“Loving and Learning together for Life, as Jesus taught us.”

Leonard Stanley C of E Primary

School Finance Policy

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Section 1 - Budgets

1.1 Budget Construction

The Head Teacher is responsible for the detailed preparation of an annual school budget which addresses the strategic aims and targets established by the Governing Board. Preparation of the school budget is delegated to the School Business Manager (School Business Manager) with necessary input from the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher retains overall responsibility for the budget. In constructing the budget, the School Business Manager and Head must take account of priorities identified in the School Development / Improvement Plan (or other relevant document), incorporating specific costs as detailed in the plan. In producing the budget, the Head should consult with other members of staff as appropriate to ascertain detailed requirements and cost pressures for the coming year.

Full Governing Body should meet to consider a broad budget strategy. In order to determine appropriate expenditure levels, Full Governing Board should consider the overall level of income expected from local authority budget, grants and school generated income, together with any anticipated balance to be carried forward into the following financial year.

Detailed formulation of the budget should take place in Spring term, and the Full Governing Body should scrutinise the detailed budget plan following receipt of the final local authority budget. The Full Governing Board will then approve the full budget, and minute this approval. The approved Governors Budget Plan spreadsheet template must then be submitted to the Schools Finance Team, along with a signed statement by the Chair of Governors, by the required late-May deadline.

Total budgeted expenditure should not exceed the total anticipated in-year income plus or minus any balance brought forward from the previous year. If it appears that a deficit position cannot be avoided, the Head and Chair of Governors must inform the Schools Finance Team immediately as the local authority must approve a Deficit Repayment Agreement (DRA) involving an appropriate recovery plan.

In constructing the detailed budget, factors for consideration include:

● current and previous year's expenditure levels on individual budget headings
● staff pay awards and increments, and known changes
● anticipated price inflation
● changes in the supply of services and contracts (traded services, utilities etc.).
● changing School Development Plan priorities
● any anticipated changes in pupil numbers
● the resulting impact on staffing structures

1.2. Budgetary control and monitoring

The Head is responsible for regular, detailed control of the school budget but the detailed day-to-day work is delegated to the School Business Manager. This role will require appropriate monthly reports from the school's accounting system. The Head may assign budgetary control of individual budget headings to other members of staff; however, the Head remains ultimately accountable to the Governing Board for these budget headings. Financial reports to the Head and other budget holders, where applicable, should include the following information for each agreed budget heading: -

● total budget for year
● total expenditure and commitments to date
● projected variance

Payroll expenditure data, as notified by local authority payroll prints, must be entered promptly onto the school's accounting system each month by the School Business Manager. Other, non pay expenditure, as notified by monthly on-line reports for central schools, must be reconciled promptly to the school's accounting system by the School Business Manager

It may be appropriate to action adjustments to the original budget (virements) during the year, for example as a result of additional income, new costs or changing national priorities etc. The Head should therefore be empowered to respond to changes to address variances by effecting virements between individual budget headings.

Where new or unplanned expenditure is necessary, the following individual virement authorisation limits are recommended: -

● up to £2000 - Head

● £2000 and above - Chair of Governors and Designated Finance and Premises Governor (and subsequently reported to Full Governing Board)

● £5,000 and over- Full Governing Board

Virements, once approved, must be promptly recorded in the school's accounting system to keep the approved budget up to date.

The Head and School Business Manager should present detailed budget monitoring statements to the Full Governing Board on at least a termly basis. The Full Governing Board will then consider and challenge these statements as necessary, with the Head and School Business Manager providing explanations for any significant variances identified. The Designated Finance and Premises Governor should then report regularly to the Full Governing Board, identifying any significant budgetary issues and any remedial action taken or needed, and any policy decisions needed. When the accounts for each financial year are closed, a final statement from the school's accounting system (or equivalent) must be presented to the next Full Governing Board.

