



## **West Earlham Infant and Nursery School**

### **Schools Finance Policy**

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## **GOVERNANCE**

### **1. GENERAL**

- A. A list of all governors and their specific roles if relevant are listed below, these are also recorded on the school website.
1. Sarah Mardell – Head Teacher (Finance, Premises and Personnel and School Development Committee)
  2. Jade Hunter – (School Development Committee)
  3. Paul Harker – Chair of Governors, Safer Recruitment, Health and Safety (Chair of Finance, Premises and Personnel)
  4. Keith Codgell – Safeguarding, Looked After Children (Chair of School Development Committee)
  5. Susan Newton- (Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee)
  6. Becca Sturgess – performance Management, Training (School Development Committee)
  7. Mahbubur Rahman – Sports Premium (Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee)
  8. Martin Smith - (School Development Committee)
  9. Rebecca Brighten- (School Development Committee)
  10. Alex Holland - (Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee)

The governing Board and committee of the governing Board meet at least once a term.

These are updated as necessary throughout the school year and published on our website.

- B. The governing Board agrees, no later than by the end of term, the dates of meetings for at least the next term.
- C. Terms of Reference for Each Committee are attached at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

### **2. THE GOVERNORS**

- A. The governing Board approves the annual budget and the associated policies as detailed in the Governors Delegation planner. (Appendix 3)
- B. The governing Board is responsible for the overall direction of the school; it determines the school's spending priorities and evaluates the effectiveness of spending decisions.

### **3. THE HEAD TEACHER**

- A. The governors delegate responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school to the head teacher.
- B. The head teacher ensures compliance with the financial regulations in Norfolk's Scheme for Financing Schools.
- C. The head teacher ensures that sound systems of internal control are in place.
- D. The head teacher compiles draft budgets.
- E. The head teacher monitors the budget monthly and supplies the finance committee with monitoring information.
- F. The information for the finance committee takes the form of Norfolk's budget pro forma, includes committed expenditure and is accompanied by the head teacher's written commentary.

#### **4. THE STAFF**

- A. Staff comply with financial regulations in Norfolk's Scheme for Financing Schools and any school specific requirements.
- B. Staff are responsible for any budget whose management is delegated to them.

#### **5. THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

- A. Membership is determined by the governing Board and reviewed annually in the Autumn term.
- B. The finance committee is responsible for:
  - a. Agreeing draft budgets for the governing Board's approval in time for submission to the Local Authority by 1 May each year
  - b. All financial appraisals
  - c. Forecasting numbers on roll and future budget shares
  - d. Monitoring and adjusting in-year expenditure
  - e. Ensuring accounts are properly closed and reviewing the outturn position
  - f. Evaluating the effectiveness of financial decisions
  - g. Administering voluntary funds
- C. And any other responsibilities as set out in the terms of reference for the finance committee.
- D. Any review of staffing is discussed as part of the finance, premises and personnel committee to assess the budgetary implications of the recommendations and advises the governing Board accordingly.

#### **6. EXPENDITURE LIMITS**

- A. The inclusion of an item in the approved budget plan gives authority to spend, save that the head teacher seeks approval from the finance committee for any individual transaction in excess of £3000.
- B. The head teacher authorises virements up to £3000. Above this amount finance committee approval is sought. All virements are minuted.

#### **7. ORDERS**

- A. Quotations are obtained or tenders sought for purchases exceeding the limits set out in Norfolk's Scheme for Financing Schools.

#### **8. MINUTES**

- A. Minutes are taken which record the basis for any decisions made and clearly state the decisions themselves. Draft minutes are circulated to members of the committee within one week of its meeting and are agreed and signed at its next meeting. The minutes of all committees are reported to the governing Board.

#### **9. REGISTER OF BUSINESS INTERESTS**

- A. The head teacher maintains a register of business interest for governors and for staff who influence financial decisions. (Appendix 4)

## 10. Key Financial Tasks

- A. The finance committee undertake the key financial tasks each term as outlined in the document at Appendix 3

## 11. FINANCIAL PLANNING

- A. The schools improvement and development plan includes a statement of its educational priorities to guide the planning process. The school development plan states the priorities in sufficient detail to provide the basis for constructing budget plans.
- B. There is a clear, identifiable link between the school's annual budget and the schools improvement and development plan.
- C. For each of the key issues in the schools improvement and development plan, costs and other inputs are identified and budgets prepared.
- D. The schools improvement and development plan is reviewed in the autumn term to ensure that educational priorities are stated for the next three years and shows how the use of resources is linked to achieving the goals.
- E. The school budget is revised after the review of the schools improvement and development plan and resources identified within the budget to deliver the plan's priorities.
- F. The school budget is maintained for the current financial year and at least one further year.
- G. The budget is based on realistic estimates of all income and expenditure so that planned expenditure does not differ materially from the agreed budget.
- H. The budget and cash flow forecast are profiled in accordance with likely spending patterns.
- I. In the event of a budget surplus this is earmarked for a future specified use.
- J. A record is maintained of all ongoing commitments with explanations of any significant year-on-year changes.
- K. All new initiatives are appraised by the finance, premises and personal committee in relation to their costs, benefits and sustainability.
- L. The main elements of the budget are fundamentally reviewed within a five year cycle. Benchmarking information helps to identify priorities.

