

Expenses Policy and Procedure

Audience:	School staff – particularly Head teachers and School Business Managers or Finance Officers Central Team
Ratified:	REAch2 Risk & Audit Committee 4 th July 2022
Other related policies:	Financial Scheme of Delegation Timetable and Procedures Gifts, Hospitality and Anti-bribery
Policy owner:	Chris Perry, Head of Finance
Review frequency:	Every 3 years



At REAch2, our actions and our intentions as school leaders are guided by our Touchstones.

- Integrity** We recognise that we lead by example and if we want children to grow up to behave appropriately and with integrity then we must model this behaviour
- Responsibility** We act judiciously with sensitivity and care. We don't make excuses, but mindfully answer for actions and continually seek to make improvements
- Inclusion** We acknowledge and celebrate that all people are different and can play a role in the REAch2 family whatever their background or learning style
- Enjoyment** Providing learning that is relevant, motivating and engaging releases a child's curiosity and fun, so that a task can be tackled and their goals achieved
- Inspiration** Inspiration breathes life into our schools. Introducing children to influential experiences of people and place, motivates them to live their lives to the full
- Learning** Children and adults will flourish in their learning and through learning discover a future that is worth pursuing
- Leadership** REAch2 aspires for high quality leadership by seeking out talent, developing potential and spotting the possible in people as well as the actual

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Policy Overview

Overarching Principles

The principle of the Expenses Policy is that employees should be reimbursed for all necessary expenditure reasonably incurred in the performance of their REAch2 duties. The basis of expense claims will be actual expenditure up to limits as specified in this policy; limits will be reviewed annually.

Managers and staff should note that managers have no authority to vary this policy; claims for items not allowed under the policy will be rejected. Staff should note that if they pay for expenses incurred by another individual, any deductions from their claim for non-compliance with policy would be their responsibility

Submission and Approval of Expenses

Expenses should be submitted to finance@reach2.org by the third (3rd) working day of the following month. You should copy your line manager in on your complete expenses form and submit this via email. Claimants should endeavor not to submit claims for less than £50, unless they represent the total of expenses in a three-month period. Your line manager will review your expense claim form and approve this via email based on the nature of items being claimed. Finance will then receive and process the claim, any queries with the expenses form will be emailed back to the employee with details of the query.

Please ensure that when submitting your claim, you scan and include ALL receipts relating to the claim. Any additional paperwork to support your claim should also be included. Once processed, this will be paid on or before the 21st of the month. You will receive a remittance advice shortly before payment.

Receipts

Receipts must accompany all claims; these should be in the form of scanned copies where possible. Credit card slips or statements will not be accepted as evidence of business expenditure. A VAT receipt must include the name and address of the retailer, the retailer's VAT registration number, the date of the purchase, details of the goods or services that have been purchased and the VAT inclusive value of those goods or services in sterling.

Company Credit Cards

If an employee has a REAch2 credit card, this policy applies for all transactions charged to that credit card. If any limits are to be breached, the employee should use a personal credit card, and only claim up to the set limit via an expenses claim form.

Failure to follow this policy may result in the REAch2 credit card being withdrawn.

Gifts and Hospitality

An employee can only claim expenses which are in line with the Trust's Gift, Hospitality and Anti-Bribery Policy.

The Trust is largely funded by public money, for the benefit and education of our pupils, and all expenditure should be measured against the aims of the Trust in this regard. Any expenditure of this type, even if deemed to be compliant, should be considered in the context of 'public opinion', as

anyone is able to make a Freedom of Information Act request, meaning the amount and nature of the expenditure becomes public knowledge.

Policy in Detail

Travel (Including Air, Rail and Ferry)

Alternatives to Travelling and Mode of Travel

Wherever practicable, **audio conference facilities** and **video conference facilities** should be considered as an alternative to travelling. For travel within mainland UK and to/from Eurostar destinations rail is the default mode of travel over air.

Rail Travel

Rail travel will be second class or the most effective way to travel. (Most travel can be pre-booked which will be significantly less than purchasing a ticket on the day of travel, which should always be the preferred method of booking).

Significant savings can be obtained by specifying outward and/or return journeys at time of booking.

First class rail travel is only permitted where the authorising line manager considers that the need for a working environment, use of portable computer equipment for example, is justified given the length of journey, nature of journey and cost of journey. The only exceptions are where it can be demonstrated that it is the cheapest ticketing option of all available tickets.

Air Travel

REAch2 travellers should use the lowest cost means of travel and fare. Travel should be booked via the relevant administration officer. Significant savings can be obtained by specifying outward and/or return journeys at time of booking. Some airlines will also allow changes to fixed tickets for an additional charge and this may be cheaper than buying a flexible ticket. Fully flexible tickets should only be requested when absolutely necessary.

Personal Travel Linked to REAch2 Business

Personal travel as part of a business trip is discouraged, and in any event only allowed where such travel actually reduces the cost of business travel to REAch2 e.g. staying a Saturday night to take advantage of a lower cost fare. Where additional costs are incurred, e.g. Saturday night in a hotel, the individual employee must meet these. Adequate private travel insurance must be held. Weekend accommodation will be paid where the traveller is unable to return home as part of a longer business trip.