Section 2 - Payroll

The school uses GCC payroll and HR services and therefore refers to the Business Service Centre Schoolsnet pages for general information and guidance (please note you will require your school's assigned log-in and password to access some of the information on Schoolsnet):

2.1 Starters/Variations/Leavers

The relevant e-forms should be completed:

- setting up new employees on the payroll (starters)
- effecting variations to pay
- taking existing employees off the payroll (leavers)

Forms should be completed by the School Office Manager (SOM), and authorised by the School Business Manager, or, in their absence, the Head on a timely basis.

2.2 Claims Forms

For relevant staff, submitted claim forms must be checked initially by the SOM and entered on to the SAP system and then authorised by the Head.

2.3 Checking of Payroll Data

Payroll data received monthly from Shire Hall must be scrutinised by:

- the Head, to ensure all employees are recognised, and pay appears reasonable (no detailed check)
- the School Business Manager, to check accuracy of salary and

expense payments.

2.4 Payroll and Expenses

All pay-related expenses must be processed through the payroll system. Pay-related expenses must never be paid via petty cash, or by the creditor payment system, except in occasional circumstances and then only if under £30 in value. If any doubt exists about whether an item should be processed via the payroll system, the BSC Financial Administration section should be contacted for advice.

2.5 Supply Teachers

The Governing Board will decide, on the basis of advice from the Head, whether supply insurance cover shall be taken out, and the extent of the cover. All claims submitted by supply teachers must be entered on to the SAP system by the SOM and then authorised by the School Business Manager or Head. Reimbursement claims must be submitted on a monthly basis. The School Business Manager must check on a monthly basis that correct amounts have been charged using the monthly expenditure printout.

Section 3 – School Fund

3.1 Accounts

The accounts of the School Fund are to be maintained on a day to day basis by the SOM and School Business Manager. All income and expenditure will be entered promptly in the accounts. A bank reconciliation will be performed monthly when bank statements are received, between the balance as per the accounting record and the balance as per bank statements.

3.2 Signatories

The following are allowed to sign cheques on the bank accounts:

- Head
- Deputy Head
- School Business Manager
- School Office Manager
- Chair of Governors

There must be two signatures on each cheque.

3.3 Final Accounts & Audit

Final accounts are prepared at the end of the financial year by the SOM/School Business Manager. The accounts will be audited by an auditor appointed by the Governing Board. The auditor will not be a member of the Governing Board. In appointing an auditor and operating the Fund, the Governors will follow the instructions laid down in the County Council's Manual on Unofficial Funds.

The audited accounts should be presented to the full Governing Board for approval. Governors' approval must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Once approved, the school will return the requested FN12 form to the Schools Finance Team.

School Fund monies must be kept, and recorded, separately from the school's capitation monies and securely held.

Section 4 – Assets

4.1 Asset Register

The portable, desirable, attractive assets of the school, as well as any assets of intrinsic value (e.g. antiques) will be recorded in the school's inventory. Full details (make, model, serial number, approximate value) shall be recorded.

The School Business Manager/Head is responsible for keeping the inventory up to date by adding new items when they are received into school. Items up to a value of £50 may be sold or written out of the inventory on the authority of the Head. Over this limit, the Governing Board must authorise and details recorded in the minutes. Reasons must be recorded in the inventory, together with the Head's signature (up to £50) or the Governors' minute reference (£50 and over). An official receipt for sales income must be issued to the purchaser.

The inventory shall be checked against the actual assets by the Head on an annual basis. Any discrepancies shall be investigated immediately, and if necessary the Governors, Police and the authority's auditors shall be informed. The check shall be evidenced by the checker signing and dating the inventory.

All inventory items should be numbered and where appropriate security marked.

4.2 Off-site Register

Any inventory items taken off-site by members of staff for official purposes must be recorded in a register. The date borrowed, and the signature of the borrower, must be recorded. On the return of the item the date of return will be recorded.

Section 5 – Income

5.1 Credit Income

Where payment for goods/services provided by the school is made after the provision takes place an official invoice must be raised by the SOM or School Business Manager in all cases and sent to the debtor as soon as practicable after the provision of the goods/service.

A file of copy invoices will be maintained; this will be arranged into 'paid' and 'unpaid' invoices. The copies of unpaid invoices will act as a control record for the sending of reminders and the chasing of unpaid debts.

