‘Inspiring the individuals of today, for a better society tomorrow,

“Aspire, Belong, Collaborate”

COMPETITIVE TENDERING & PROCUREMENT POLICY

Review Frequency	Every years
Reviewed	July 2026
Next Review	July 2027
Agreed by Trustees	17th July 2026

INTRODUCTION

This Policy sets out the framework for ensuring that Riviera Education Trust adopts competitive tendering processes and appropriate purchasing procedures, which meet the requirements of procurement legislation, financial accountability and appropriate management of public money. The Trust is committed to buying practices in order to achieve value for money and to be worthy custodians of public money. The aim is to make efficiencies including savings and to spend funds prudently with approval.
In summary, the Trust will always make its buying decisions in accordance to the following principles

- To seek Value for Money.
- Probity.
- Accountability.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This Policy takes its legal framework from the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- The Trust's Funding Agreement.
- The Trust's Articles of Association.
- Procurement Act 2023
- The Academy Trust Handbook – updated annually.
- PPN Notice 11/20 – Reserving Below Threshold Procurements

EXTENT & APPLICATON

This policy applies to all spending on goods, services and works for and on behalf of the Trust, including ad-hoc one-off requirements.

This policy will be applied by any Trustee or staff member, who is undertaking any purchasing or procurement activity on behalf of the Trust.

WHY IS PROCUREMENT IMPORTANT

Poor procurement decisions and a failure to comply with procurement legislation could result in legal challenges from suppliers, contracts being cancelled and financial penalties, which can be costly, time-consuming and impact on the Trust's reputation.

Any non-compliance or breach of this policy can seriously impact upon the legal standing of the public money being spent and the resultant contract that is awarded. It can also increase the opportunity of unsuccessful suppliers to seek redress through the legal system.

The benefits of effective procurement practices include:

- Financial savings that can then be re-invested.
- Goods or services purchased are fit for purpose.
- Suppliers deliver (and continue to deliver) as agreed.
- Compliance with legal and financial obligations for the use of public money including financial audit.

SPEND CATEGORY MANAGEMENT

The Trust operates a category management approach to the procurement of goods and services. Category Management is a strategic approach which organises procurement resources to focus on specific areas of spends. This enables the Trust to focus their time and conduct in-depth market analysis to fully leverage their procurement decisions on behalf of the whole organisation. The result of which can be significantly greater than traditional transactional based purchasing methods.

PROCUREMENT PLANNING

Before a procurement process is commenced, the following will be considered:

- Whether equipment can be loaned, or resources shared with any other public body or across the Trust.
- The use of collaborative opportunities which will increase the buying power.
- The use of any existing contracts or frameworks in place through a Purchasing Consortium.

RESERVING BELOW THRESHOLD PROCUREMENTS

The UK's exit from the EU means we can exercise additional freedoms in relation to contract spend on goods, services and works contracts with a value below the applicable thresholds.
In line with these new freedoms, the following options will now be considered for the procurement of below threshold contracts:

- Reserve the procurement by supplier location - this means being able to run a competition and specify that only suppliers located in a geographical area can bid. This could be UK-wide to support domestic supply chains and promote resilience and capacity, or where appropriate, by county (metropolitan or non-metropolitan) to tackle economic inequality and support local recruitment, training, skills and investment. Inscope Organisations should not define by nations of the UK (i.e. England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland) and where a county reservation is to be applied, only a single county may be reserved. Supplier location should be described by reference to where the supplier is based or established and has substantive business operations and not by location of corporate ownership. AND

- Reserve the procurement for Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) / Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs) - this means being able to run a competition and specify that only SMEs and VCSEs can bid

These options will be considered on a case by case basis. In reserving procurements, the Trust will:

- ensure value for money.
- assess the sector / market.
- identify and manage associated risks, including fraud and corruption.
- ensure a budget is available and approved at an appropriate level(s);
- use suitable model contracts.
- develop simple and proportionate KPI and data reporting mechanisms;
- undertake supplier due diligence checks.
- ensure final approval is obtained at an appropriate level(s);
- keep suitable records of commercial decisions.
- publish transparency notices on Contracts Finder as appropriate in a timely manner.

