



THE ALTUS SCHOOL

FINANCE POLICY

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Please read in conjunction with the Charging & Remissions Policy

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Section 1: Organisation

1.1 The Management Committee

The Management Committee has overall responsibility for the administration of the School's finances. The main responsibilities include:

- Ensuring the funding is used for the purposes intended
- Approval of the annual budget
- Appointment of the Headteacher
- Appointment of the Strategic Finance Lead in conjunction with the Headteacher
- Ensure compliance with the Finance Policy
- Ensuring the annual accounts are produced in accordance with the LA requirements.
- Consultation on awards of contracts over £75,000.
- Ensure a strategic financial view of income, staffing, and other expenditure and capital projects.
- Appointment of responsible officer – this will usually be the Centre Manager of each AP school.
- Review of reports from the Strategic Finance Lead on the effectiveness of the financial procedures and controls. Management Committee members with responsibility for Finance will be sent the monthly income versus expenditure reports.

1.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the schools, including financial activities. Much of the financial responsibility is delegated to the Strategic Finance Lead but the Headteacher still retains responsibility.

1.3 Strategic Finance Lead

The Strategic Finance Lead works in close collaboration with the Headteacher and is responsible to the Management Committee. The main responsibilities are:

- Day to day management of financial issues including staffing and operation of the finance system
- The management of the schools financial positions at a strategic and operational level within the framework of the Finance Policy
- Ensuring the annual accounts are properly presented and supported by the financial records and systems
- Preparation of interim financial reports
- Regular monitoring of income and expenditure against budget. Including reporting of any significant budget amendments
- Approval of: opening and operation of school bank accounts; authorised signatories; transfers between accounts; operation of debit cards; payment system controls including BACS.
- Approval of orders up to £50,000, in conjunction with budget holders.
- Ensuring the required returns are sent in to the LA in line with timetables.

1.4 Responsible Officer – *a responsible officer should be appointed to challenge SFL*

The responsible officer is appointed by the Management Committee to provide the Management Committee with on-going independent oversight of the schools financial affairs and assurance that:

- The financial responsibilities of the Management Committee are being properly discharged
- Resources are being managed in an efficient, economical and effective manner
- Sound systems of internal control are being maintained
- Financial considerations are fully taken into account in reaching decisions

1.5 Other Staff

Budget holders have financial responsibility for managing within their delegated budgets and ensuring best value.

Section 2: Budgets

2.1 Budget construction

The Head is responsible, with the Strategic Finance Lead, for the detailed preparation of the annual budget. In doing this they will consult with other members of staff to ascertain detailed requirements.

In constructing the budget, the Head and Strategic Finance Lead must take account of priorities identified in the School Improvement Plan and incorporate the costs of these in the budget. Priorities identified in the School Improvement Plan must always be costed.

The budget expenditure total should not exceed the amount of the LA allocated income total plus or minus any balances brought forward from the previous year. If it appears that this cannot be achieved, the Head and Chair of Management Committee must inform the LA immediately this becomes apparent.

The Management Committee must meet in the autumn term to consider a broad budget strategy, and again in the spring term to consider and approve the detailed budget. The full Management Committee must subsequently approve the full budget, and minute this approval. The approved Management Committee Budget must then be submitted to the LA in accordance with the timeline required.

In constructing the detailed budget, the Head and Strategic Finance Lead must take account of:-

- changes in pupil numbers
- changes in overall and specific funding
- flexibility of use or ring-fencing of funding
- current and previous year's expenditure levels at individual budget heading levels

- School Improvement Plan priorities
- staff pay awards and increments
- anticipated price inflation
- changes in the staffing complement
- changes in the supply of services (gas, electricity, water etc.).
- facilities development
- IT resources

2.2 Budgetary control and monitoring

The Head and Strategic Finance Lead are responsible for regular, detailed control of the school budget. To achieve this, they will analyse monthly reports from the school's accounting system. Such reports shall show, for each budget heading:-

- total budget for year
- total commitment and expenditure to date
- variances

The Head and Strategic Finance Lead are empowered to take remedial action to address variances, by effecting virements between individual budget headings. Individual virements may be authorised as follows:-

- up to £50,000 -Strategic Finance Lead
- Over £50,000 -Head

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

The Head and Strategic Finance Lead will present detailed budget monitoring statements to the Management Committee three times a year, such statements shall show for each budget heading:-

- total budget for year
- total commitment and expenditure to date
- variances

The Management Committee shall consider such statements; the Strategic Finance Lead will provide explanations for any significant variances identified.

The Head may assign budgetary control of individual budget headings to other members of staff (e.g. Centre Managers). Such members of staff must control their own budget area, control equipment and stock, receive regular budget statements. The Head remains ultimately accountable to the Management Committees for all budget headings.

All staff must contribute to best value and the efficient running of the school by maximising efficiency and minimising waste (e.g. heating, lighting, and telephones).