Reminders will be sent after the following periods if the debt remains outstanding:

- 1st reminder 28 days
- 2nd reminder 56 days

If after 84 days the debt remains unpaid, consideration will be given by the Head and/or Governors to writing the debt off in accordance with the following limits: -

- up to £50 - Head may authorise write-off
- up to £100 – Designated Finance and Premises Governor may authorise write off
- £100 and over - Full Governing Board may authorise write-off.

In each case, the possibility of taking legal action to recover the debt must be considered by Head, Chair, and Governors as appropriate.

As well as sending formal reminders, efforts must be made by the school to contact the debtor in order to secure recovery of the debt. If payment has not been received after 28 days of raising the invoice, no further goods or services must be provided until the outstanding debt is settled.

When an invoice is paid, details of the payment must be written on the copy invoice, and this transferred to the 'paid' section of the file. An official receipt should be issued to the debtor and the receipt number written on the copy invoice; a duplicate copy of the receipt must be retained at school.

5.2 Cash Income

An official receipt must be issued to the payer at the time the payment takes place, and a duplicate copy retained at the school.

5.3 Banking

All income received (cash or cheque) must be banked promptly and intact. No payments may be made out of income collected. A record to evidence the banking must be kept (e.g. stamped paying-in slip). Debtors and cash payers are encouraged to be made by BACS or via the ParentPay system to minimise the levels of cash handled in school. Weekly ParentPay reports are reconciled to income shown on GCC monthly prints and monthly bank statements.

5.4 Charging Policy

The Full Governing Board will set a charging policy to cover: -

- lettings
- school trips
- music tuition
- private photocopying

The charging policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Board. Charges levied by the school will be in line with this policy.

5.5 Donations

Donations from any sources must be acknowledged by the issue of an official receipt to the payer. All donations must be banked promptly and intact.

5.6 Official Capitation and School Fund Income

All income used to offset expenditure incurred on the capitation budget (e.g. lettings, photocopying, telephone calls, music tuition, sales of work) must be paid into the official County Fund and coded to an appropriate income code. Monies received from any sales of school equipment must similarly be paid into the County Fund.

Donations may be paid into the School Fund dependent upon the wishes of the donor which must be ascertained beforehand.

5.7 Cash Received from Pupils

Cash received from pupils in class should be recorded . Cash collected should be handed over to the school office frequently.

5.8 Security of Receipt Books and Tickets

All unused receipts and tickets to be used to acknowledge receipt of income, must be held securely in the school office.

Section 6 - Purchasing

6.1 Ordering

School procedures for purchasing should ensure that purchases are as required and are for bone-fide purposes.

Orders should be processed by the SOM or School Business Manager. Official orders must not be used to procure goods for private purposes. Official order stationery must be held in a secure location.

Copies of all official orders placed must be retained on file at the school in the school office.

When placing orders, it is the responsibility of the initiator to ensure that Gloucestershire County Council Financial Regulations and Standing Orders are adhered to.

6.2 Quotations/Tenders

Financial Regulations - for orders for goods/services under £50,000:

- £1,000 - £5,000 - at least three prices to be examined and retained, these prices may be taken from suppliers' written or verbal quotations or catalogues/price lists.
- £5,001 - £50,000 - independent written evidence of at least three prices should be obtained and retained.

Independent written evidence means quotations must be provided on suppliers' headed notepaper or business email.

Standing Orders - for orders for goods/services over £50,000. Tenders should be invited in one of three ways, and in accordance with specific standing orders:

- from at least three contractors included on a standing list - SO49; or where no standing list exists
- from at least three appropriate contractors - SO.5O, or

- by open competition by advertisement in local newspapers or appropriate journals - SO.51.

6.3 Governor Involvement

As well as ensuring that the above have been adhered to, it is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to ensure that Governors are consulted in the following circumstances:

- Review of quotations obtained where estimated costs exceed £5,000.
- Review of quotations when the lowest quote is not the most suitable or the pre-requisite number of quotes could not be obtained. In such circumstances the Governors should formally authorise a waiver of the regulations, either prior to the purchase or retrospectively, if necessary.

