



Risk Management Strategy

Approved by Board of Directors:	2 May 2026
Revision date:	May 2027
Version:	3.1

Risk Management Strategy

Glossary

ABM	Academy Business Manager
F&WC	Finance & Workforce Committee (MAT)
LGB	Local Governing Body
MAT	Aspire Multi-Academy Trust
SLT	Senior Leadership Team (academy)

1. Background

The Risk Management Strategy aims to ensure that the Aspire Multi-Academy Trust and its associated academies (henceforth known as the MAT) complies with risk management best practice and sets out the current processes and responsibilities for risk management in the MAT.

1.1. The requirements can be summarised as:

- MAT Board Directors acknowledge responsibility for the system of internal control
- An ongoing process is in place for identifying, evaluating and managing all significant risks
- An annual process is in place for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control
- There is a system in place to deal with internal control aspects of any significant issues disclosed in the annual report and accounts

1.2. In assessing what constitutes a sound system of internal control, consideration should be given to:

- The nature and extent of the risks facing the organisation
- The extent and categories of risk which it regards as acceptable
- The likelihood of the risks concerned materialising
- The organisation's ability to reduce the incidence and impact of the risks that do materialise

1.2. Risk Management best practice is encapsulated in the Risk Management Standard published jointly by the major risk management organisations in the UK – The Institute of Risk Management (IRM); The Association of Insurance and Risk Managers (AIRMIC); and ALARM, The National Forum for Risk Management in the Public Sector. (https://www.theirm.org/media/4709/arms_2002_irm.pdf)

2. Risk Management objectives

The objectives for managing risk across the MAT are:

- To comply with risk management best practice;
- To ensure risks facing the MAT are identified and appropriately documented;
- To provide assurance to the Directors that risks are being adequately controlled, or identify areas for improvement;
- To ensure action is taken appropriately in relation to accepting, mitigating, avoiding and transferring risks.

3 Risk Management strategy

This strategy aims to:

- Outline the roles and responsibilities for risk management.
- Identify risk management processes to ensure that all risks are appropriately identified, controlled and monitored
- Ensure appropriate levels of awareness throughout the MAT.

3.1 Roles and responsibilities

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has overall responsibility for managing risk. The Academy Business Managers (ABMs) have lead responsibility for risk management processes in the MAT-wide Risk Register. This responsibility includes:

- Monitoring the performance of risk management processes
- Ensuring that appropriate controls are in place to manage identified risks
- Preparation of periodic reports to the Finance & Workforce Committee (F&WC)

The Risk Register is formally reviewed each term by the ABMs. The Risk Register is a standing item on the F&WC's agenda and they will monitor the identification and mitigation of risk within the MAT. The F&WC's review of the Risk Register forms part of that Committee's report to the MAT Board.

3.2 Identification of risks

The Risk Management Standard states that risk identification should be approached in a methodical way to ensure that all significant activities have been identified and all the risks flowing from these activities have been defined.

Our approach to risk management is linked to six key aims:

- Aspire, Accomplish, Achieve
- Outstanding staff, leadership and management
- Outstanding infrastructure
- Financial strength
- Inspiring and supportive culture
- Strong community and partnerships

The structure and organisation of the MAT's risk register seeks to ensure that all significant objectives and activities have been identified and the risks associated with each area have been identified.

3.3 Evaluation of risks

The Risk Management Standard states that risks should be evaluated against agreed criteria to make decisions about the significance of risks to the organisation.