TRUST WIDE CONTRACTS, APPROVED LISTS & FRAMEWORK AGREEMENTS

Trust wide Contracts, Approved Lists or Framework Agreements may be mandated for certain categories of spend.
Trust wide contracts are put in place for across Trust use in relation to commonly and frequently purchased goods, works and services. Examples may include catering, cleaning and curriculum supplies.
An approved list can be setup following an appropriate procurement process, for spending below the spend threshold. The Trust may set these up to enable direct purchasing of goods and services where it is deemed more appropriate to use a group of suppliers, rather than a single supplier contract.
Framework agreements are umbrella agreements under which individual contracts can be called-off either through a further competition or direct award, dependent on the terms of the agreement. Call-offs from the framework agreement must be in accordance with the terms laid out in the framework agreement.

Trust-wide contracts, approved lists and framework agreements enable direct purchasing and avoid the administrative costs and time involved in sourcing and purchasing goods and services with individual suppliers. The administrative costs and time taken can negate any savings on goods or services that can sometimes be found cheaper elsewhere.

SUPPLIERS

The Trust's Finance Team will approve all suppliers before they are set up in the finance system. This will ensure:

- Due diligence is undertaken to ensure their suitability to hold a contract with the Trust.
- That a Trust-wide Contract isn't already in place.
- That they are coded against the Trust's financial system to enable purchase order approval, goods received, invoicing, payment and spend analysis to be undertaken.

Suppliers that have not been active in the finance system for a rolling 12 months, will be archived.

ESTIMATING THE VALUE OF THE PROCUREMENT

The calculation of the estimated value of a procurement is based on the total amount payable including any contract extension options. Consideration of the total estimated value should be for the Trust and not just for an individual school. Advice should be sought from the Trust's Finance Department to determine the correct estimated value of a procurement.

The procurement shall not be sub-divided, nor should the choice of the method used to calculate the estimated value be made with the intention of avoiding the application of this policy, nor shall it be sub-divided. Where a procurement is proposed to be awarded in the form of lots, account shall be taken of the total estimated value of all the lots.

The estimated value of the Procurement for goods and services is calculated by taking:

- The value of the total amount payable for the full term of the contract, including extensions and is for 48 months or less; or
- The value of the total amount payable for each month multiplied by 48 if the term of the contract, including extensions, is for more than 48 months, or over an indefinite period.
- Or, where there is
- A requirement over a period of time for goods, or services that are for the same type or have similar characteristics and for that purpose a series or contracts are entered into, or a contract

with renewable terms is being used, the value shall be calculated by taking the spend from the previous 12 months, taking into account any expected changes in the next 12 months;

- The estimated value of the procurement for works shall take account of both the cost of the works and the total estimated value of the supplies and services that are made available to the Contractor and are necessary for executing the works.

SPEND THRESHOLD

Where an estimated value of a procurement is equal to or exceeds the spend threshold values, then the Procurement Act 2023 apply to the procurement process. However, there are exceptions whereby the Procurement Act 2023 also apply to certain aspects to a procurement which has been estimated at below the spend thresholds.

We will refer to the thresholds within the current procurement act when considering any spend.

The Public Contract Regulations stipulate that the following applies to below spend threshold procurement processes:

- Restricted Procedure is not permitted.
- Selection Criteria used to assess the meeting of minimum standards or Criteria must be relevant to the subject matter of the procurement and proportionate.
- Selection Criteria used to assess the meeting of minimum standards or Criteria must be in accordance with guidance issued by the Cabinet Office.

SELECTING THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

The procurement process selected must be in accordance with the table below, advice must be sought from the Trust's Finance Department in determining the estimated value of the procurement and to confirm the approval process.

