St Cyprian's Greek Orthodox Primary Academy

ΠΑΝΤΑ ΙΣΧΥΩ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΕΝΔΥΝΑΜΟΥΝΤΙ ΜΕ ΧΡΙΣΤΩ ΙΝΑ ΑΡΙΣΤΕΥΩ

I AM STRONG THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

TO THE BEST THAT I CAN BE

Competitive Tendering Policy

Revised: July 2026

Reviewed and ratified by Full Academy Trust:

Date: 15th JULY 2026

Signed:

Name: PETER TRAGOUDAS

Position: Chair of Finance Audit & Risk Committee

Date of next review: July 2027

Our Mission Statement:
The aim of St Cyprian's Greek Orthodox Primary Academy is to provide its children with primary education of the highest quality in a supportive learning environment through the National Curriculum in the core subjects, enriched by the progressive teaching of the Greek language and Christian Orthodox religion.

The children will be equipped with the knowledge, skills and spirituality to enable them to achieve their full potential and prepare them for transition to secondary education and to contribute positively to the challenges of a diverse multicultural society.

The term 'parents' in this policy also refers to carers.

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1. Aims and scope

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Value for money (economy, efficiency and effectiveness) is achieved
- Conflicts of interest are managed adequately and appropriately
- The school has open and transparent procurement procedures

This policy includes procedures for open tenders. This approach allows anyone to submit a tender to supply goods or services required and offers an equal opportunity to any organisation to submit a tender.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on:

- Department for Education (DfE) guidance on buying procedures and procurement law
  The Public Contracts Regulations 2015

This policy also complies with our funding agreement.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board will ensure that:

- The school has achieved value for money
- Relevant legal or professional advice (such as an external auditor) is used, where appropriate
- Any conflicts of interest that may arise are managed
- A register of the up-to-date business and pecuniary interests of governors and the headteacher is kept, helping to ensure the board is transparent and open
- Where any governor has a pecuniary interest in a procurement decision, they exclude themselves from the process and records (e.g. meeting minutes) show they had no influence on the decision

3.2 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Overseeing and supporting competitive tendering
- Providing information to the governing board, as appropriate
- Monitoring budgets

4. Purchase thresholds

4.1 Low to high-value purchase thresholds

Purchase levels are divided into the following:

- Low-value purchase: £1,000 – £9,999
- Medium-value purchase: £10,000 – £40,000
- High-value purchase: over £40,000, but below the PCR procurement threshold

4.2 PCR procurement threshold

If it is estimated that the cost of a contract is above the PCR threshold for procurement spending, the school will seek legal advice to ensure it runs a PCR compliant buying process. The current PCR threshold for all goods and most services is £214,904

A 'light touch regime', with a higher threshold of £663,540, applies for some services that are specifically for education provision. We will seek legal advice to determine if any procurement run by the school qualifies.

5. Approval authority

As per the Scheme of Delegation.

6. Framework agreements

Where possible, we will use a framework agreement to contract suppliers. These are arrangements that a contracting authority, such as a public sector buying organisation, makes with suppliers. The benefits of frameworks are that they have already been through a competitive tender process and they have favourable terms and conditions. In addition, the framework provider may offer advice and support.

Depending on the framework we choose, we will either pick the best value supplier from a list or run a mini-competition between listed suppliers. In either case, we will follow the DfE guidance

on procurement (see section 2 of this policy) to ensure good practice. The reasons for the choice of framework, and for the choice of supplier, will be clearly recorded.

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7. Valuing contracts

The value of a contract will be determined by calculating the estimated whole-life value of the goods, works or services, including any related fees.

For fixed term contracts with an option to extend the term, the value of the contract will be the price of the fixed term plus the potential extension period.

We will not divide a single contract into smaller contracts to bypass the purchase thresholds (see section 4).

8. Evaluating tenders

Tenders will be evaluated against the criteria and weighting outlined in the tender document. This criteria will include:

- Cost
- Quality
- Delivery
- Performance
- Risk

We may specify additional criteria based on the type of tender, as outlined in the tender document.

9. Tendering procedure: low and medium-value purchases

When making low or medium-value purchases without a framework agreement, the school will use the process outlined below.

a. **Create a specification** – a specification document will set out what suppliers need to understand about what we are looking to buy, including the quality, quantity and delivery date

b. **Compare suppliers** – a comparison of different suppliers, including their reputation, will help the school develop a shortlist of at least 3 suppliers we want to approach for a written quote

c. **Assess quotes** – an award criteria will be developed to assess suppliers' quotes. Criteria may include:

- How well the supplier meets our specification
- The whole-life cost of the contract, which may include:
  - The sale price of the goods, works or services
  - VAT
  - Delivery charges
  - Maintenance costs
  - Running costs

- The cost of removing and disposing of an item or service once we no longer need it

> Whether there will be price increases or decreases over the life of the contract

> Value for money

Each aspect of the criteria will be scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest score. A record of how the quotes are evaluated will be kept.