The budget cycle is as follows:

### SPRING TERM

- A. If necessary, the head teacher prepares a revised budget for the current year for the finance, premises and personal committee to consider at its meeting in the first half of the term.
- B. The approved budget revision is sent to the LA by 28 February.
- C. A draft budget plan for the coming financial year, and at least one further year, is prepared by the head teacher and taken to the finance premises and personal committee meeting in the second half of the spring term. This will form the basis of the committee's recommendation to the governing Board.

- D. The full governing Board meeting is arranged to take place after the meeting of the finance premises and personal committee. The governing Board will carefully consider the budget plan and a report from the finance committee before approving the school's budget plan.
- E. The head teacher submits the approved budget plan to the LA by 1 May each year.

#### SUMMER TERM

- A. The head teacher prepares a revised budget for the finance premises and personal committee to consider. The revision takes account of the actual balance in hand or overspending for the previous financial year.
  - a. The approved budget revision is sent to the LA by the end of the summer term.

#### AUTUMN TERM

- A. The head teacher prepares a revised budget for the finance premises and personal committee to consider. The revision takes account of any changes to the school development plan, staffing adjustments and changes to the number of pupils on roll.
- B. The approved budget revision is sent to the LA by the end of the autumn term.

### **14. BUDGET MONITORING**

- A. The head teacher produces monthly monitoring reports, which include committed expenditure.
- B. The finance committee receives the monitoring report at each meeting together with the head teacher's written report thereon. The report takes the form of Norfolk's budget pro forma.
- C. The head teacher identifies and recommends to the finance committee appropriate remedial action for budget variances.
- D. The head teacher recommends to the finance committee how to vire any in-year underspends in excess of £3000. (The head teacher is authorised to vire amounts up to £3000)
- E. The head teacher monitors expenditure on initiatives in the school improvement and development plan.
- F. Holders of devolved departmental budgets are supplied with monthly monitoring reports. The head teacher monitors devolved budgets and agrees remedial action plans where necessary.
- G. The head teacher produces monthly cash flow forecasts to ensure the school does not go overdrawn.

### **12. PURCHASING**

- A. All orders comply with the LA's Standing Orders for Contracts as published in Norfolk's Scheme for Financing Schools.
- B. The school demonstrates value for money through competitive tendering when appropriate or by using ESPO or other approved purchasing arrangements.
- C. Prior approval of the governors is obtained for any expenditure in excess of £3000. Orders are not artificially split to evade this limit.
- D. The school will not enter into any "finance lease" and will ensure that any lease entered into is an "operating lease".
- E. Three written quotations are obtained for any order whose value is estimated between £3,000 and £30,000.

- F. If a quotation other than the lowest is accepted it is reported to governors and the reasons minuted.
- G. Contract specifications will contain the following:
1. contract duration
  2. definitions
  3. contract objectives
  4. services to be provided
  5. service quantity
  6. service quality standards
  7. contract value and payment arrangements
  8. information and monitoring requirements
  9. procedure for disputes
  10. review and evaluation requirements
- H. The official pre-numbered orders are used for all services except utilities, rent, rates, petty cash and any payments due under a loan/lease agreement. Any urgent verbal order is confirmed by a written order.
- I. Individuals will not use official orders to obtain goods or services for themselves.
- J. All orders are signed by an authorised signatory and the finance office maintains an up-to-date list of signatories. (Appendix 6)
- K. The signatory will be satisfied that the goods or services are appropriate and necessary, that competitive tenders have been obtained where necessary and that there is sufficient budgetary provision.
- L. Each order placed is entered in the school's financial system as a commitment.
- M. The school checks goods received against the delivery note and the delivery note is checked against the invoice. The invoice is also checked against the order. Evidence of this is provided by the use of rubber stamps approved by Norfolk Audit Services. The other checks indicated on the stamps are also carried out. These checks are not done by the person who signed the order.
- N. Payment is made within the agreed time limits after certification by an approved signatory.
- O. An invoice is not authorised for payment by the person who signed the order nor by the person who checked receipt of goods/services. Payment is only made against the original supplier's invoice and not on a statement.