Goods/Works/Services Estimated Value of the Procurement – net value	**Procurement Process**	**Approval process**
£0 to £10,000	No formal quotations required – best value should always be considered. To ensure best value, good practice is to obtain more than one quote for orders greater than £4,000. Documentation to be held on file.	Orders to the value of £1,000 to be approved by department representative and/or budget holder identified. Orders between £1,001 and £9,999 to be approved by Head of School/Director of Education in conjunction with CFO/Finance Team. Orders over £10,000 to be approved by CEO.
£10,001 to £50,000	Request three written (formal or via email) quotations. Documentation to be held on file.	Orders over £10,000 to be approved by CEO. Outcome to be reported to the FAR Committee. Finance Department to arrange contract directly with chosen supplier. CEO to sign the contract.
£50,001 to procurement spend threshold	Procurement process to be run which delivers value for money and is in accordance with the risk and complexity of the purchase being undertaken. This could be the use of a Framework Agreement,	Finance Department to arrange directly with supplier to provide approval to proceed with the contract process.

Goods/Works/Services Estimated Value of the Procurement – net value	Procurement Process	Approval process
	seeking formal written quotations or a formal tender process. Process determined by the CFO and documentation held on file, which provides the rationale for the process undertaken.	Trust FAR Committee to provide approval to award procurement, and delegate authority to CEO and CFO to sign the contract.
Spend Threshold and Above	Advertised invitation to Tender. Procurement process to be run in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015. Documentation must be held on file.	Finance Department to arrange directly with supplier to provide approval to proceed with the process. Trust Board to provide approval to award the tender and delegate authority to CEO and CFO to sign the contract.

PLANNING THE PROCUREMENT

In order to avoid any distortion of competition and ensure equal treatment of suppliers, the Trust is legally required to take all appropriate measures to effectively identify, remedy and prevent any conflicts of interest that may arise during the course of a procurement process.

The Trust must not disclose information which has been provided by a supplier and designated as being confidential by that supplier, this includes but is not limited to, technical or trade secrets and any confidential aspects of tenders unless it is required to do so under the Freedom of Information Act.

Where a procurement procedure requires the sharing of confidential information with suppliers, such as details relating to the transfer of staff, this must not be disclosed unless the supplier has signed and submitted an appropriate Confidentiality Agreement prior to any such disclosure being made.

TUPE Regulations may apply when a service contract is transferred from one external supplier to another or where staff are being outsourced. Under both TUPE and Public Contract Regulations there is a requirement for the Trust to share information relating to the staff who may be eligible to transfer.

PURCHASING – PURCHASE ORDERS

When purchasing goods and services, the Trust's purchase ordering process must be followed. . Orders are to be placed using requisition forms signed by the Budget holder (this may be via an online process). It is intended that orders will be raised using the financial system except for example utilities, rates and petty cash.

Requests for purchase order numbers are raised in the system and are automatically sent to the nominated person for approval.

To comply with segregation of duty controls, an order should not be initiated and approved by the same member of staff.

Once authorised, the Finance Department will electronically submit the purchase order number to the supplier. Purchases from suppliers who don't require purchase orders from the Trust may only be placed after a purchase order has been generated. Every effort must be made to generate a purchase order demonstrating financial control and expenditure approval. In the unlikely event that a non-order invoice is received the Finance Department will require retrospective approval Disciplinary action may be taken to repeat offenders who do not use the correct process.

Every location should have a designated 'drop-off' point for external deliveries, which suppliers should be alerted to. Upon receipt of goods and services the staff member taking delivery needs to check and ensure it is recorded against the purchase order (Goods Received Note – GRN). In most cases a delivery note will be received with the delivery. Schools must retain this document for a minimum of 30 days or until the associated invoice has been paid.

By doing this (GRN), confirmation is being given to the Finance Department that invoices relating to the purchase order can be paid. All discrepancies between purchase order, GRN and invoice will be dealt with on an individual basis to ensure appropriate spending controls and authorisations are maintained. These discrepancies may include, but not limited to

- Items on the original order have not been delivered – partial delivery.
- Additional items, not on the purchase order have been delivered.
- Items are no longer available.
- Price discrepancy on the invoice to the original purchase order approval.
- Missing items on the purchase order that are listed on the invoice eg postage.
- Defective items.

Twice a month the Finance Department will review the Creditors Ledger and make payment through BACS to suppliers based on the agreed terms.