The School Business Manager will evaluate quotes with support from the headteacher.

When we contact suppliers, we will send them:

> The specification

> Deadlines for quotes and when decisions will be made

> Instructions for how to ask clarification questions about the specification

d. **Place an order** – when the best value quote is identified, we will send the supplier a purchase order, which includes details of the:

> Goods, works or services we are purchasing

> Price

> Delivery address

> Delivery deadline and any other important dates

> Payment schedule

10. Tendering procedure: high-value purchases

The school will make high-value purchases without a framework only in rare circumstances and only with legal support. When this does happen, we will use the process below.

a. **Create a specification** (see section 9)

b. **Assess the market** – we will prepare for the tendering process by developing our knowledge of the market. We will find out how many suppliers are available and the best way to advertise our contract to a range of suppliers

c. **Check the school's position in relation to the PCR procurement thresholds** (see section 4)

d. **Develop a contract** – a contract will include terms and conditions, service levels expected, a contract management plan and an exit strategy

e. **Reduce the number of bids** – to reduce the number of bids the school needs to evaluate, we will either use an expression of interest process to gauge interest in the contract or a pre-qualification questionnaire

f. **Establish how we will assess quotes** – we will set out criteria that will allow us to evaluate which of the suppliers' bids best meets the requirements in our specification, and is the most economically advantageous tender that best combines price and quality

g. **Create a timeline for the tender process** – this will include the dates of the clarification period, the deadline for submitting tenders and the date we expect to award the contract

h. **Prepare an invitation to tender** – this will include:

> A covering letter with a timeline for the process

> Instructions on how suppliers can ask clarification questions and submit their tender

> The specification

- A pricing schedule
- The contract's terms and conditions
- Contract management requirements (see 'develop a contract' above)
- Award criteria, including the scoring system and any weightings
- If appropriate, an invitation for suppliers to give a practical demonstration of their goods, works or services

i. **Advertise the contract** – the contract will be advertised where suppliers are likely to look, such as:

- The Find a Tender service – this is a requirement if the contract is over the PCR procurement threshold
- The government's Contracts Finder service
- Local or national newspapers
- Education publications or websites
- Trade magazines

j. **Run the tender process and provide clarifications**

k. **Evaluate tender responses** – at least 2 people will independently score and evaluate each bid, and then compare notes after completing their evaluations; records of decision making and moderation decisions will be kept

l. **Notify bidders** – we will inform both the successful bidder and the unsuccessful bidders at the same time

m. **Challenges from unsuccessful bidders** – if an unsuccessful bidder challenges the fairness of the contract, we will contact them to explain that we have conducted a fair process and kept good records. If they make a formal challenge, we will not formalise the contract and seek legal advice.

n. **Finalise the contract** (if there are no legal challenges) and advertise the award (if the contract was advertised in Contracts Finder or the Find a Tender service)

o. **Abandoning the tender process** – on very rare occasions we may need to halt the tender process. The tender documents should make it clear that we have the right to do so without any liability to the bidders. Should this occur, we will notify suppliers who are preparing their bids as soon as possible

Single Tender Waiver

A single tender waiver allows an organization to bypass standard competitive bidding processes and award a contract to a single supplier, even when other suppliers are available. This is typically done when specific criteria are met, such as time constraints, the need for specialized expertise, or the unavailability of alternative suppliers. It's a formal process, documented with a waiver form, that justifies the decision to not seek competitive bids. Organizations must provide a clear and documented rationale for using a single tender waiver, outlining why a competitive process is not feasible.

A single tender waiver form is used to record the justification, approvals, and details of the contract. The waiver request usually requires approval from relevant authorities, such as budget holders, procurement teams, and senior management. While not always involving competitive bidding, organizations must still demonstrate value for money in their decision-making. In some cases, single tender actions are reported to oversight bodies like Audit Committees. Situations where single tender waivers might be used:

- **Time-critical situations:** When immediate action is needed and there's no time for a competitive process.
- **Specialized expertise:** When only one supplier possesses the unique skills or knowledge required.
- **Sole source availability:** When a product or service is only available from a single provider.
- **Existing contract extensions:** When extending a contract with an existing supplier offers significant benefits or avoids disruption.

11. Record keeping

Records will be kept securely, only for as long as necessary and in line with data protection law, our privacy notices and Data Retention Policy.

12. Monitoring arrangements

The headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the governing board every two years and when PCR procurement thresholds change.

13. Links with other policies

This competitive tendering policy is linked to the following policies:

- Accounting policies
- Investment policy