

Academy Helpdesk

At Price Bailey, all of our Academy clients have access to our Academy Helpdesk.

We offer this service for **free**, by phone or by email, if we either know or should know the answer to your query (and our experience is such that this is no longer confined to just financial and reporting matters).

As much as you need and as often as you like, for all external and internal audit clients.

If you are an existing client and have any academy related queries, **please contact:**

academy.helpdesk@pricebailey.co.uk

"We saved our clients

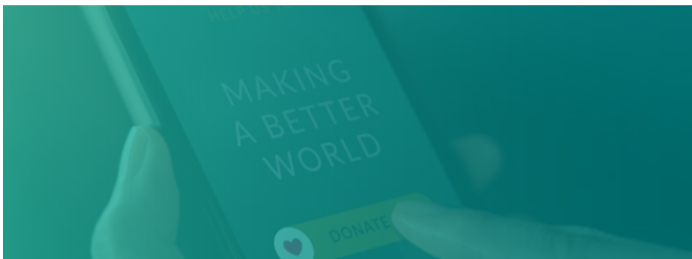
£ 2,700

in advisory fees during Q3 2024"

Take a look at some of the key topics our Helpdesk covered below during Q3 July - September 2024.

Gift Aid

Academies are able to claim gift aid on certain donations as long as they meet specified criteria. Gift aid is an effective way of increasing your academy trust's effort to raise additional funds and in a time of tight funding this could really benefit your trust.



What is gift aid?

Gift aid is a simple way to make your donations go further at no extra cost. It is a government scheme which enables charities to claim the tax back on donations from HMRC. You can claim an extra 25p for every £1 donated. Only voluntary gifts or payments are eligible for Gift Aid and to claim you need to get a Gift Aid declaration from the donor.

Is there a claim deadline?

You need to claim for a donation within 4 years of the end of the accounting period you received it in. If you claim under the small donations scheme you must claim within 2 years of the end of the tax year that the donations were collected in.

Registering with HMRC

Although academies are exempt charities they still have charitable status. The academy trust must be registered with HMRC as an exempt charity in order to claim gift aid. If your trust has yet to do this, you can do so [here](#).

What is eligible?

Only voluntary gifts or payments are eligible for Gift Aid. Donations must not be linked to the provision of any benefit to a student related to a donor.

Donations given for the following will usually qualify for Gift Aid:

- non-uniform days
- sponsored events
- building appeals
- equipment appeals

What is not eligible?

Payments made for the following are not eligible for Gift Aid:

- tuition fees
- school holidays
- extra-curricular activities
- lessons
- educational trips
- payments for raffles tickets
- tickets for a school production
- a 'minimum donation' where there is no choice about payment
- payments for goods and services



Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS)

You may be able to claim 25% on:

- cash donations of £30 or less
- contactless card donations of £30 or less

This is called the Gift Aid small donations scheme (GASDS). You do not need a gift aid declaration to claim. In order to claim under GASDS your academy trust must have claimed gift aid in the same tax year as you want to claim GASDS.

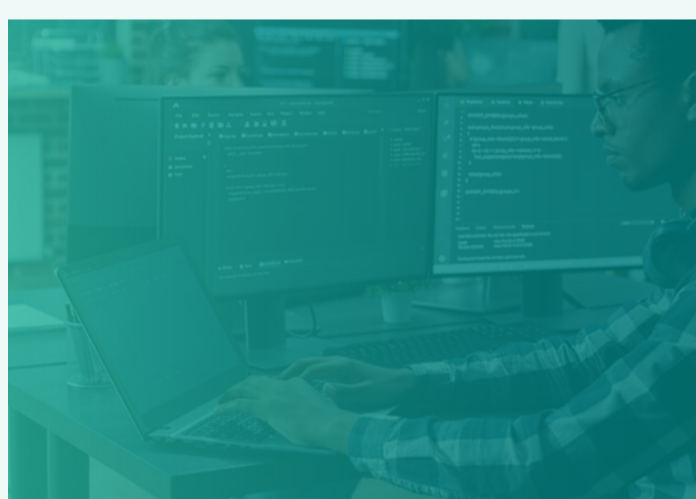
→ Read our latest article on gift aid in academy trusts [here](#).

Cyber Security

Cyber security is crucial to safeguarding operational resilience to ensure that your trust can continue to function during an incident.

In line with the [Academy Trust Handbook 2024](#), trusts should take appropriate action to meet the [DfE's cyber security standards](#).

All academy trusts need to review their cyber security risks and should build this into their risk register review where appropriate. The DfE standards recommend trusts to conduct a cyber risk assessment annually.



What is a cyber awareness plan?

Well-informed users are the best line of defence against cyber criminals. Having a cyber awareness plan is crucial in the process of educating people to understand, identify and avoid cyber threats. Raising awareness, and training students and staff on cyber security will reduce the risk of the cyber incidents, help users understand what acceptable use of digital technology looks like and how to report attacks quickly. Cyber training should be given at least annually.

Does your trust provide annual cyber training?

