

Section 14: Assets

14. Why is this area important?

Schools often have attractive and portable items of material and equipment ranging from library books to computers /IT and audio visual equipment. These assets should be kept under proper control. Head teachers should make arrangements to identify the items as school property, to record the location of the assets and to insure them for off-site use, where necessary.

Most schools also carry stocks, mainly of the kind that are in constant use, such as stationery, cleaning materials, and sport equipment. Generally, they are consumable items and the costs are charged to the various budget allocations as each purchase is made. Often stock records are not maintained and therefore schools should keep a close watch on the quantities ordered and the frequency of ordering. They should ensure that stocks are adequately safeguarded and in the charge of a responsible member of staff.

Recording assets and ensuring their safe care and custody is the responsibility of the governing body, which should maintain proper security for all buildings, furniture, equipment, plant, stores and other assets. Schools should apply the forms of internal control referenced in the [financial control section](#) to ensure the protection of their assets.

Schools now have greater responsibility for their buildings and other parts of their premises and it is, therefore, important that they plan how they intend to use, maintain and develop their buildings. The schools own plan will need to match the LA's asset management plan in relation to that school.

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14.1. Stock/Inventory

Stock levels

The head teacher should ensure that stocks are maintained at reasonable levels and subject to a physical check at least once a year.

- A record of this check e.g. ticked off inventory, should be kept with a signature and date.

Maintenance of inventories

Up-to-date inventories should be maintained of all items of equipment. Such items should be identified as school property with a security marking.

- In order to comply with LBE's insurance policy an inventory must be maintained of all permanent valuable and transportable items worth more than £50 including vehicles, visual aid equipment, computer equipment, expensive tools, camping and sports equipment. It is recommended that inventories are maintained in the following format:
 - i. Date of acquisition
 - ii. Serial number
 - iii. Description of item
 - iv. Location (on site/off site)
 - v. Source of funding i.e. revenue, capital or leasing
 - vi. Cost/estimated replacement value
 - vii. Disposal, authorisation for disposal, and amount realised (if any)
- Items should be clearly and permanently marked as being school property and should be included in the inventory as soon as they are received. New additions should be added to the inventory as they are purchased and an updated inventory should be sent to the Insurance Section immediately, where the school is insured through the LA, to ensure it is covered.
- Items donated/"freebies" should also be listed on the asset register with an estimated value noted.

Checking inventories

The head teacher should arrange for inventories to be checked at least once a year against physical items. Inventories are checked by someone other than the officer who maintains them. All discrepancies should be investigated and any over a predetermined sum reported to the governing body.

Approval for off-site use of property

Whenever school property, for example musical instruments or *laptops*, is taken off the school site, it should be signed for and a register noted accordingly.

- The schools must have a process for the logging of all equipment that is taken off site, this should include the logging of the reason for taking the asset off site along with the relevant authorisation from the head teacher. This should be reflected in the inventory.

14.2. Disposals & write offs

Authorisation of write-offs

The governing body should authorise all write-offs and disposals of surplus stocks and equipment in accordance with LA's regulations.

- As part of the internal manual of procedures, the governing body should specify the maximum values of stocks and equipment which the head teacher may write-off or dispose of without reference to the governing body.
- Under LA regulations any disposal of an asset over £2,000 should be done through a competitive tender or a public auction, for items under £2,000 written bids should be obtained. If an item is disposed of with a potential value of £10,000, authorisation must be obtained from the Executive Director of Corporate Resources.

Locking of safes etc.

Safes and similar deposits should be kept locked and the keys removed and held in a different location.

- All safes, locked cupboards and other secure areas should be kept locked at all times. Keys should be held by the responsible officer. The number of key holders should be kept to a minimum (no more than three sets is recommended) but with normal day to day access restricted to one individual in order to ensure accountability.
- The head teacher must ensure that sensible controls operate to make the school's property secure. This includes ensuring that the amount of cash and cheques held on school premises is minimised by preferably weekly banking.

Cash and cheques should also be held securely and should not exceed the limits of the school's insurance cover.

14.3. Asset management plan

Asset management plan

The governing body should have a plan for the use, maintenance and development of the school's buildings.

- To assist in the process of strategic decision making the LA is working with its partners to further develop and implement the Asset Management Plan (AMP). That plan will provide the basis for prioritising needs and determining the respective responsibilities of the LA, schools and diocesan education boards.
- A key output of the plan is a prioritised programme of work to address the most serious and urgent needs of the LA's school building stock in terms of condition, sufficiency and suitability. The funding to carry out the works can come from various sources, e.g. school budget, devolved capital, central government bids.
- The Asset Management Plan Local Policy Statement contains further details of Ealing's AMP. A copy has been sent to all schools and further details can be obtained from the School's Property Group.