All staff should ensure that all school facilities, equipment and resources are taken good care of.

Teachers should ensure that students are properly prepared for all exams and qualifications for which they have been entered.

Payroll expenditure data must be entered promptly each month on to the school's accounting system.

When the accounts for each financial year are closed, a final statement from the school's accounting system must be presented to the next meeting of the Management Committee.

Section 3: Payroll

Only the Headteacher or the Chair of the Management Committee are authorised to instruct the Strategic Finance Lead to make changes to the payroll.

3.1 Time sheets

All time sheets for additional hours that are submitted by members of staff must be checked and authorised by the staff member's line manager, and then sent to the Strategic Finance Lead.

3.2 Checking of payroll data

Payroll data must be scrutinised by the Strategic Finance Lead, in conjunction with the Head, to ensure all employees are recognised, pay appears reasonable and for the accuracy of pay calculations.

3.3 Pay-related 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.

3.4 Supply teachers

The Management Committee will decide, on the basis of advice from the Head and Strategic Finance Lead, whether supply teacher insurance cover shall be taken out, and the extent of the cover.

All claims submitted by 'in house' supply teachers must be authorised (signed) by the Centre Managers or the Head. The Strategic Finance Lead in conjunction with the Head must check on a monthly basis that correct amounts have been charged as per the payroll summary data.

Section 4: Assets

4.1 IT Asset Register and Inventory

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, subject to a minimum value for an individual item of £2,000.

All asset disposals must ensure the best possible value is obtained. Items up to a value of £5,000 may be sold or written out of the inventory on the authority of the Operations Manager or Head. Over this limit, the Management Committee must authorise and details recorded in the minutes. Reasons must be recorded in the inventory, together with the Head's or Strategic Finance Lead's signature (items up to £5,000) or the Management Committee minute reference (£5,000 and over). An official receipt for sales income must be issued to the purchaser.

Inventories shall cover all areas of the school, and be arranged on a room-by-room basis. A separate inventory will be maintained to include items which are not allocated to a specific room.

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

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 Strategic Finance Lead or other person under the direction of the Strategic Finance Lead in all cases and sent to the debtor as soon as possible after the provision of the goods/service, and no later than the end of each term after the provision.

A file of copy invoices will be maintained by the Strategic Finance Lead, the copies of unpaid invoices will act as a control record for the sending of reminders and the chasing of unpaid debts.

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.

When an invoice is paid, details of the payment must be recorded in the accounting system immediately. Receipts can be issued to debtors on request, the receipt number is to be written on the copy invoice and a duplicate copy of the receipt must be retained at school.

5.2 Cash income (i.e. where payment is received at the time goods/services are provided).

Detailed records must be maintained for all cash income. An official receipt may be issued to the payer on request 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).

5.4 Donations (received)

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.

Donations should be properly recorded into the appropriate income budget.

5.5 Other income

All income used to offset expenditure must be paid into the schools bank accounts and coded to an appropriate income code. Monies received from any sales of school equipment must similarly be paid into the schools bank accounts.

5.6 Cash received from pupils

Cash received from pupils must be fully and accurately recorded. Any cash received from a pupil should be given straight to the school office with details of what it is for and how much has been received. The value of the money should be posted onto the petty cash spreadsheet as a receipt into the Petty Cash account, and the cash put into the Petty Cash tin. The receipt should be allocated to the appropriate cost code.

Section 6: Purchasing

6.1 Ordering

School procedures for purchasing should ensure that purchases are as required and are only for valid school purposes. The Purchase Order (PO) Form (see Appendix 1) should be completed by all staff who wish to purchase any items, the form should be authorised by the Head, Assistant Head or SLT member prior to the order being placed. The orders should then be processed by the appropriate administrative staff.

We do not raise PO for supply staff, Alternative Providers (AP) or taxis, this is because these requirements cannot be planned for and can be either one offs, or start and stop with little or no notice. All invoices for these types of purchase are thoroughly checked by the administrative teams to ensure - the supply staff were in on the date's invoiced, that our pupils were with the AP on the date's invoiced, and that we have emails to confirm the booking of taxis. It should also be noted that some of the AP's are very niche and there is no alternative available for some services.

If an order has been placed over the telephone by the administrative staff an official order number will be given and the invoice will be checked against this number. Alternatively official confirmation of the order must be sent as soon as possible afterwards, e.g. by email.

Official orders must not be used to procure goods for private purposes.

Records of all official orders placed must be retained on file at the school by the Administrative team; these orders will be used by the Strategic Finance Lead to make accruals.

6.2 Quotations/tenders

When placing orders it is the responsibility of the Administrative Staff to ensure the following rules are adhered to:-

For orders for goods/services that have a total value or estimated total value:

- Up to £15,000 may be procured after obtaining a single written quotation which must be obtained against a written request for a quotation;
- Between £15,001 - £75,000 may be procured after obtaining three written quotations.