PREPARING THE TENDER DOCUMENTS

Appropriate tender documentation must be used for advertised opportunities. These documents must include as a minimum:

- Suitable instructions for the Applicants.
- A specification of requirements.
- Procurement Information and Evaluation Criteria.
- Pricing requirements.
- Tender submission requirements.
- Contract Terms and Conditions.

Value for money is not always about the lowest price. It's about getting the right balance between quality, cost, service and delivery. Consideration will be given on how these will be measured when setting the evaluation criteria.

Contracts must be awarded on the basis of the evaluation criteria laid out within the Tender documents. Selection and Award Criteria must be treated separately and all criteria, sub-criteria and weightings must be clearly detailed within the Tender documents, which consists of the following:

- Selection Criteria
- Mandatory Exclusions.
- Discretionary Exclusions.
- Economic and Financial Standing.
- Technical and Professional Ability.
- Insurance.
- Compliance with Equality Legislation.
- Environmental Management.

- Health and Safety.
- Award Criteria
- Pricing requirements.
- Technical Questions/Method Statements.
- Presentations.
- Interviews.
- Site Visits.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND FRAUD

All staff, trustees, and members of committees involved in procurement on behalf of the Multi-Academy Trust must act in the Trust's best interests and avoid any situation where personal, professional, or financial interests could improperly influence, or be perceived to influence, decision-making.

A conflict of interest includes any direct or indirect interest in a supplier, contractor, or service provider, including relationships with individuals employed by or connected to such organisations.

All actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest must be declared promptly and recorded in the Trust's Register of Interests. Individuals must not participate in procurement decisions where a conflict exists, except where expressly authorised under agreed governance procedures, and must withdraw from any relevant discussion or decision-making.

All procurement processes must be conducted transparently, fairly, and in accordance with value-for-money principles. Gifts, hospitality, or inducements that could influence procurement decisions must be refused or declared in line with the Trust's Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

The Register of Interests will be reviewed at least annually and updated whenever circumstances change. Failure to declare a conflict of interest may result in disciplinary action.

The Trust has a zero-tolerance approach to fraud, bribery, and corruption. Any suspected fraud must be reported immediately to the Chief Financial Officer or Chief Executive Officer. Reports will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action and/or referral to law enforcement.

TENDER EVALUATION

All Tender submissions received must be evaluated in accordance with the pre-determined evaluation criteria, set out in the invitation to tender (ITT) documents issued. Criteria, sub criteria, weightings and the attributed breakdown will not be changed from what was published in the tender documents and will be applied consistently for all tender submissions.

Tender evaluation processes will be recorded on a suitable evaluation matrix. All criteria, sub criteria and scoring will be detailed for each tender submission to enable a complete assessment of what scores are attributed to each criteria set. Reasons for scores allocated will be recorded which provides an appropriate justification and used to complete the tender outcome letter.

An evaluation process for every compliant tender received will be fully completed. It will not be stopped part way through because it has been assessed that they aren't going to be successful. Suppliers are entitled to a full assessment of the submission, which will be provided in their tender outcome letter and available to facilitate a de-brief if requested.

APPROVAL TO AWARD THE TENDER

For any tender undertaken the decision to approve the tender award to the highest scoring supplier must be taken and the recommendation to proceed submitted to the Trust Finance, Audit & Risk (FAR) Committee. Where approval from the committee isn't given, no contract award can be made. All successful and unsuccessful suppliers will be notified of the tender award decision at the same time via a suitable tender award decision letter, including where a decision is not to award.

FRAMEWORK AGREEMENTS

Framework contracts are those where a number of suppliers have been pre-procured with all public sector rules complied with. Due to this it is possible to purchase directly from a framework without the need to complete a further procurement exercise, irrespective of the value being procured. In appropriate circumstances, this can be an efficient way of procuring goods and services as it reduces administration costs on the procurement as well as potentially securing value for money through pre-tendered low prices.

If appropriate, in accordance with the Academy Trust Handbook and DfE policy, the Trust may choose not to run its own procurement processes, and instead use an existing framework arrangement.

The Trust may also set up its own framework agreements which can be used by all Academies.