Travel with A Spouse or Partner

If a spouse or partner who is not involved in REAch2 business accompanies a member of staff, the traveller must bear the cost of their spouse/partner. It is not permitted to downgrade the travel or accommodation booked in order to fund travel costs for a companion.

Frequent Traveller Schemes and Personal Incentives

Membership of a frequent traveller scheme must not deflect from using the most cost-effective option presented. REAch2 will not reimburse frequent traveller membership fees.

Transport

Buses and Public Transport

When travelling, public transport should normally be used.

Minicabs and Black Taxis

Minicabs or taxis can be taken for business purposes if it is the most cost-effective means of transport. A final destination must be specified for all bookings. Travel by minicab or taxi is not ordinarily appropriate for journeys over 40 miles; any cost over 40 miles will be deducted from salary and can be reclaimed via expenses if there is a genuine business reason. Black taxis are more expensive than minicabs and they should only be booked as a last resort. Where taxis are hailed the cost can be recovered through an expenses claim.

Journeys Between Home and Normal Place of Work

You are normally expected to meet the full cost of all journeys between your home and your designated work base. However, due to the nature of the work of some staff, and the wide geographical spread of the Trust's schools, every role will be categorized as either a home-worker, a mobile-worker, or as a school-based worker, and home to work deductions will operate as follows:

1. Home Workers: you are based at home and your role does not require you to be in schools regularly, apart from meetings to which you are invited – all work-related travel can be claimed without deduction
2. Mobile Workers: these are directors, regional roles and others whose role it is to provide support for schools and where it is likely you will be in school at least twice a week – all work-related travel can be claimed, apart from five miles for the outward journey and five miles for the return journey
3. School Based Workers: you go to the same school every day for your role – your mileage to and from the school cannot be claimed. If you travel to another site for work purposes, you deduct your 'home to work' mileage and submit a claim for the rest.

Journeys Between Home and Temporary Place of Work

If you can demonstrate that your journey from home to a temporary base (or vice versa) incurs excess travel costs, the excess costs will be reimbursed. Full details of the excess costs must be provided on your expense claim.

Driving (Including Mileage Rates and Hire Cars)

Driver's Responsibility

It is your responsibility to ensure that you comply with your Motor Vehicle Insurance Policy before driving a private vehicle on REAch2 business. REAch2 accepts no liability for loss of, or damage to,

vehicles being used on REAch2 business. Tax relief may be available when using your own vehicle for work; please view the HM Revenue & Customs guide on using your own vehicle for work.

Mileage Rates

Mileage should be claimed at the HMRC Travel – Mileage and Fuel Allowance Approved rates, (correct as at April 2022). You should note that the mileage limits are per tax year, which is April to March.

The most recent rates have been in force since 2011, and are:

	Car & Vans	Motorcycle	Bike
Up to 10,000 miles	45p	24p	20p
Over 10,000 miles	25p	24p	20p
Passenger Payments – Claimed per passenger per business mile	5p	0p	0p

You should complete the expenses form keeping a running total of the business mileage claimed in each tax year in the nominated field.

A Public Transport Rate of 25p per mile is claimable, unless either public transport is not available to that location or there is a valid business reason for taking a car, such as it saves time, or a number of people are travelling together.

Hiring A Vehicle

Vehicles should only be rented for business purposes where it is cost effective and when public transport and minicabs are impractical, more expensive or not available. The class of vehicle booked should be the minimum size and specification necessary to allow duties to be performed. Hiring a vehicle should be approved by a line manager in advance.

Fuel

The cost of fuel used on business can be reimbursed by submitting an appropriate receipt. Vehicles should be returned with a full tank, as hire companies charge inflated rates for refueling.

Parking

Reasonable car parking costs while on business will be met as long as a valid receipt is provided.

Tolls and Congestion Charges

Necessary road and bridge toll costs will be met, including the congestion charge where there is a genuine business need to incur it. No tolls or congestion charges can be claimed for travel between home and work.

Fines

REAch2 will not meet the cost of fines incurred by individual for motoring or parking offenses while on REAch2 business. Employees must pay any fines, including parking tickets, incurred whilst using any

vehicle for any motoring offences, promptly. Failure to do so will result in the cost of the fine and administration fee being recovered directly from the driver.

Overnight Accommodation

Accommodation Rates

If you have to stay away from home overnight, REAch2 will pay for the cost of a standard single room with bathroom facilities.

The cost of the room should not normally exceed the limits set out below. These limits will be the maximum claimable, with receipts, unless there has been prior approval from your line manager after consideration of the circumstances.

Employees may also book a Premier Inn room, which has been deemed to provide the best balance of comfort and value. In doing so, employees are encouraged to book early, and at the lowest rate. In doing so, employees can also book breakfast or the 'Meal Deal', which are deemed to be compliant with this policy. If these are booked, no further meals can be claimed.