### **13. FINANCIAL CONTROLS**

- A. A written description of all the school's financial systems and procedures is maintained. These are kept up to date and all appropriate staff trained in their use.
- B. The head teacher has secured contingency arrangements to ensure that financial control can be maintained in the absence of key staff. These arrangements are the purchase of enhanced financial and professional services.
- C. The head teacher has due regard to separation of duties in organising financial duties. At least two people are involved in the completion of tasks and the work of one acts as a check on the work of the other.
- D. The school maintains proper accounting records. All transactions can be traced from accounting records to prime vouchers and all prime vouchers are traceable in the accounting records. The use of correcting fluid is

not allowed. Any alterations to original documents are clearly made in ink and initialled to identify the person making the alteration.

- E. Documents relating to financial transactions are retained in line with the LA's recommendations. (Appendix 7)
- F. All records are securely stored and access allowed only to authorised staff, ie
  - a. Sarah Mardell –Head Teacher
  - b. Jade Hunter – Deputy Head Teacher
  - c. Rebecca Patterson- School Business Manager
  - d. Jo Woodman – School Secretary
- G. Where there is a requirement to account separately for earmarked funding the head teacher ensures this is done and that money is spent on its intended purpose.

#### **14. INCOME**

- A. The full governing Board approves the school's charging policy and reviews it annually.
- B. Proper records of all income due including Nursery Fees are kept. Lettings are approved by the head teacher in accordance with the governors' policy and recorded in the lettings register. *(The school does not currently let its premises)*
- C. The responsibility of identifying and recording sums due is separated from the responsibility for collecting and banking income.
- D. Where appropriate official pre-numbered receipts are given for all cash collected. Other formal documentation is kept for other income. Receipts are kept securely and in order.
- E. Pending banking, cash and cheques are locked away or safe, as per insurance limits.
- F. Income is banked promptly and in full. Paying-in slips show the analysis between cash and cheques and cheques are individually listed. Income is not used for making any payment or for cashing personal cheques.
- G. Income recorded in the accounts is reconciled monthly with the bank statement.
- H. Where invoices are required, they are issued within 30 days.
- I. The school sends a first reminder for any unpaid invoice after 3 weeks, a second reminder after 6 weeks and a final reminder after 9 weeks. Legal action is considered if a further 14 days lapse. Debts are written off only in accordance with the school's bad debt policy.
- J. Any cash transfers between staff are recorded and signed for.

#### **15. BANKING**

- A. For official funds, the school banks with Barclays. The bank account name is Norfolk County Council West Earlham Infant School – Imprest Account. Account number 50331120.
- B. Bank reconciliations are completed monthly and any discrepancies resolved.
- C. The reconciliation statement is signed by the person undertaking the reconciliation and reviewed and countersigned by someone who understands the reconciliation process.
- D. The person completing the reconciliation is not responsible for processing receipts and payments.
- E. Staff never use their private bank accounts for any receipt or payment due to or from the school budget.

- F. The school's banker has been advised that the school is not allowed to go overdrawn or negotiate overdraft facilities.
- G. The school is not allowed to enter any loan agreement except with the LA. (This does not apply to loans pre-existing at 1 April, 1999).
- H. Each cheque is signed by two authorised signatories and supporting vouchers are made available to each signatory to safeguard against inappropriate expenditure. Cheques are not pre-signed. Only manuscript signatures are allowed.
- I. All cheques are crossed 'account payee'. Cheque books are stored securely when not in use.

*Where schools use online payments through their bank:*

- J. Head teachers must ensure that the correct staff are assigned the access rights within the banking online system that is appropriate (considering separation of duties) and ensure that these are kept up to date i.e. staff leavers.
- K. Online user ID/cards/Pin numbers are specific to named staff and must not be shared with others.
- L. Schools must adhere to the policies laid down by their banker in respect of online payments and ensure that the Data Protection Act is not breached in regards to holding suppliers bank information.
- M. Supporting vouchers are made available to each authoriser to safeguard against inappropriate expenditure

*For BACS Payments*

- N. We will ensure in the process of BACS (Bank Automated Credit System) payments that there is a clear, strict separation of duties. Each BACS payment batch is signed by an authorised signatory and supporting vouchers are made available to the signatory to safeguard against inappropriate expenditure. The BACS Creator and BACS Authoriser must not be the same person.
- O. Each BACS payment will generate a remittance document, which will be sent to the supplier, either by post or by email, to notify them of their payment having been sent.
- P. The limit of BACS payments has been set to £3000

