

MAPLESDEN NOAKES SCHOOL

JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION – Senior Finance Officer

Reports to:	Head of Finance/CFO
Pay Band:	MNS Range 9
Liaison with:	School staff, contractors, suppliers, the public, external organisations and any other parties connected with the effective running of the school

Purpose of the Job:

As Senior Finance Officer, you will support the Head of Finance in providing an effective, efficient and compliant financial service to the school, contributing to the day-to-day management of the finance function and the delivery of accurate financial reporting, robust financial controls and value-for-money processes in accordance with School policies and the Department for Education (DfE).

You will work closely with the Head of Finance and the wider finance team to support planning, forecasting and budgeting activity, coordinate month-end and year-end processes, and ensure finance-related guidance, systems and procedures remain up to date, compliant and value-adding.

You will deputise for the Head of Finance as and when required and will gain first-hand insight into the preparation of the Academy's annual accounts, supporting the Head of Finance with year-end accounts preparation and readiness for external audit, and assisting with effective engagement with auditors and other regulatory bodies.

Key duties and responsibilities:

1. Planning, forecasting and budgeting:
 - Support the Head of Finance in the preparation of the annual budget and three-year financial forecasts, ensuring accuracy, robustness and alignment with strategic priorities.
 - Support ongoing budget monitoring throughout the year by identifying variances and preparing supporting analysis and commentary for review.
 - Support the forecasting of future budget years based on estimated funding, grants and trends in expenditure to inform long-term financial planning.
 - Assist with budget modelling, scenario planning and data input into budgeting and forecasting systems.
 - Assist in the preparation of financial information and reports for governors, senior leaders and external stakeholders as required.
 - Support the identification of opportunities to generate additional income for the school, including sourcing and supporting applications for grants.
 - Support regular monitoring of spend against budgets and forecasts to ensure effective control of income and expenditure and to avoid excess spending.
 - Support the Head of Finance with forecast update and budget planning meetings with Heads of Department and other budget holders across the school.
2. Financial reporting, control reporting and management information:
 - Support the Head of Finance with month-end and year-end financial reporting processes.
 - Coordinate the month-end close-down process across the finance team, ensuring all tasks are completed accurately and to agreed deadlines.
 - Prepare monthly management accounts, including income and expenditure reports/analysis, for review by the Head of Finance.

- Prepare monthly balance sheet reconciliations and maintain the Fixed Asset Register for Head of Finance review.
- Prepare cashflow forecasts for review by the Head of Finance
- Prepare and post accruals, prepayments, payroll journals and other month-end accounting adjustments.
- Prepare VAT returns for review and submission, ensuring compliance with HMRC requirements.
- Support the Head of Finance with any other key statutory return submissions e.g Budget forecast return, SRMSAT.
- Support the preparation of year-end schedules and the trial balance.

3. Audit, compliance, procurement and value for money:

- Support the ongoing development, review and approval of the school's approved supplier list, including adding new suppliers, updating supplier bank details, and streamlining the supplier base to ensure compliance, accuracy, and value for money.
- Support the Head of Finance with internal and external audit processes, including the preparation of working papers, schedules and supporting documentation.
- Assist in responding to audit queries and implementing agreed actions arising from audit findings.
- Support compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook, financial regulations and internal financial policies.
- Support the Head of Finance with procurement compliance, including adherence to procurement thresholds, tendering requirements and internal approval processes.
- Assist in supporting value-for-money decision making by ensuring appropriate documentation, benchmarking and evidence is available for review.
- Assist in ensuring the school is fully prepared for audit, compliance reviews and regulatory checks.

4. Financial management, control, operations and team support:

- Deputise for the Head of Finance in the day-to-day leadership of the finance function during periods of absence.
- Support the effective operation and continuous improvement of finance systems, processes and internal controls.
- Approve payment runs, including BACS and Faster Payments, in line with delegated authority and bank signatory responsibilities.
- Approve purchase orders and invoice workflows within finance systems following budget holder approval.
- Coordinate and oversee the Purchase Ledger and Sales Ledger processes to ensure timely and accurate processing.
- Manage and coordinate the school trip income and expenditure reporting, including supporting the trip close-down process, ensuring accurate recording, use of trip related systems by school staff and reconciliations and compliance with financial procedures and school policy.
- Act as a senior point of reference for Finance Officers, providing guidance, support and task prioritisation as required.
- Assist with the coordination and monitoring of workloads within the finance team to ensure deadlines and service standards are met.
- Provide cover for key Finance Officer and/or Finance Assistant duties during periods of absence to ensure continuity of service.
- Work alongside other members of the finance team to ensure finance-related guidance, policies, templates and training aids remain up to date, compliant and value-adding.
- Support adherence to financial controls, procedures and approval processes, identifying and escalating issues or areas for improvement as appropriate.

- Undertake any other reasonable duties commensurate with the role, as required by the Head of Finance.

This job description is not designed to be an exhaustive list of duties and responsibilities but represents the key areas of work. There will be additional duties and responsibilities implicit within the role. The content of this post will be reviewed in consultation with the post holder when necessary.

Signed :

Date :

Person Specification: Senior Finance Officer

	CRITERIA
QUALIFICATIONS	AAT Level 4 Qualified or evidence of equivalent practical experience
EXPERIENCE	<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience working in a finance role within the education sector, with a strong understanding of school or academy trust financial operations and controls. • Experience of budgeting, forecasting and budget monitoring, including variance analysis and supporting long-term financial planning. • Hands-on experience of month-end and year-end financial processes, including preparation of management accounts, balance sheet reconciliations and supporting audit processes. • Experience of operating within a regulated financial environment, with knowledge of education-specific compliance requirements (e.g. Academy Trust Handbook, procurement rules, audit expectations). <p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working in a senior or supervisory finance role, including coordinating workloads, supporting or deputising for a more senior finance lead. • Experience of procurement and value-for-money processes within a school or academy trust, including supplier management, tendering or benchmarking activity.
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to clearly communicate financial information, both verbally and in writing, to senior leaders, governors and other staff. • High level of proficiency in the use of financial systems and Microsoft Excel, with the ability to produce accurate and accessible financial reports. • Strong analytical skills, with the ability to interpret financial data and identify variances, trends and issues. • Ability to prioritise workloads, manage competing demands and work effectively to deadlines. • High level of attention to detail, ensuring accuracy and reliability of financial information. • Solutions-focused approach, with the ability to identify issues and propose practical improvements. • Ability to work collaboratively as part of a team, supporting colleagues and contributing to shared objectives. • Ability to plan ahead and support continuous improvement of finance processes and systems. • Flexible, positive and proactive approach to work. • Commitment to maintaining high professional standards and achieving positive outcomes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to develop own skills and knowledge through continuous professional development. • Demonstrates professionalism, treating others with dignity and respect at all times.
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound knowledge of accounting principles and financial procedures, sufficient to maintain accounts, produce financial reports and support variance analysis. • Knowledge of financial processes within an education setting, including budgeting, financial controls and reporting requirements. • Awareness of DfE guidance, the Academy Trust Handbook and School financial regulations. • Knowledge of procurement and value-for-money principles within a regulated environment. • Knowledge of a range of financial and IT systems, including electronic document management and filing systems. • Awareness of data protection, confidentiality and information governance requirements, including record retention and freedom of information principles. • Understanding of the importance of working within policies and procedures, including health and safety responsibilities.