Grove Learning Trust

Central Charge Policy

Agreed by the Board of Trustees :

Autumn 25

Version – Final 03

Version

Control

Version	Date	Status	Author (AU) / Approver (AP)
Draft 01	03/02/2022	Completion of first draft	PB (AU)
		To be ratified by Board of Directors	Trust Board (AP)
Final 02	Autumn 2024	Ratified by the trust board (RAR)	Trust Board (AP)
Final 03	Autumn 2025	Update to ratified date, review date and academic year date under point 1. No other changes made. Amended roles and inclusions as per board recommendations	DG (AU)

Review

Next Review	Summer 2026

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Have robust, clear processes in place for applying a central charge to all trust academies.
- Clearly set out the functions that the central charge will be used for.

To ensure that all trust schools are processed equally.

Introduction

The Academy Trust Handbook, 2025 states that a multi-academy trust (MAT) can collect a proportion of general annual grant (GAG) funding from all its academies to form one central fund. This fund can then be used to meet the costs of running the trust.The collection of a percentage of individual academies' funding for a MAT's central fund is sometimes referred to as '*top-slicing*'. Grove Learning Trust refer to this as the central charge.

1. Central Charge Rate

For the financial year 25/26 Grove Learning Trust will apply a deduction of 7% of total income from all its academies as its central charge.

The next years central charge rate will be confirmed to all its academies once the budgets for the following year have been ratified by the Board of Trustees, normally mid-June. The academies will have a period of 10 working days to appeal.

2. Appeals process

Grove Learning Trust will give consideration to the funding needs and allocations of all its academies. There is an appeals mechanism which is described within this policy document for academies who may feel that they arebeing treated unfairly by the central charge.

The Academy Trust Handbook 2025 states that the multi-academy trusts must have an appeals process.

Grove Learning Trust appeals process is:

- The trust academies have 10 working days from the ratification date of the budgets by the Board of Trustees to appeal.
- Appeals should be made in writing directly to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- The CEO will consider the appeal and notify the academy of their decision within 10 working days of receipt of the written appeal.

3. Central Charge Functions

The central charge will be used to fund the following expenditure (not conclusive) on behalf of the academies within Grove Learning Trust:

- HR function
  - Workforce census management
  - Recruitment admin support
  - School pro support
- Education support function
  - Headteacher appraisal
  - School improvement framework
  - Professional development programme
- Finance function
  - Payroll
  - Bank charges
  - Audit fees
  - Land and building valuations
  - Pension and actuarial management
  - DfE returns
- Governance Function
  - Policy management
  - Clerk line management and training
  - Governance training

4. Review

Grove Learning Trust reserves the right to amend this policy on an annual basis at the beginning of each financial year. Where appropriate the central charge may be adjusted in year to reflect the costs relating to that financial year, the increasing of services provided directly by Grove Learning Trust, a change in year to the pupil numbers at the academies or cost savings generated through streamlining of back-office functions, or as additional academies join the trust.