



**Aletheia**  
Academies Trust

# Central Services Offer

## March 2022

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**Offer Overview:**

The Offer represents an agreement between Aletheia Academies Trust (AAT) and all Local Governing Bodies of its member academies. This Offer is intended to ensure transparency around the deduction of General Annual Grants (GAG) by the Trust in order to provide a number of centralised services to its member academies. This Offer sets out to ensure that AAT meets its legal obligations to maintain and improve educational and financial standards across the Trust.

The Offer will remain valid until superseded by a revised agreement mutually endorsed by the stakeholders.

**Objectives:**

The objectives of this Offer are to:

- Provide clear reference to service ownership, accountability, roles and/or responsibilities;
- Present a clear, concise and measurable description of service provision to the Service Recipient(s); and
- Match perceptions of expected service provision with actual service support and delivery

**Stakeholders:**

The following Service Provider and Service Recipient(s) will be used as the basis of the Agreement and represent the primary stakeholders associated with this Offer:

<b>Service Provider:</b>	Aletheia Academies Trust
<b>Services Recipient(s):</b>	Cliffe Woods Primary School
	Halling Primary School
	Holy Trinity CE Primary School
	Horton Kirby Church of England Primary School
	Rosherville Church of England Academy
	Saint George's Church of England School
	Shorne Church of England Primary School
	St Botolph's Church of England Primary School
	Stone St. Mary's CE Primary School
	Sutton-at-Hone Church of England Primary School

**Periodic Review:**

The Board of Trustees in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for facilitating regular reviews of this document. Contents of this document may be amended as required, provided mutual agreement is obtained from the primary stakeholders and communicated to all affected parties. AAT will incorporate all subsequent revisions and obtain mutual agreements/approvals as required.

**Service Offer:**

The following detailed service parameters are the responsibility of the Service Provider in the ongoing support of this Offer.

**Service Scope:**

The following Services are covered by this Offer:

- i. The appointment of a CEO (to act as Accounting Officer), Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and an Executive Team to provide expertise and support on all matters to Headteachers/Heads of School, Local Governing Bodies and staff (including the provision of RSL services);
- ii. The provision of a centrally managed finance function, save where member academies retain a School Business Manager or Finance Manager, including the provision of an accounting system, internal and external year-end audits and consolidated financial statements;
- iii. The provision of Human Resources services, including the provision of an outsourced Human Resources Administration Service, Human Resources Advice & Consultancy Service, Payroll function, support during the Trust Performance Management process and payment of indirect staff costs, such as recruitment packages and the Apprenticeship Levy;
- iv. The provision of IT Support Services (via a separate Service Level Agreement; please see Appendix 1 for further details), including the provision of Microsoft licencing;
- v. The provision of a number of goods and services, including (but not limited to):
  - School Improvement services, including annual School Reviews, pre/post Ofsted/SIAMS inspection support and facilitation of Initial Teacher Training hub;
  - Compliance, including annual Safeguarding Audit, website compliance, health & safety compliance, procurement, policies, Data Protection Officer (GDPR), statutory insurance inspections, Single Central Record package and DfE returns;
  - Leadership Support, including leadership capacity, leadership development (NPQML & NPQSL), Governor support and payment of the Rochester Diocese Service Level Agreement;
  - Legal support; and
  - Governor and staff training
- vi. Access to approved online education services, such as the National College training resources, the Key and Fischer Family Trust;
- vii. The management and delivery of Trust funds, including (but not limited to) School Condition Allocation funding; and
- viii. The appointment of a Trust Clerking team to the Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies, including associated Committees;

**Service Recipient Requirements:**

The Service Recipient responsibilities and/or requirements in support of this Offer include:

- i. To ensure that the agreed deduction of GAG is available to the Trust and that this expenditure is included within approved budgets and strategic financial planning;
- ii. To ensure that all information requested by the Trust is made available in a timely manner to assist with the aforementioned services; and
- iii. To ensure that stakeholders are aware of the Central Services Offer and comply with the requirements of the Trust in fulfilling the Offer.

