



Maharishi School

CONSCIOUSNESS-BASED EDUCATION

Governor Expenses Policy 2025-26

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Signed by:

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Date: _____

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October 2025

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Statement of intent

At Maharishi School Trust Ltd we are dedicated to good practice and ensuring equality through school processes.

The governance of schools in England is deeply rooted in the principle of voluntary service, but free schools have the opportunity to decide whether they wish to pay expenses to governors. We believe that no governor should be out-of-pocket in respect to carrying out their duties on behalf of the free school and, therefore, that the payments of expenses for governors are important in ensuring equality for all members of the school community.

We encourage all governors to submit claims for reasonable expenses incurred whilst carrying out their duties.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Charities Act 2022
- The Governor Act 2000
- The Charity Commission (2022) 'Governor expenses and payments'
- DfE (2020) 'Governance handbook'
- DfE (202) 'Academies Trust Handbook 2025' (ATH)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Conflicts of Interest Policy

2. Expenses governors can claim for

For the purpose of this policy, “**expenses**” are refunds paid to governors to cover the costs incurred whilst fulfilling their governance duties for the free school trust. Allowances of properly incurred expenses are not a payment to governors for their services, nor do they count towards any kind of personal benefit.

In line with this policy, payments will only be made for expenditure necessarily incurred to enable the person to perform any governance duty.

Expenses will be paid on provision of a receipt, at the rate set out in the scheme, and will be limited to the amount shown on the receipt.

Governors will be permitted to claim expenses in the following instances, on a case-by-case basis and with prior approval from the board of governors:

Travel

- Claims for expenses may be made for travel between the governor's household and an free school or the trust's central administration office in their personal car, at the level of mileage rates [published by HMRC](#).
- The nature of the travel must be related to the work of the board of governors, e.g. governor meetings, training courses.
- Payments will be reimbursed for use of public transport or taxis, upon production of a valid receipt.
- The costs of parking for business away from the free school trust, where necessary, will be returned upon production of a valid receipt.

Hospitality

- Claims for expenses may be made for the costs of meals taken whilst undertaking their governor duties and upon production of a valid receipt.
- The costs for reasonable overnight accommodation and subsistence while attending governor meetings or conferences will be reimbursed, only when the proposed claim has been agreed by the board of governors in advance.

Childcare

- In cases where a governor does not have a spouse or family member to care for a child/children when the governor must attend meetings relating to the work of the board of governors, expenses will be returned for the cost of childcare or a babysitter.
- Allowances will also be reimbursed for the cost of care for elderly or dependant relatives where the governor must be absent due to their governor duties.

Specific needs

- Governors may claim allowances for expenses relating to specific needs incurred when carrying out approved duties. This may include expenses related to taxi fares, special transport for individuals with disabilities, audio equipment, support from a signer, braille transcription etc.

Telephone charges, broadband, photocopying, stationery, etc

- Claims for reimbursements can be made where a governor is unable to use an free school's or the trust's central administration office facilities for any of the above.
- Allowances will be returned upon production of a valid receipt, where appropriate. In all other cases, a full written report must be submitted.

Reimbursement for loss of earnings:

Governors will be able to claim expenses for loss of earnings if there is suitable authority to do so and it would be of an advantage to the free school trust.

The board of governors will consider this type of payment to be viable where the governor:

- Brings particular skills or perspectives which are valuable.
- Cannot afford to serve as a governor as their employer does not pay them for their time spent undertaking their duties for the free school trust.
- Is self-employed, and carrying out their governor duties would cause them to suffer financially.

If the payment is approved, the Charity Commission will normally impose a condition that the reimbursement is no more than:

- The amount which could be regarded as reasonable payment for the work undertaken; **or**
- The amount lost by the governor, whichever is lower.

This list is not exhaustive and the board of governors may decide to reimburse in other instances; however, this will be discussed by the board of governors prior to any repayment of expenses.

3. Payments which do not count as expenses

Governors will not be able to receive allowances for the following:

- Payments for hotel accommodation or travel costs for spouses or partners who are not participating in the business of the free school trust

- Payments for private telephone bills for business unrelated to the free school trust
- Payments for private medical insurance
- Petrol mileage rates above the mileage rates published by HMRC
- Parking fines

This list is not exhaustive and the board of governors may decide to reject other requests for expenses which are excessive, false or unreasonable.

Any governor that attempts to claim expenses which are excessive or which do not relate to legitimate governor activities, as outlined above, may be liable to removal from the board of governors and, if the expense has already been reimbursed, may be liable to repay the free school trust for the amount paid.

4. How expenses are claimed

Governors will claim expenses on a termly basis unless the amount to be claimed is substantial and/or urgent.

Claims will be made using a claim form, and submitted to the school business manager, via the trust's finance office.

An example of the [Claim Form](#) which will be used by the governor can be found in the appendices.

Claims will not be reimbursed unless authorised by the school business manager.

All claims will be subject to independent audit. If claims appear to be too frequent or excessive, the board of governors may ask for further details.