Overnight stay outside of London (and other similar destinations)

	Cost per night (ex VAT)	Cost per night (Inc VAT)
Room Only	£75	£90
Bed and Breakfast	£85	£102

Overnight stay in London (and other similar high cost destinations)

	Cost per night (ex VAT)	Cost per night (Inc VAT)
Room Only	£150	£180
Bed and Breakfast	£166	£200

Private Accommodation

In circumstances where it is economical for REAch2, a line manager may authorise in advance, where an employee is more than 40 miles from home, for staff to stay in private accommodation, with family or friends. An allowance of £20, including breakfast may be claimed for this.

Meals

Meals Whilst Away Overnight

When necessarily away from home overnight, REAch2 will reimburse the actual cost of relevant meals on presentation of receipts, up to the limits (including VAT and service) below. These limits take account of the fact that staff would normally incur a domestic cost for meals in any case:

Meal	Limit (incl. VAT & Service)
Breakfast	£6
Lunch	£6
Dinner	£25

Alcohol will not be authorised for reimbursement under any circumstances.

If certain meals have been provided for you, (i.e. breakfast included in the accommodation charge or location catering provided for lunch) only the other meals may be claimed.

Group Meals

If one member of a team pays a bill on behalf of other members of staff, details of the reason, location, names and number of staff must be shown on the expenses claim. Claiming shares of joint expenses is not permitted under any circumstances. Claims cannot exceed the number of staff multiplied by the relevant per head cost for the type of meal.

Alcohol will not be authorised for reimbursement under any circumstances.

Business Entertaining

Staff will be reimbursed reasonable entertaining costs for themselves and guests (e.g. client, sponsor or partner on a collaborative project) where there is a valid business purpose.

Guideline levels

Lunch	£30.00	Per person including drinks and gratuities
Dinner	£50.00	Per person including drinks and gratuities

Alcohol will not be authorised for reimbursement under any circumstances.

Business Phone Calls

When you use your own home or mobile phone on REAch2 business, the cost of business calls will be met on production of an itemised bill. REAch2, irrespective of whether these include a certain amount of free call time, will pay no rental charges. HM Revenue & Customs will only allow REAch2 to reimburse the business call costs.

REAch2 will not meet the cost of phone cards for pay as you go mobiles.

REAch2 will meet the cost of business calls from a callbox or hotel room, provided details of the call, including the length and to whom, are included on the expense claim.

Working Base

All employees have a designated work base and this will be your normal place of work. If you are required to travel as a normal part of your work your designated work base may be your home or REAch2 premises close to your home. Your designated workplace will be confirmed to you in writing.

When traveling on business for REAch2 by car, directly from or to your home, you must deduct the home to work base mileage from your mileage claim. This is a requirement of HMRC.

When traveling on business for REAch2 by public transport, directly from or to your home, you must deduct the home to work public transport rate published by HMRC, from the cost of your travel claim. The public transport rate published by HMRC is currently 25p per mile.

Home to work base mileage, in the event of a dispute, will be based on Google Maps.

Example 1

Employee lives 25 miles from their normal place of work. They travel directly from home to a REAch2 sponsored academy to provide curriculum support. They return the same evening directly to home. The sponsored academy is 55 miles from their home and 40 miles from their normal work place.

In their expenses claim they claim 2x55 miles for the round trip to the sponsored academy, minus 2x25 miles for their normal home to work mileage. They claim therefore $(2 \times 55) - (2 \times 25) = 60$ miles.

Had the employee simply travelled from their work base to the sponsored academy they would have claimed $2 \times 40 = 80$ miles. As they are driving rather than using public transport they must also check that their actual mileage minus home to work mileage is less miles than travelling directly from their place of work, as they must only claim the lower mileage.

For their first 10,000 business miles claimed during the current tax year, they can claim those miles at 45p per mile. After 10,000 miles have been claimed in the current tax year, the miles are claimed at 25p per mile.

Example 2

Employee lives 25 miles from their normal place of work. They travel to their work base before travelling on to a REAch2 sponsored academy to provide curriculum support. They return the same evening directly to home. The sponsored academy is 55 miles from their home and 40 miles from their work base.

In their expenses claim for the outward journey they simply claim the work base to sponsored academy mileage = 40 miles. On the return journey they travelled directly to their home. For the return leg they need to claim the sponsored academy to home mileage minus the home to work base mileage $55 - 25 = 30$ miles. Their total mileage claim will therefore be $40 + 30 = 70$ miles.

Example 3

Employee lives 25 miles from their normal place of work. They travel directly from home to a REAch2 sponsored academy to provide curriculum support, by public transport. They return the same evening directly to home. The return public transport fare was £22.

In their expenses claim they can claim the £22 public transport fare. However, because they have travelled directly from home, they must first deduct the value of the home to work travel. In this case the home to work cost is calculated on the basis of the current HMRC public transport rate of 25p per mile. The value of the home to work journey is $25 \text{p} \times 50 \text{ miles (return trip)} = £12.50$.

Their expenses claim will therefore be:

Actual fare – Value of Home to Work Journey

£22.00 – £12.50 = £9.50

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by the REAch2 Risk & Audit Committee every 3 years or sooner if required. The limits will be reviewed annually.