### **Service Provider Requirements:**

The Service Provider responsibilities and/or requirements in support of this Offer include:

- i. AAT will appoint an appropriately experienced CEO to act as Accounting Officer for the Trust, who provide expertise and support to all academies in all matters. The CEO will carry out their responsibilities as Accounting Officer as detailed within the Academies Financial Handbook. The CEO will endeavour to ensure that strategic support is offered to all academies on a fair basis, but each academy must realise that circumstances may lead to additional support being required in one or more academy;
- ii. AAT will appoint an appropriately experienced CFO, ensuring that they have suitable knowledge and skills to fulfil the criteria as detailed within the Academies Financial Handbook. The CFO will provide strategic financial advice and support to all finance staff across all academies as required;
- iii. AAT will procure a number of goods and services on behalf of its member academies at both an individual and Trust level, ensuring that value for money is achieved;
- iv. Where available, surplus funds held centrally by AAT as a result of deductions from academy budgets will be used for the purpose of educational improvement, staff development and expansion;
- v. AAT will ensure that maximum interest is gained on surplus balances and the investment of surplus funds will be agreed by the Board of Trustees in conjunction with the CEO;
- vi. AAT will evaluate and appropriately distribute School Condition Allocation funding for capital projects across member academies. Funding will be allocated on a fair basis, but each academy must realise that circumstances may lead to additional funding being provided to one or more academy; and
- vii. AAT will ensure that its member academies will have access to professional legal advice through the services of a solicitor with appropriate education-based experience.

### **Terms of Payment:**

In accordance with the decision of AAT and agreement of the Local Governing Bodies of the academies, payment will be made via a bank transfer undertaken by AAT from academy bank accounts three times per year.

Deductions will be made at the sum of 5.75% per academy.

In the event of any academy experiencing cash flow problems, they must contact the CFO in the first instance to discuss a temporary alternative arrangement regarding payments to assist in alleviating the issues. This decision remains at the full discretion of the CFO and any temporary arrangement will be reviewed against a mutually agreed timescale.

### **Appeals Process:**

If a Local Governing Body feels that their academy has been unfairly treated in the pooling of funding, they should appeal in writing to the CEO in the first instance, clearly stating their reasons as to why they feel the level of pooling of funds is not appropriate. The appeal will be considered by selected members of the Board of Trustees and a written response provided to the Local Governing Body within 30 calendar days. If the grievance is not resolved, the Local Governing Body may appeal to the Secretary of State for Education, whose decision will be final and may dis-apply the provision for the pooling of funds.



**Aletheia**  
Academies Trust

# **Appendix 1: IT Support Services Service Level Agreement**

March 2022

**Overview:**

The purpose of this document is to ensure that the proper elements and commitments are in place to provide consistent Information and Communications Technology (IT) Support Services across Aletheia Academies Trust (AAT).

The objectives of this document are to:

- Provide clear reference to service ownership, accountability, roles and/or responsibilities;
- Present a clear, concise and measurable description of service provision; and
- Match perceptions of expected service provision with actual service support and delivery

**Definition of Service Levels:**

There will be numerous reasons for contacting IT Services. Not all requests will relate to errors or a disruption in service. When requests are made, they are assigned a call priority, determined by their potential service impact and fault severity, determined via IT Support Services. One of the following priorities will apply:

**High:** An issue or issues affect multiple users. IT Support Leads are automatically alerted by email to any support ticket that has been assigned a high priority for urgent attention

**Normal:** This is the default level that tickets are assigned and worked on in the order that they are received by IT Support Services

Exceptions to the above may be made to escalate specific needs of individuals (where appropriate) at the discretion of an IT Support Lead.

**Provision of Services:**

The following services will be included as part of this Agreement:

- Provision of full technical support on workstations, servers, networks and other matters which affect the operation of the computer systems of the Service Recipient;
- Finding and implementing appropriate resolutions in response to technical issues;
- Remote support, including management of all software deployments, updates and server maintenance;
- Advising and supporting on matters regarding IT planning, procurement and implementation of systems in alignment with the Service Recipient's requirements, including migration of services, upgrading of systems (including compatibility with existing systems) and seeking value for money;
- Ensuring compliance with appropriate legislation and policies;
- Enhanced support line for Headteachers/Heads of School;
- Remote monitoring of network equipment to allow for the provision of proactive maintenance;
- Management of web-filtering to meet safeguarding and Service Recipient requirements;
- Management of a cloud-based backup solution, including the restoration of data;
- Remote completion of all SIMS.net upgrades and patches, including technical and assessment-based support;
- Assistance with General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR) compliance for digital data and storage; and

- The provision of an IT Helpdesk system and knowledge base, which will:
  - Provide a single point of contact for IT support
  - Handle all support contacts
  - Log and process faults/queries
  - Provide progress information on faults upon request
  - Liaise with partner organisation Helpdesks
  - Manage a database of inventory, contacts and fault management
  - Provide reports detailing faults handled upon request

**Definition of Requests:**

The following definitions describe the types of request handled by IT Support Services.

