

# 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](mailto:academy.helpdesk@pricebailey.co.uk)

"We saved  
our clients

**£2,300**

in advisory fees during Q1 2025"

Take a look at some of the key topics our Helpdesk covered below during Q1 January - March 2025.

## Gifts

We had numerous queries in the first part of 2025 in relation to gifts. An area which can be subjective and could result in irregular, improper or non-compliant use of public money.

### The DfE Academy Trust Handbook states:

*"Academy trusts should have a policy and register on the acceptance of gifts, hospitality, awards, prizes or other benefits that may compromise their judgment or integrity and should ensure all staff are aware of it. When making gifts, the trust must ensure the value is reasonable, is within its scheme of delegation, the decision is documented, and achieves propriety and regularity in the use of public funds."*

We encourage all our trusts to be open and transparent in declaring gifts and we will request a copy of the trust's gifts policy and gifts register as part of our external audit.

It is also important to be mindful of HMRC tax rules when giving gifts to staff, as it could be classed as a 'taxable benefit'.

You don't have to pay tax on a benefit for your employee if all of the following apply:

- it cost you £50 or less to provide
- it isn't cash or a cash voucher
- it isn't a reward for their work or performance
- it isn't in the terms of their contract

If you're not sure whether a benefit counts as trivial benefit [contact HMRC](#).

**Is your trust's gifts and hospitality policy up to date?**

## NI Employment Allowance

Employment Allowance allows eligible employers to reduce their annual National Insurance liability by up to £10,500 from 6th April 2025 (25/26 tax year). You can only claim against your employers' class 1 National Insurance liability. **Academy trusts are eligible for the Employment Allowance.**

Previously employers could only claim if their Class 1 National Insurance liabilities were less than £100,000 in the previous tax year, but from the 6th April 2025 this criteria will be completely removed, opening up the Allowance to more Academy Trusts. This is a useful relief that can help reduce the financial burden of National Insurance contributions.

The allowance will be deducted against the employer NICs bill for each month until the limit has been reached. For a lot of Academy Trusts this will be used up in the first payroll of April 2025.

Multi Academy Trusts (MATs): if you're part of a MAT, you will only be entitled to just one allowance and it will be up to MATs to decide which academy makes the claim.

Don't forget to claim the Employment Allowance from 6th April 2025. We recommend speaking to your payroll provider to ensure this is in place to claim and the appropriate payment summary is reported to HMRC.

## Our Helpdesk has also answered ad hoc queries regarding:

- VAT
- Benchmarking
- Corporation tax
- Related party transactions
- Banking
- Governance



## Contact Us



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Academy Helpdesk for general queries:

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At Price Bailey - It's all about you

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