There are several organisations that offer a wide variety of framework agreements, these include:

- Crown Commercial Services (CCS)

- Crescent Purchasing Consortium (CPC)
- Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO)
- Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO)
- Fusion 21

If using a Framework Agreement, the Trust will ensure it complies with all relevant procurement regulations.

CONTRACTS

Suitable Terms and Conditions will be used for all procurement contracts. Legal advice will be sought for appropriate contract terms and conditions. Suppliers own terms and conditions will require approval.

Prior to issuing a contract staff must obtain from the supplier evidence of compliance with any contractual requirements. Checks may include

- Companies House
- Financial stability
- Appropriate insurance
- safeguarding (where relevant)
- DBS (where appropriate)

Where a procurement process was undertaken, the contract terms and conditions must be those that were issued within the tender documents.

A supplier shall not be allowed to commence performing the contract prior to the formal contract documents being signed. In the case of Framework Agreements, a supplier shall not be permitted to participate in any call-off from the Framework until such time as their agreement has been duly signed.

CYBER SECURITY

The Trust will ensure that cyber security and data protection risks are considered in all procurement activity involving digital systems or services. Suppliers must have appropriate security measures in place, proportionate to the sensitivity of the data and services provided, and comply with UK GDPR and relevant data protection legislation. Cyber security requirements, including incident reporting, secure access controls, and data handling standards, may be included in contracts. Where appropriate, suppliers will be required to provide evidence of recognised security assurance and to support secure termination of services, including the return or deletion of Trust data.

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

The Trust will maintain a register of contracts. Contracts awarded will be monitored and managed throughout the contract term to ensure delivery of the contracted goods, services or works in accordance with the contract requirements and performance standards.

The contract register will include:

- Contract owner
- Renewal date
- Contract value
- Review date
- Any break clauses

Contract monitoring and management arrangements will be proportionate to complexity, value and risk associated with the contract.

MONITORING & ENFORCEMENT

The Trust's Finance, Audit & Risk Committee will undertake continuous monitoring of its activities to ensure that this policy is applied and value for money is being achieved.

PROCUREMENT PLANNING

The Trust will maintain a rolling 12-month procurement plan that sets out all anticipated procurement and contract opportunities. The plan will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to reflect changing operational needs, budgetary adjustments, and strategic priorities.

EXEMPTION FROM THE APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

An application can be made for an exemption from this policy. The exemption will be applied in the following circumstances:

- The spend is urgently required and delay would cause loss, injury or damage, The urgency must be brought about by events that were unforeseeable by and not attributable to the Trust and which will result in loss or damage to the Trust if the suspension or exemption is not allowed; and / or

- The spend is of a nature that no advantage would be gained by inviting competitive tenders; or
- There is no effective competition because payment is fixed under statutory authority or the item is a patented or proprietary article or is available from only one source.
- The following must be considered before applying for an exemption:
    - Lack of planning and / or internal process delays will not constitute special, exceptional or emergency circumstances;
    - Exemptions from this policy must not be applied for retrospectively;
    - Exemptions from this policy must not be applied for where spend will exceed the relevant Spend Threshold.

Due to their nature, we would not necessarily seek more than three quotes for trips or residentials above the policy thresholds, so these are considered exempt from the policy unless they exceed £50,000 in total.

The following authority is required to seek exemptions from the policy:

Value	**Exemption**
£10,001 to £50,000	CEO, on recommendation from CFO
£50,001 to procurement spend threshold	FAR Committee on recommendation from CEO and CFO

DETAILS OF AMENDMENTS

January/February 2022

- New Model Policy adopted

September 2022

- Reviewed without changes

September 2023

- Updated the procurement process requirements for those between '£50,001 to procurement spend threshold'
- Updated wording in the tender process notes
- Section added for Framework Agreements
- Updated exemptions from policy to allow CEO to authorise exemptions below £50,000

July 2024

- Reviewed without changes

July 2025

- Added exemptions of trips and residentials from the policy

July 2026

- Updated references to Procurement Act 2023
- Included new section on conflicts of interest
- Included new section on cyber security