The MAT uses a 3x3 matrix to assess impact and probability as high, medium or low, as illustrated below:

Impact	3	3	6	9
	2	2	4	6
	1	1	2	3
		1	2	3
		Probability		

The descriptors for high, medium and low impact and probability can be expanded as follows:

Impact of risk occurring

Impact	Description
High score 3	The financial impact will be significant [in excess of £50,000] Has a significant impact on the MAT's strategy or on teaching and learning Has significant stakeholder concern
Medium score 2	The financial impact will be moderate [between £15,000 and £50,000] Has no more than a moderate impact on strategy or on teaching and learning Moderate stakeholder concern
Low score 1	The financial impact is likely to be low [below £15,000] Has a low impact on strategy or on teaching and learning Low stakeholder concern

Probability of risk occurring

Probability	Description	Indicator
High score 3	Likely to occur each year, or more than 25% chance of occurrence within the next 12 months	Potential of it occurring several times within a 4 year period. Has occurred recently
Medium score 2	Likely to occur within a 4 year time period or less than 25% chance of occurring within the next 12 months	Could occur more than once within a 4 year period. Some history of occurrence
Low score 1	Not likely to occur within a 4 year time period or less than 5% chance of occurrence	Has not occurred Is not likely to occur

3.4 Risk appetite

The term risk appetite describes the MAT's readiness to accept risks and those risks it would seek to reduce. The MAT's risk threshold is the boundary delineated by the pink shaded area (represented by scores of 6 and above) in the risk matrix in paragraph 3.3. Above this threshold, the MAT will actively seek to manage risks and will prioritise time and resources to reducing, avoiding or mitigating these risks. Scores of 3 – 4, represented by the yellow shaded area, will be kept under constant review to determine whether action to actively manage risks is required relative to other risks and priorities.

3.5 Addressing risks

When responding to risks, the MAT will seek to ensure that it is managed and does not develop into an issue where the potential threat materialises.

The MAT will adopt one of the 4 risk responses outlined below:

Avoid	Counter measures are put in place that will either stop a problem or threat occurring or prevent it from having an impact on the business
Transfer	The risk is transferred to a third party, for example through an insurance policy.
Mitigate	The response actions either reduce the likelihood of a risk developing, or limit the impact on the MAT to acceptable levels.
Accept	We accept the possibility that the event might occur, for example because the cost of the counter measures will outweigh the possible downside, or we believe there is only a remote probability of the event occurring.

4. Risk Reporting and Communication

The aim of reporting risk is to provide assurance to the Directors, Senior Management and Auditors that the MAT is effectively managing its risks and has a robust system of internal controls.

4.1 Risk register

The reporting mechanism will be the MAT's Risk Register. This will highlight the key risks facing the MAT, as well as a breakdown for each key strategic aim. The Risk Register will be monitored by the F&WC on a termly basis.

Any significant changes in risk impact or probability, or the occurrence of an event which raises the profile of a risk will be recorded on the risk register as it occurs. Any new or increased risks identified by SLT, Directors or raised by a member of staff will be evaluated and, if appropriate, recorded in the Risk Register.

4.2 Communicating Risks

The Finance & Workforce Committee monitors the risk register each term. The ABMs will ensure that any perceived new or increased risks or significant failure of risk management control measures are considered and reported to the F&WC, along with a summary of actions taken. The Business Directors will endeavour to raise awareness that risk management is a part of the MAT's culture and seek to ensure that:

- individual members of staff are aware of their accountability for individual risks
- individuals report promptly to senior management any perceived new risks or failure of existing control measures.

4.3 Annual risk review and assessment

The Responsible Officer (CEO) review provides a annual assessment of the effectiveness of the MAT's management of risk.

The Business Managers will prepare an annual review of risk for the F&WC annually in the autumn term. This will enable the F&WC to report to the Board of Directors on::

- The significant risks facing the MAT
- The effectiveness of the risk management processes
- That the MAT has published a risk management strategy covering risk management philosophy and responsibilities.

5. Areas for improvement

Any areas identified as being in need of improvement will be discussed and agreed each term at the F&WC.

APPENDIX 1: Risk Register: Part A - Trust

The Risk Register for the Trust is detailed in a separate document.

APPENDIX 2: Risk Register: Part B – Academies

The Risk Register for individual academies in the Trust is detailed in a separate document.