Incident:

An incident is any event that is not part of the standard day-to-day operation of a service and which causes, or may cause, an interruption to, or reduction in, the quality of that service.

Examples of incidents would include but not be limited to:

- Cannot logon to the network using a Trust provided device;
- Inability to project an image onto a whiteboard;
- Unable to access user own work area;
- Unable to send and receive e-mails; and
- Unable to connect to the Internet.

Problem:

This is used by IT Support Services to link multiple incidents together to manage and effectively communicate with affected users, from the start of the problem through to resolution.

Task

Generally, a task will be raised to acquire something that an end-user does not currently possess or have access to. *An example of a task would be the consultancy on procurement of IT equipment.*

Question:

Users are able to request assistance such as asking how to accomplish a task or how to use software that is not related to the software and/or system functioning correctly. An example of a question would be 'How do I insert a picture into a document'.

Support Availability:

IT Support Services will be able to provide support during the times detailed in Table 1:

Period	Hours Covered	Resources Available
Term Time	Monday to Friday 08:00 to 16:30	IT Support Services are the primary contact for support. You will need to contact the IT Services to raise new incidents and

School Holiday	Monday to Friday 09:00 to 15:00 (telephone support will be limited)	change requests, in addition to obtaining feedback and updates on existing incidents and change requests.
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Table 1: Support Availability

Outside of the above hours, calls can still be logged using the online Helpdesk or a message can be left via voicemail. Any such support calls will be reviewed and handled the following working day.

#### Call Logging:

IT Support Services utilises an online helpdesk solution for call logging and management. When a call is updated, a notification e-mail is automatically sent to the end-user who can reply through e-mail or via the online Helpdesk webpage.

#### Call Closure:

End-users will receive notification of call closure via a notification e-mail from the online Helpdesk. If an incident reoccurs after more than 7 calendar days, it will be logged as a new incident and referenced to the previous incident. All related incidents are linked to ensure the scope of the problem is fully understood.

#### Contact Methods:

Use of the **IT Helpdesk** email address and **Live Chat** facility are the preferred contact methods.

Contact Method	Detail
<b>E-mail</b>	IT@aaat.uk
<b>Live Chat</b>	<a href="https://support.aaat.uk">https://support.aaat.uk</a>
<b>WhatsApp</b>	01474 531493
<b>Facebook &amp; Twitter</b>	@aaatitsupport
Telephone	01474 531493  The telephones are manned during standard support hours (Table 1). A call handling system is in operation. For out of hours, a message can be left via voicemail that will be reviewed and handled the following working day. All calls are recorded for monitoring and training purposes
Knowledge Base	<a href="https://support.aaat.uk">https://support.aaat.uk</a>  The Knowledge Base contains guidance and articles for support with common problems
Procurement Enquiry	It-procurement@aaat.uk

Table 2: Contact Methods

#### Incident & Change Request Prioritisation:

IT Support Services will endeavour to resolve any incident at the earliest opportunity. If this is not possible, a plan of action for proposed resolution will be discussed either through the online Helpdesk or via telephone.

Priority will be assigned based on the severity and urgency of the incident/change request as identified above.

#### Response and Resolution Times:

Several factors may influence IT Support Services in dealing with incidents and change requests. Such factors include but are not limited to:

- Access to equipment;
- Access to site;
- Complexity of problem;
- Current volume of support requests;
- Delays with suppliers;
- Lack of action/information by end-user;
- Limitations of 3<sup>rd</sup> party contracts/services;
- Responsiveness of 3<sup>rd</sup> parties;
- Staff absence; and
- Travel delays and traffic incidents.

#### Reporting:

The online helpdesk will track and monitor calls over time on a per academy basis. Reports will be provided during an annual Service Review and will show the number of calls logged by priority. Further information will be available on request.

#### **Extension to Services:**

Extensions to the service provision can be made by an individual academy by submitting a request to IT Support Services for consideration. An extension to service can include temporary, seasonal or permanent extensions to the current service. Extensions will be subject to an additional charge, such as out of hours work or excessive on-site working hours.

#### **Backup:**

Academies will be required to purchase cloud-based backup, Redstor, provided by IT Support Services at a discounted rate based on a MAT procurement model. Academies will be charged three times per year in-line with the Terms of Payment. Charges will be at-cost, based on the total allocated storage utilised per GB. This service includes all virtual service OS drives, critical data from physical server drives and staff/pupil areas (etc.) that are required for disaster recovery.

Data is backed up on a nightly basis with a rollover of one month (this is the time span in which data can be recovered from the backup date). Restore jobs will need to be raised as a support call to IT Support Services.