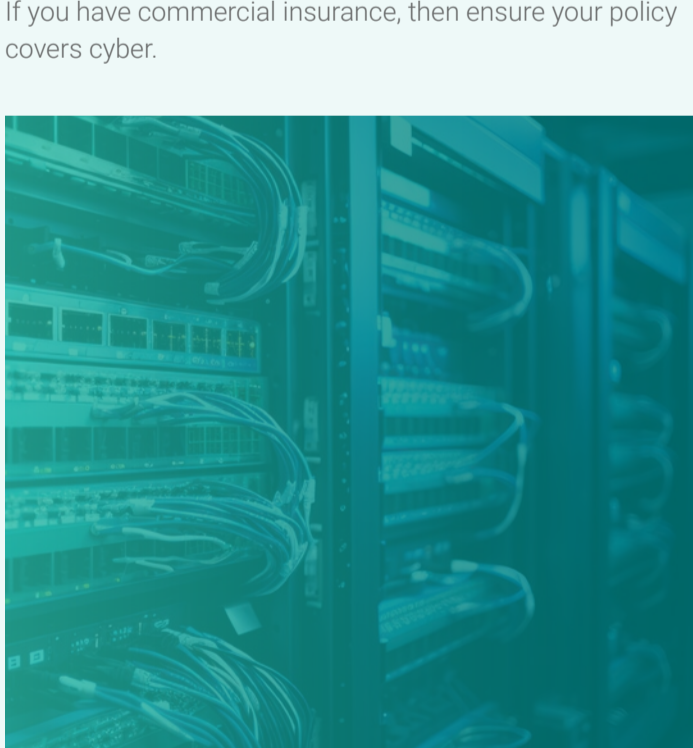
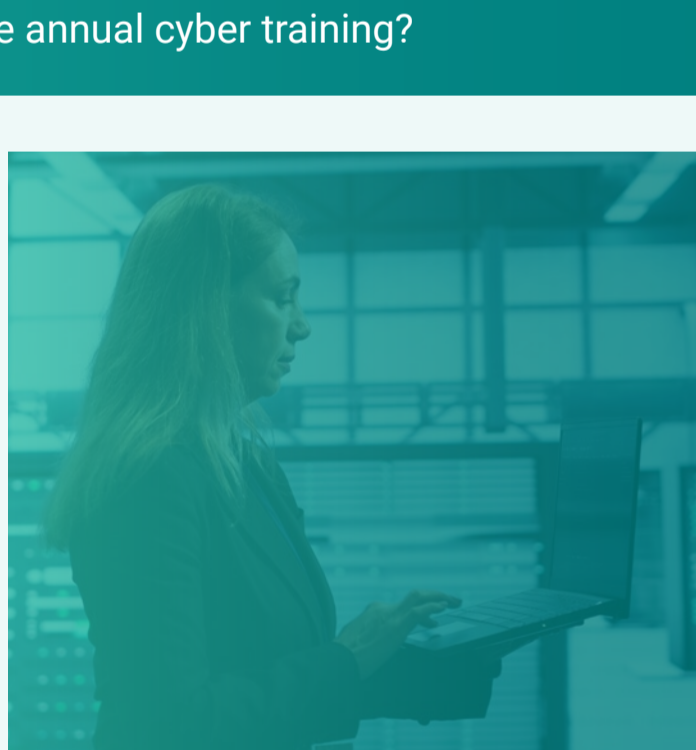
Does RPA cover cyber?

Yes, the risk protection arrangement covers cyber attacks assuming your trust adheres to the following four conditions:

1. have offline backups
2. make sure all employees or Governors who have access to the school's information technology system undertake NCSC Cyber Security Training annually
3. register with Police CyberAlarm
4. have a Cyber Response Plan in place

If you don't meet these conditions and an incident occurs, you will not be covered.

If you have commercial insurance, then ensure your policy covers cyber.



How often should we back up school data?

Backups should be created on a regular basis. The more frequently backups are created, the less data is lost if you're forced to recover. The DfE cyber security standards recommend trusts review the National Cyber Security Centre advice on backing up and follow the '3-2-1 rule'. 3 copies of your data, 2 of which are on separate device and one of which is offsite which could include a cloud backup service. It is vital to keep multiple backups and to logically separate them.

Your backup plan should feed into your business continuity plan and disaster recovery plan. The backup plan should be:

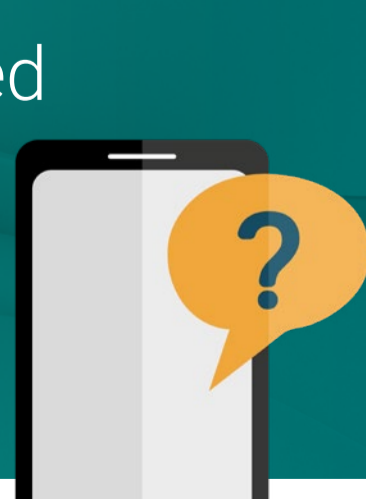
- kept up to date
- tested at least termly to make sure it works
- reviewed on an annual basis, or when there is a major change to the systems or data

What resources are available to academy trusts & boards?

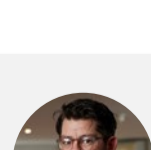
The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has practical resources to help schools improve their cyber security, which can be accessed [here](#). They also provide a free cyber training package for school staff. We recommend all trust boards to review the NCSC cyber security toolkit specifically designed to help trust boards govern cyber risk more effectively.

Our Helpdesk has also answered ad hoc queries regarding:

- Related party transactions
- Capital spend
- Chart of accounts mapping
- Gifts policy
- VAT
- Budgeting



Contact Us

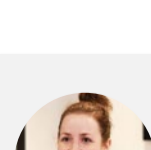


Tom Meeks
Partner, Head of Academies team

T: +44 (0)127 971 2730

T: +44 (0)788 020 2472

E: tom.meeks@pricebailey.co.uk



India Payne
Helpdesk Manager

T: +44 (0)127 921 7253

T: +44 (0)782 512 4330

E: india.payne@pricebailey.co.uk

Academy Helpdesk for general queries:

academy.helpdesk@pricebailey.co.uk

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