Exceptions to the number of quotes required above would be when we are unable to obtain multiple quotes due to specialism, or due to having a preferred supplier, for example for our alarm systems, and in the purchase of pre-owned goods where there is no realistic comparison for example purchase of second hand vehicles.

Written quotations can be requested using email and the quotations should be provided on suppliers' headed notepaper, but can be sent back by email.

- For order of goods/services over £75,001 a tendering process is necessary

This would realistically only apply to capital works which would be overseen by GCC, quotations are then sought by GCC staff from the GCC approved suppliers using a tendering process and contracts awarded in conjunction with the school Head and/or Operations Manager to meet the school requirements.

6.3 Management Committee involvement

Delegated Responsibility - Management Committee delegate the responsibility for adherence to the above requirements to the Head, Strategic Finance Lead and Operations Manager.

As well as ensuring that the above requirements have been adhered to, it is the responsibility of the Head and Strategic Finance Lead to ensure that the Management Committee are consulted in the following circumstances:-

- Once the quotation is available the head teacher can authorise up to £75,000.

- Review of quotations when the lowest quote is not the most suitable or when the prerequisite number of quotes could not be obtained. In such circumstances the Management Committee 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 Administrative Staff must ensure that items delivered, correspond to details contained in the delivery note. Upon examination of goods staff must ensure that both quality and quantity are appropriate.

6.5 Invoice check and authorisation

Invoices received must be matched to both copy orders and delivery notes to ensure that the invoices relate to goods ordered and delivered. Invoices should also be checked for arithmetical correctness. All invoices must be authorised by SLT or middle management before being passed for payment.

Invoices passed for payment must be recorded promptly in the school's accounting system by the Administrative Staff.

6.6 Petty Cash

Petty cash is to be used in **exceptional circumstances** to reimburse staff who have been requested to purchase items that were not anticipated, and therefore could not be ordered in the usual way via a purchase order. Advances of Petty Cash can only be given, for preplanned and pre-authorised expenditure, when invoice or debit card option is not available. Staff **MUST** provide a receipt for the expenditure on their return.

Day to day operation of the petty cash account is the responsibility of the Administrative Staff.

All petty cash expenditure, and reimbursement income, must be recorded in the petty cash account on admin spreadsheet on the day it is presented.

Each time a reimbursement claim is submitted, the Administrative Staff must complete a reconciliation ensuring that cash expended, plus cash in hand or at bank, equals the amount of the advance.

All members of staff who have been requested to purchase goods or services from the petty cash account must present valid receipts or invoices attached to an authorised Petty Cash Form, see Appendix 2, to the Administrative Staff. The petty cash will then be made up and distributed at a time convenient to the Administrative Staff. The petty cash forms and receipts must be retained by the Administrative Staff for audit and reconciliation by the Strategic Finance Lead each half term.

Items bought for a single purpose or event constitutes a single claim. Individual claims from petty cash must not exceed £50 Any purchases by staff above £50 can only be refunded via the payroll system by attaching the authorised receipts to an expense claims form, items paid in this manner are NOT taxed.

All cash and cheque books held must be retained securely.

Section 7: Register of Pecuniary and Other Interests The school shall maintain such a Register.

7.1 Persons to be included:-

1. All Management Committee Members
2. Headteacher
3. All senior 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. Pecuniary Interest forms will be collated by the Clerk to the MC.

Examples of such improper influence might be:-

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

There cannot be a definitive, comprehensive list of the interests which should be recorded. 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.
- having a close personal relationship with a person in the above categories.
- being in a position to potentially influence decisions made about the school.
- having a close personal relationship with a member of the Management Committee or member of staff.

All gifts with a value of over £50 received, or given, to any member of staff, Management Committee, suppliers or contractors must be disclosed to the Strategic Finance Lead who will report these at the next Management Committee meeting.

If staff or Management Committee are in any doubt, guidance should be sought from the Head or Chair of Management Committees.

Appendix 1

Office Use		Date Order placed	
Payment Type	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Supplier Reference number	
Invoice		Purchase Order number	PO

School Name		Centre Name			
Requester's Name		Supplier <small>Consortium eg The</small>			
Item Code	Description	Quantity	Unit Price (£)	Line Total (£)	Account & Cost Centre
Total Value of Order					
Requester's Signature			Date		
Head's Signature			Date		
BM's Signature (checking bank statement)			Date		

Actions when Goods or Services Received

Office Use	Actions when Goods or Services Received		
Attach receipt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Actual value of order	£
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transaction on Spreadsheet	URN

Appendix 2

Petty Cash Authorisation Forms

Petty Cash Authorisation Slip		
Name		PC No:
Items Required		
Cost (approx)		
Date		
Authorisation		Headteacher
Cash Received		Account No: