitled to hotel or other suitable accommodation. Basic standards include cleanliness, privacy, personal security and the availability of breakfast.

All overnight stays must be approved in advance by the authorised department Budget Holder or the SLT lead if CPD related travel and the Director of Finance and Resources. Staff should not book rooms costing more than £110 for Bed and Breakfast outside Central London and £145 inside Central London, however, at times this may not be possible. In all cases, it is expected that the cheapest hotel, with a minimum of 3 stars, within a reasonable distance from the required place of work, would be selected.

In some situations, particularly with certain training courses, accommodation is provided as part of the package, in which case employees do not need to make any claim.

The Budget Holder/Director of Finance and Resources will determine in advance the level of funding allocated for the accommodation. All accommodation booked will be in relation to the business/training event and will represent value for money and convenience for the employee.

The Finance Office should be contacted at least two weeks in advance of the travel date so that arrangements can be made.

Meals

In the event of an overnight stay, the accommodation will normally be booked on a bed and breakfast basis. Where breakfast is not available at the hotel, a maximum of £5 can be claimed.

A maximum of £25 may be claimed for an evening meal. Alcohol will not be reimbursed in any circumstances. A VAT receipt is required for all expenses claimed. Please refer to Appendix 1 for further details.

Subsistence

Where an employee is travelling and is absent from their normal place of work or home and is not staying away overnight, then providing the following conditions are met, a meal allowance may be claimed. Please refer to Appendix 1 for applicable rates. The limit can include drinks, but not alcohol.

Qualifying Conditions

The qualifying conditions are:

- The travel must be in the performance of an employee's duties or to a temporary place of work, on a journey that is not substantially ordinary commuting.
- The employee should be absent from their normal place of work or home for the duration of the working day

- The employee should have incurred a cost on a meal (food and drink) after starting the journey and retained appropriate evidence of their expenditure in the form of a VAT receipt.

Other expenses

Foreign Travel

If employees are required to travel abroad for the purpose of a school trip or on other business necessarily related to the school, a separate allowance in respect of incidental out-of-pocket expenses may be claimed. This should be discussed with the department Budget Holder and the Director of Finance and Resources in advance (if possible). All receipts must be retained for this purpose and the employee will be reimbursed as agreed.

Parking Expenses

Car parking charges incurred on school business may be reclaimed in full. All car parking receipts must be retained and submitted with the claim form.

No reimbursement will be made for parking charges at the employee's normal place of work. The only exception relates to employees with a declared disability affecting mobility. In this situation, reasonable charges for car parking at, or as near as possible to their usual place of work will be reimbursed where there are no free parking facilities.

RCT will not reimburse employees in respect of parking (or similar) fines; these are the direct responsibility of the employee.

Taxis

Taxis should only be used in cases of urgency or where no public transport is reasonably available or to ensure the safety and welfare of employees travelling only. Consideration must first be given to other more economical means of travel, i.e., local bus and train services.

When an employee needs to use a taxi, all expenses must be claimed using the expense claim form and supported by receipts.

Working Lunches

Working lunches or the provision of refreshments will only be allowed in the following circumstances:

- When promoting the smooth running of official business; include external guests, Local Governors and Trustees.
- In a meeting with external guests, the duration of which is in excess of two hours and must be held between 12 noon and 2pm only.

This will need to be booked with the catering department, a minimum of 24 hours' notice will be required.

Travel insurance

Employees are adequately insured through the RCT insurance policy when travelling on RCT business.

Additional insurance should not be required for school trips and overseas trips, as this is also covered by the RCT insurance policy.

General purchases

The purchase order system must be used for all general purchases where possible. Any purchases that cannot be made this way can be processed by using one of the Trusts charge cards. Please see debit and charge card policy for further guidance.

Any purchases under £20 that cannot be ordered either by purchase order or by charge card can be claimed via expenses as outlined in Appendix 1.

For exceptional circumstances, purchases can be reimbursed via bank transfer with the necessary supporting paperwork, but this is only in exceptional circumstances and with prior agreement from the finance team.

Any purchases over £50 in value made through the expenses system, must be approved by the Director of Finance and Resources.

Purchases made that are seen to be circumventing the purchase order system will not be reimbursed.

Expenditure on official gifts

Please refer to the Gifts and Hospitality policy for further guidance.

Methods of claiming

Employees should complete an Expenses claim using Edupay. This will need to be signed off by their line manager (and Director of Finance and Resources where applicable) Approved claims by employees will be reimbursed via the monthly payroll received on the 23rd of each month.

Expense claims will be monitored by the Finance department to ensure these remain within acceptable limits. However, the mileage rates for use of a personal vehicle are rates agreeable to the HM Revenue & Customs.

Copies of the receipts claimed will be kept on Edupay but it is also the responsibility of the employee to maintain a copy of the claim for their own records.

Should any employee delay in submitting a claim form they must anticipate a delay in processing and payment.

Any receipts should be attached to the claim when printed.

They should then submit the claim to their line manager for approval/authorization on Edupay.

Claims must be supported by VAT receipts and must be authorised as described above.

Trustees, Governors and other volunteers should contact the Finance Team for details of how to apply for expenses claim.

Approved by the Trustees on 25 March 2025

Next review: May 2026 (two years)

Appendices

Appendix 1 Mileage Rates and Other Acceptable Claims

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Mileage				
Cost Type	Allowed	Authorisation	Justification	Restrictions and Disallowed Costs
Private Car or Van Users – up to 10,000 miles per year	45p/mile	Upon receipt of Claim by Line Manager	Reason for journey must be given	Mileage can only be claimed when it is incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily for work purposes e.g., driving between offices, to meetings, to training. Mileage undertaken from home to work must not be claimed. Private cars up to Evidence of Business insurance cover must be provided.
Private Car or Van Users – over 10,000 miles per year	25p/mile	Upon receipt of Claim by Line Manager	Reason for journey must be given	
Motorcycle Users – up to and over 10,000 miles per year	24p/mile	Upon receipt of Claim by Line Manager	Reason for journey must be given	
Bicycle Users - up to and over 10,000 miles per year	20p/mile	Upon receipt of Claim by Line Manager	Reason for journey must be given	
Passenger Payment	5p/mile	Upon receipt of Claim by Line Manager	Reason for journey must be given	
Parking				
Cost Type	Allowed	Authorisation	Justification	Restrictions and Disallowed Costs
Parking Charges	All	Upon receipt of Claim by Line Manager	Reason for expenditure must be given	Staff are able to claim the cost of parking on submission of the receipt. In circumstances where a receipt is not obtainable (barrier machines) staff can still recover the cost of reasonable charges but the reason for no receipt must be clearly stated on the claim.
Parking Fines	Not Allowed	N/A	N/A	Staff will not be entitled to claim parking fines in any circumstances.
Travel <i>Staff are expected to use the most cost-effective form of transport wherever possible</i>				
Cost Type	Allowed	Authorisation	Justification	Restrictions and Disallowed Costs
Hire cars & fuel for hire cars	All	Prior approval must be given for all hire cars by Line Manager	Reason for journey must be given	Fuel costs for hire cars will be reimbursed provided a VAT receipt is submitted with the claim.

Taxis	All	Upon receipt of Claim by Line Manager	Reason for journey must be given	Staff must travel by the most cost-effective mode of transport. The use of taxis should be kept to a minimum if alternative public transport is available. Account taxis are to be used wherever possible, if not, a receipt should be obtained in order to claim reimbursement.
Rail Fares	All	Upon receipt of Claim by Line Manager	Reason for journey must be given	Staff should book tickets through the Finance Office at least 2 weeks before the journey. All staff must travel standard class on all train journeys
Subsistence				
Cost Type	Allowed	Authorisation	Justification	Restrictions and Disallowed Costs
Subsistence Breakfast Lunch Evening Meal	<£5 <£5 <£25	Upon receipt of Claim by Line Manager	Justification for visit must be given and employee must have been away from normal workplace of work or home for longer than 5 hours.	This can only be claimed by staff who are required to spend a night away from home on business or who are away from their normal place of work for the duration of their working day. Any cost in excess of the amount allowed under the rules will automatically be deducted from the claim. If the meal relates to more than one member of staff the maximum amount that can be claimed is limited to the rates specified per person. The limit includes drinks but not alcohol even if it is consumed with the meal.
Gratuities	Not allowed	N/A	N/A	Staff will not be entitled to claim gratuities
Accommodation	All	Prior approval from the Director of Finance and Resources	Justification for visit must be given	Accommodation requirements should always be booked directly through the Finance Office if available, to take advantage of any discounts. As a guide, staff should book a standard room for single occupancy with en-suite facilities. Staff should not book rooms costing more than £110 for Bed & Breakfast outside Central London (£145 inside Central London).
Other Hotel Facilities	Not allowed	N/A	N/A	Regardless of whether they are charged separately or as part of a hotel bill, all personal phone calls, newspapers, video, subscription TV, laundry and mini-bar drinks must not be claimed. Any such costs incurred will automatically be deducted from salary.
Telephones	All	Upon receipt of Claim by Line Manager	Justification for visit must be given	Personal phone calls must not be claimed. Business phone calls are reimbursed upon receipt and evidence of the costs incurred e.g., itemised phone bill. Staff are

				encouraged to limit hotel phone costs due to the enhanced rates charged.
Purchases				
Cost Type	Allowed	Authorisation	Justification	Restrictions and Disallowed Costs
Small Value purchases	<£20	Upon receipt of Claim by Line Manager	Justification for purchase must be given	Consideration must be given to buying supplies such as stationery via the purchase order mechanism before making individual purchases.
Other Purchases	>£20	N/A	N/A	Purchases for more than £20 must not be claimed through expenses. Instead, the purchase order mechanism must be used.
Eye Tests				
Cost Type	Allowed	Authorisation	Justification	Restrictions and Disallowed Costs
Basic eye examination	<£25	Prior approval as a Display Screen Equipment User by Line Manager	Justification as a Display Screen Equipment User	Eye examinations are available to all employees who are classified as 'a DSE user'.
Corrective spectacles	<£75	Prior approval as sight defective is Display Screen Equipment related by Line Manager	Justification as sight defect is Display Screen Equipment related	If the optician certifies that the defect is DSE related, the employee can claim up to £75 towards the cost of a pair of corrective spectacles.