IT Support Services will maintain and verify success of backup and restore jobs. Any data to be backed up must be stored on a network drive, as by default; local storage will not be backed up.

Disaster recovery or minor data recovery, data loss or loss of access to IT Support Services for a significant period that is caused as a result of issues arising from unauthorised work undertaken to the network by staff other than IT Support Services may incur additional charges. Such a decision will remain at the discretion of the IT Support Lead. Issues arising from preventable environmental issues, such as unintentional flooding or local electrical

circuit changes where IT Support Services have not previously been notified, may also incur additional charges if resultant in data loss or similar.

**Academy/End-User Responsibilities:**

The below table identifies tasks that remain the responsibility of the End-User:

Academy/End-User Responsibility	Description
Access Arrangements	Provide adequate and safe access to the academy site and equipment as required by IT Support Services
Configuration	Equipment supplied by IT Support Services or one its third-party suppliers must not be altered or amended unless explicitly requested or authorised to do so by a member of IT Support Services
Procurement	The procurement of all hardware must be done so via IT Support Services, to ensure compatibility and value for money. Direct procurement shall only take place with the express approval of an IT Support Lead. Service Recipients will endeavour to update IT Support Services on procurement plans throughout the year.
Storage and Security <sup>1</sup>	Ensure critical network equipment and servers are secured and any access is restricted to technical staff and premises staff as appropriate
System User Training	Academies must ensure staff have received appropriate induction for systems applicable to their role, including GDPR. An appropriate Acceptable Use Policy must be signed by any students, staff and visitors who will use the academy network
Updates <sup>1</sup>	Academies must ensure that any non-managed or standalone device connected to the academy network has appropriate security in place
Virus Protection <sup>1</sup>	Academies must ensure that any non-managed or standalone device connected to the school network has appropriate and up-to-date anti-virus software and definitions installed
Warranties	Academies must ensure that purchased hardware (supported by IT Support Services) critical to network and service operation (e.g. a server) has the appropriate warranty cover and acknowledge that such hardware may require additional investment at their expense for warranty extension

Table 3: School /End-User Responsibilities

<sup>1</sup> Failure to adhere may result in a withdrawal of service until appropriate security is in place

### **Complaints Procedure:**

The complaints procedure is to be used if an academy wishes to escalate an incident or change request that has been logged, which the academy feels has not been dealt with in a timely or professional manner. A complaint may also be lodged relating to the overall service received, including the way an End-User has been treated by a member of IT Support Services. Any correspondence relating to complaints must originate from a member of the Leadership Group within the academy concerned and be submitted via e-mail to the following address: [it-complaints@aat.uk](mailto:it-complaints@aat.uk).

### **Service Review:**

An IT Support Services service review is to be undertaken annually within the academic year. The review will provide an opportunity to reflect on the service delivered, the scope of the SLA and to discuss future expectations, allowing for an assessment of any required amendments or extensions to the service being delivered.

The Headteacher/Head of School or Deputy Head and IT Co-ordinator (if applicable) will be invited to attend the review. The service review should be undertaken at the supported academy.

### **Service Recipient Requirements:**

The Service Recipient responsibilities and/or requirements in support of this Agreement include:

- i. Authorisation for IT Support Services to procure goods relating to the maintenance of hardware to the value of £500.00 per order directly with suppliers, working within predetermined budgetary constraints;
- ii. Authorisation for IT Support Services to act as keyholders to access premises during holiday periods, as necessary for hardware installations where no other keyholder is available; and
- iii. Engage in a medium-term procurement strategy with IT Support Services, allowing infrastructure to be aligned Trust-wide.

### **Service Exclusions:**

The following areas are not covered under this Agreement. If appropriate (and at the discretion of the AAT), IT Support Services will assist as required on a reasonable best endeavours basis; which may incur charges.

- Third-party e-mail suppliers (for example, RM Unify)<sup>2</sup>;
- Bespoke learning platforms aside from central MAT provision (where available);
- Contractor and visitor devices;
- Incompatible or unlicensed software;
- Recovery of data from personal external storage devices (external hard disk drives, USB flash drives);
- Personal devices, such as mobile phones;
- Use of assessment and tracking systems aside from central MAT provision (where available); and
- Viewing and extraction of CCTV footage.

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<sup>2</sup> IT Services may not be able to provide direct support for services where a separate, third-party support contract and commitment is active.

**Revision:**

Changes to this Agreement may be made over time in response to changing circumstances and climates. Any changes will first be communicated to the Service Recipients and a revised Agreement will need to be signed.