

## Fraud Awareness

All parts of an organisation are susceptible to fraud and schools are no exception. The raising of awareness of fraud risks is one way in which we seek to manage fraud risk. Our national counter fraud networks continue to highlight a number of specific areas where the number of reported frauds continues to increase due in part to these frauds being relatively easy to commit and where the fraudster is unlikely to be traced by law enforcement agencies. One of these areas is **CEO (Chief Executive Officer) Fraud**, sometimes called 'Bogus Boss' fraud.

**CEO Fraud** is where a school is targeted by a fraudster who purports to be the Headteacher / Principal. The fraudster contacts a member of staff with responsibility for authorising financial transfers and requests for a one off, often urgent, bank transfer to be made. Contact is made by email and from a spoofed / similar email address to the one the Headteacher / Principal would use. Schools may be more susceptible to this type of fraud during school holidays when key staff may not be around.

Finance staff should be encouraged to challenge requests they think may be suspicious, particularly urgent sounding requests "from" senior employees. Staff should be reminded that even senior officers are unlikely to have the authority to circumvent normal payment procedures, i.e. any authority to request urgent payments without production of adequate supporting documentation.

Finance staff should be reminded that the tactics used by fraudsters are becoming increasingly more sophisticated and fraud attempts increasingly more genuine-looking. Unfortunately, many organisations have fallen for this type of scam over the years with losses often irrecoverable.

It is advised that headteachers take steps to raise awareness of this specific fraud within their finance teams.

More information on fraud can be found on the Action Fraud website:

[https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/types\\_of\\_fraud](https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/types_of_fraud)