## **16. PAYROLL**

- A. Personnel procedures, including appointments, promotions and terminations are supervised by the Finance, premises and personnel committee.
- B. The head teacher ensures that the duties of authorising any variations to the payroll are separated from the processing of claims.
- C. The head teacher ensures that at least two people are involved in completing, checking and authorising any variations to payroll, whether temporary or permanent, and the payment of expenses.
- D. Names and specimen signatures of authorised signatories have been sent to the payroll provider who will be promptly notified of any changes.
- E. Only the following authorised staff are allowed access to personnel records
  - a. Sarah Mardell –Head Teacher
  - b. Jade Hunter –Deputy Head Teacher



- c. Rebecca Patterson- School Business Manager
  - d. Jo Woodman – School Secretary
- F. Arrangements have been made for staff to access their own records. These are from the head teacher or school secretary.
  - G. Payroll transactions are processed only through the payroll system; this includes the payment of all expenses and benefits.
  - H. The head teacher maintains an up-to-date list of teachers and other staff employed at the school. This is held on the schools and county hall personnel department database and is amended, as necessary, on a monthly basis. This forms part of the Schools Single Central Register.
  - I. The monthly reports on payroll transactions are checked against the schools’ budget working papers to ensure they match.

## **17. PETTY CASH**

West Earlham Infant and Nursery School does not use petty cash

## **18. TAX**

- A. The head teacher ensures that all relevant staff are aware of relevant provisions concerning VAT, tax and the Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) as the LA will pass back to the school any penalties imposed on it arising from an error by the school.
- B. Proper VAT invoices are obtained for all transactions involving VAT.
- C. The LA’s VAT manual for schools gives details of accounting for VAT and is adhered to by the school.
- D. All payments falling within CIS are made in accordance with the LA’s agreed procedure.

## **19. VOLUNTARY FUNDS**

West Earlham Infant and Nursery School does not deal with voluntary funds

## **20. ASSETS**

- A. The head teacher ensures that stocks are maintained at reasonable levels and are checked physically at least once a year.
- B. An up-to-date inventory is maintained of all items of equipment. Those that are portable, valuable and desirable are identified as school property with security marking.
- C. The inventory is checked at least once a year, in the summer term. The inventory is signed as evidence of the check having been undertaken. All discrepancies are investigated and any resulting in a loss of £100 or more will be reported to the governors. Any loss exceeding £500 will be referred to the Head of Children’s Services (Finance & ICT).
- D. Whenever school property is taken off site, e.g. musical instruments/computers, they are signed for and the register noted accordingly. The register is held in the school office.
- E. The governors have approved a policy in relation to redundant equipment.
- F. The safe is kept locked and the keys removed and held elsewhere.

- G. The school's asset management plan is supervised by the governors' Finance, premises and personnel committee.

## **21. INSURANCE**

- A. The school reviews all risks annually to ensure that the cover available and the sums insured are adequate. Advice is available from NCC's Risk and Insurance Manager.
- B. The governors consider whether to insure against any uncovered risks.
- C. The school will notify the LA/its insurers of any new risks or any other alterations affecting existing insurance.
- D. The school will not give any indemnity to a third party.
- E. The school will immediately advise the LA/its insurers of any accident, loss or other incident which may give rise to an insurance claim.
- F. Insurance will cover the use of school property when off the premises, e.g. musical instruments/computers.

## **22. DATA SECURITY**

- A. Computer systems used for school management are protected by password security. Passwords are changed frequently and more frequently in the event of staff changes.
- B. All data is backed up daily and the back-ups stored in a secure fireproof location.
- C. The head teacher has established a contingency plan for recovery from an emergency, this forms part of the schools Business Continuity Plans.
- D. Only authorised software is installed on any school computer to safeguard against computer viruses.
- E. The governors ensure that the Data Protection Commissioner is notified in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, and that the school's use of any electronic or relevant manual systems to record or process personal information, and any disclosure of that information, complies with the legislation.

## **23. PURCHASING CARD**

- A. A purchasing card is held by the following people:
1. Sarah Mardell –Head Teacher
    - i. Monthly Limit: £1500
    - ii. Transactional limit: £600
  2. Jo Woodman – School Secretary
    - i. Monthly Limit: £3000
    - ii. Transactional limit: £600
- B. The cards are used to purchase provisions for Early Start Club, alongside travel and accommodation payments. All procedures issued by county hall in relation to the use of this card are followed.

### **Supporting Policies:**

- Redundant Equipment
- Charging Policy

- Bad Debt Policy
- Nursery Fees Policy

### **Approval**

This policy has been reviewed in line with the 2010 Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Act. Due regard has been given to Equality.

This policy has been adopted in **October 2020**. The date of the next formal review will be **October 2021** and every year thereafter, unless statutory legislation changes.

Policy approved by the **Finance, Premises and Personal Committee** of West Earlham Infant and Nursery School.