The board of governors will account for all expenses in the free school trust's accounts and disclose the following information:

- The total amount of governor expenses
- The nature of the various expenses
- The number of governors involved

5. Governor payments

The trust recognises that, with mutual agreement, there may be circumstances where governors provide additional goods or services over and above their normal governor duties.

Governor payments will be paid from the free school trust's funds in return for the work the governor has carried out on behalf of the board of governors.

Governors may also receive benefits "in kind", i.e. free use of a free school within the trust's facilities for which other users would need to pay.

Such payments will be classed as taxable income and, therefore, the free school trust will only grant these payments if there is suitable authority from the Charity Commission to do so and the free school trust's governing document does not prohibit these payments.

The Charity Commission will only authorise these payments where it has been clearly shown to be in the free school trust's interests, and will consider issues such as the following:

- The reasons for the payment
- Whether conflicts of interest have been managed appropriately
- Whether the Secretary of State for Education is in agreement
- Whether the payment of any governors is in the longer-term interests of an free school in the trust or the free school trust

Before the payment can be validated, and authority is received from the Charity Commission, the board of governors will ensure that the following conditions are met:

- There is a written agreement between the free school trust and the governor or connected person to whom the payment is to be paid
- The written agreement sets out the exact or maximum amount to be paid
- The governor concerned will not partake in decisions made by the board of governors concerning the making of the agreement or the acceptability of the service provided
- The payment is reasonable in relation to the service provided and equivalent to the same service that may be provided by an equally qualified and experienced person
- The board of governors follows the duty of care guidelines outlined in the Governor Act 2000
- The total number of governors, or those connected to the governors, who are receiving the payment is a minority
- There is no prohibition against payment of a governor
- The Charity Commission's guidance surrounding governor payments has been considered and adhered to where relevant
- The payment is in the best interests of an individual free school, academies or the free school trust

Before entering into this type of agreement, governors will 'have regard to' the Charity Commission's guidance on the subject and be able to show that:

- They are aware of the guidance.
- In making a decision where the guidance is relevant, they have taken it into account.
- If they have decided to depart from the guidance, they have a good reason for doing so.

Written agreements

Any written agreements for payments to governors will be recorded separately to trust meeting minutes and include the following details:

- An accurate description of the goods or services to be provided.
- The name of the governor or connected person (including a business) who will receive the payment.
- Details of the amount, if a 'one-off' or fixed-term payment, or else the maximum amount for goods or services to be provided over the duration of the agreement. Where the benefit is a 'payment in kind', details of the benefit and its approximate value will be given.

- A statement that the governor concerned (including one who is connected to a person providing goods or services) will withdraw from any discussion of the governors which has any bearing on the terms of the agreement or the acceptability of the standard of goods or services provided.
- A statement that the governor concerned will not vote on any of these matters and will not be included when deciding whether a quorum exists at a meeting to discuss them.

The agreement will be signed by someone authorised by the governors to do so. This could be one or more of the governors who do not stand to benefit under the agreement, or someone who is not a governor but who has a sound knowledge of the matter. The agreement will also be signed by the governor or connected person who is to be paid.

As the agreement forms part of the trust's accounting records, it will be retained for 6 years as recommended best practice.

Duty of Care

When exercising the statutory duty of care requirement to decide whether a payment to a governor is viable, the board of governors will fulfil its requirements to:

- Act honestly, in good faith and exercise all reasonable care and skill in reaching their decision.
- Exercise the power responsibly in the best interests of the free school trust.
- Seek professional advice when in doubt.
- Be clear that the payment of a governor can be justified.
- Ensure that conflicts of interest are properly and openly managed in accordance with the free school trust's Conflicts of Interest Policy.
- Ensure that agreements are complied with and that any poor performance is identified and addressed.
- Retain the agreement.
- Disclose the payments in the free school trust's accounts.

In the application to the Charity Commission to approve a payment, the board of governors will demonstrate:

- What steps have been taken to recruit governors without payment for their services and, if none, the reasons why.
- Why it is considered advantageous to the free school trust to pay a governor.
- Whether the functions to be carried out are genuinely those of a governor.
- That the payment is reasonable and affordable and will not affect the ability of the board of governors to carry out its duties.
- What risks have been identified and how they will be managed.
- How the unpaid governors will be able to review performance, judge value for money and, if necessary, bring the payments to an end.
- How conflicts of interest will be managed in accordance with the Conflicts of Interest Policy.

6. Monitoring and review

The school business manager will review this policy on an annual basis in conjunction with the board of governors and will make any changes necessary.

All governors are required to familiarise themselves with this policy upon their appointment to the board of governors

7. Claim Form

This claim form consists of two sections. Section two must only be completed when payment has been made to another party, e.g. child carer.

Section one

Name of governor:		Date:
Date of expenditure	Details of expenditure	Claim
Total claim		£

[To be completed once authorisation of the claim has been approved.]

I certify that the above expenses are actual and necessary, and confirm that cash/cheque has been received.

Signature of governor		Date:
Signature of school business manager		Date:
Reimbursed by (name)		Date:

Section two

Duty of service, e.g. childcare	
Name of provider	
Amount received (£)	
Signature	