6.4 Receipt of Goods

Once items ordered have been received, the receiver must ensure that items delivered correspond to details contained in the delivery note. Upon examination of goods the receiver must ensure that both quality and quantity are appropriate.

6.5 Invoice Check and Authorisation

Invoices received must be checked to both copy orders and delivery notes to ensure that invoices relate to goods ordered and delivered. Invoices should also be checked for arithmetical correctness. All invoices must be certified for payment by the Head Teacher before being passed for payment (or in the Head's absence, the Deputy Head).

Invoices passed for payment must be recorded promptly in the school's accounting system by the SOM or School Business Manager.

6.6 School Fund

Day to day operation of the School Fund account is the responsibility of the SOM.

School Fund is used to pay small claims where not settled through the payroll system. All such expenditure, and reimbursement income, must be promptly recorded in the school records.

Reimbursement must be claimed regularly. The School Business Manager or Head Teacher (or Deputy Head in the Head's absence) must certify the reimbursement claim.

All members of staff who wish to purchase items from the School Fund account must obtain prior approval from the Head or the School Business Manager. Vouchers (receipts, paid invoices etc.) to evidence the payment must be presented to the School Business Manager by members of staff when reclaiming amounts paid. These must be retained by the School Business Manager and returned with the reimbursement claim.

In normal circumstances individual purchases via school fund must not exceed £50.

In exceptional circumstances payments up to £100 may be made, with the express prior approval of the Head Teacher. Such payments should be for emergencies only and should not simply result from a lack of planning.

All cash and cheque books held must be retained securely.

Section 7 - Register of Pecuniary and Other Interests

It is a requirement for all schools to maintain such a Register.

7.1 Persons to be Included

1. All Governors
2. Head Teacher
3. All senior staff (e.g. Deputy Head, Assistant Heads, Heads of Departments, senior administrative staff e.g. School Business Manager, Estates Staff)

7.2 Interests to be Recorded

The basic principle to be followed is that any interest should be recorded which could be seen to improperly influence any decisions taken, pecuniary or otherwise, regarding the operation of the school.

Examples of such improper influence might be: -

● to purchase goods or materials from a company in which a Governor/senior member of staff has a financial interest without going through the correct procedures re. obtaining competitive prices;
● promoting member of staff who has close personal relationship (spouse, partner, son, daughter etc.) with Governor/senior member of staff, without going through correct procedures re. recruitment and selection.

There can never be a definitive, comprehensive list of the interests which should be recorded, but the following is intended to give some guidance:

● having a financial, or other, interest in an organisation which could feasibly be in a position to supply goods/services to the school e.g.

- building contractors
- audio/visual goods suppliers
- repair/maintenance of equipment
- suppliers of computer hardware and software
- suppliers of educational equipment
- suppliers of furniture, fittings, carpets, curtains etc.
- decorating contractors
- catering contractors
- suppliers of provisions
- suppliers of clothing
- suppliers of building materials
- suppliers of catering equipment

- suppliers of fuel
- suppliers of vehicles
- suppliers of books
- grounds maintenance contractors
- gardening contractors
- suppliers of grounds/garden maintenance equipment
- suppliers of plants, trees, seeds etc.
- suppliers of insurance
- suppliers of security services and supplies
- suppliers of art materials
- suppliers of telecommunications equipment
- suppliers of photographic equipment
- transport contractors
- suppliers of supply teaching cover
- suppliers of peripatetic teaching
- suppliers of banking services
- suppliers of workshops etc.
- having a close personal relationship (spouse, partner, son, daughter, parent etc.) with a person in the above categories
- being in a position to potentially influence decisions made about the school, e.g. as:

    - o member of local council (County Council, District Council, Parish Council)
    - o officer of Local Education Authority in a senior capacity
    - o Member of Parliament
    - o OFSTED Inspector

- having a close personal relationship (as described above) with any person falling into the above categories
- having a close personal relationship with a Governor or member of staff (employed on a full-time, part-time, permanent, or temporary basis).