

St Mark's CE Primary School

Ramslye Road
Tunbridge Wells
TN4 8LN



School Finance Policy

Headteacher: Simon Bird
Chair of Governors: David Hill

Our Vision

St Mark's CEP School is committed to developing children that are flourishing, building strong foundations, making excellent all-round progress and reaching their potential. We Aspire, Believe, Succeed.

St Mark's school vision is theologically rooted in the belief that everyone reflects the image of the creator God, is loved and sustained by God and is called by Christ into "life in all its fullness" (John 10:10).

Every member of the school community is therefore to be equally valued, fully supported and encouraged to flourish.

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Ratified: 23rd September 2024
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Website -YES

Signed by Chair of Governors: _____

Date: _____

Aspire, Believe, Succeed

1. Introduction

The Governors of St Mark's CE Primary School are committed to providing sound financial controls, to achieving value for money and to being worthy custodians of public money. To achieve these aims the Headteacher and the Governing Body have drawn up this Finance Policy to provide the guiding principles for which all Governors and staff will operate within.

This Policy has been drawn up in accordance with the Local Authority's (LA) Scheme for Financing Schools.

2. Principles

St Mark's CE Primary School Finance Policy will adhere to the following principles;

- The responsibilities of the Governing Body, its monitoring groups, the Headteacher and staff will be clearly defined and limits of delegated authority established, where applicable.

The **Governing Body** is responsible for taking steps to ensure that expenditure reflects best value principles. This is done by;

- Using both performance data and financial benchmarking to **compare** to similar schools locally and nationally.
- Using the information gained to **challenge** performance and set new targets
- Using fair **competition** through quotations and tenders, ensuring resources and contracts for services are secured in the most economic, efficient and effective way
- **Consulting** parents on policy development and major changes in the use of resources

The school will establish sound internal financial controls, based on the LA's Financial Controls to ensure the reliability and accuracy of its financial transactions.

The budget will reflect the school's prioritised educational objectives through its links to the School Development Plan, which indicates the resource implications of each priority.

The budget will be subject to effective monitoring, allowing the Governors, Headteacher and staff to maintain financial control in line with the Balance Control Mechanism by reviewing the current position and taking any remedial action necessary.

The school will be adequately insured against exposure to risk.

The school will ensure that:

- The Budget Share is spent for the purpose of the school only

- Purchasing arrangements achieve value for money
- There are sound procedures for the administration of personnel matters
- There are sound procedures for the administration of payroll matters
- Stocks, stores and assets are recorded and adequately safeguarded against loss or theft
- All income due is identified and all collections receipted, recorded and banked promptly
- The operation of the bank account and the reconciliation of bank balances with the accounting records are properly controlled
- The use of a NatWest **onecard** is strictly controlled
- Any suspected irregularity will be reported immediately to the LA's Head of Internal Audit
- The school will adhere to current GDPR and Data Protection legislation
- Appropriate training in financial administration will be given to enable staff cover at all times

3. Putting Policy into Practice

3.1 Delegated Authority

The Full **Governing Body** of St Mark's CE Primary School has overall responsibility for the management of all of the school's finances covering the revenue budget, other budgets delegated or devolved by the LA and other funds.

The **Full Governing Body** of St Mark's CE Primary School will ensure the annual detailed report of the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) is provided to them and the chair of governors will sign the completed form prior to sending a copy to the Local Authority.

The **Finance and Premises Group** is delegated responsibility by the Full Governing Body for the following aspects of financial management;

- Evaluate and recommend the three year budget plan, which shows clear links to the School Development Plan, for approval by the Full Governing Body
- To review the Finance Policy and agree levels of delegation for approval by the Full Governing Body
- To review the Charges and Remissions Policy for approval by the Full Governing Body
- To review a Pay Policy for approval by the Full Governing Body
- To make decisions in respect of service agreements and insurance

- To advise the Full Governing Body of any consultations to change the LA Scheme for Financing Schools, to allow the school to respond to any consultation
- To report monitoring and the outturn position to the Full Governing Body, highlighting any significant variances
- Evaluate any proposed virements
- Evaluate and report on Tenders for Contract Services to the Full Governing Body
- Keeping in-school financial procedures under review
- Benchmark the school's financial performance and report to the Full Governing Body

The **Headteacher** is responsible for implementing the decisions of the Governing Body and for the operational management of the school. The general administration of financial procedures is delegated to the School Business Manager by the Headteacher and this delegation should be documented in the Finance Policy.

3.2 Internal Financial Controls

The internal financial controls operated by St Mark's CE Primary School follow the financial controls set out in the LA's Scheme for Financing Schools.

3.3 Financial Links to the School Development Plan

The School Development Plan has sufficient scope and depth of the financial implications and it is reflected in the school's three year budget plan.

3.4 Monitoring and Virements

St Mark's CE Primary School recognises that the regular monitoring of income and expenditure against the agreed budget is central to effective financial management. To this end, the Headteacher carries out a monthly internal monitoring procedure, copied to the Chair of the Finance and Premises Group. A monitoring report is taken to all meetings of the Finance and Premises Group which reports, if required, to the Full Governing Body. Monitoring reports are submitted to the LA in accordance with its timetable. Governors should ensure their meetings are timed to see all monitoring submitted to the LA either prior to submission or soon after. This will ensure they have an up-to-date position of the school's finances.

On occasions, virements may need to be carried out. Virements to the approved budget are minuted appropriately and require the following authorisation:

Virements up to £8 000 - The Headteacher, reported to the Finance and Premises Group

Virements from £8 001 to £15 000 – The Finance and Premises Group

Virements over £15 001 – The Full Governing Body

3.5 Insurance

St Mark's CE Primary School is insured through **the Kent County Council (KCC) 'Safe Hands' Scheme** with relevant cover, as identified by the schedule received from the LA's Insurance section.

St Mark's CE purchase staff absence cover through SAS Insurance.

St Mark's CE Primary School does not purchase Money Cover through the Safe Hands scheme and therefore recognises that cash is not insured. All transitions are processed digitally where possible, therefore minimizing the risk associated with cash handling.

3.6 Purchasing

Budgets are delegated to named key stage Leaders and subject leaders.

Where there are Budget holders a 'needs budget' is prepared and submitted for their area of responsibility, for approval by the Headteacher in line with the priority needs of the school and the School Development/Improvement Plan. A list of authorised signatories, containing name, position, budget held and value of budget, should be held in school as an appendix to the Finance Policy (See Appendix B).

All staff adhere to the KCC procedures for purchasing items, detailed in financial control no7, ensuring regard to value for money at all times. The Budget Holder or the authorised delegated deputy is responsible for authorising all order requests and invoices prior to payment.

Where the school purchases larger items, we adhere to the procedure for Spending the Council's Money as laid down in the Scheme for Financing Schools in summary:

For purchases up to £24,999* one written quotation.

For purchases of £25,000* and up to the current public procurement threshold, three written quotations are obtained and submitted to the Finance Committee or FGB for approval according to the TOR responsibilities.

For purchases above the public procurement threshold for goods and services, or above £1m for works, a tendering procedure compliant with public procurement regulations is required.

*These limits should be viewed as upper limits. It may be more appropriate to consider a lower limit dependent on school standing and local knowledge.

All of the above will be minuted at the appropriate committee/Governing Body meeting to ensure that the School is seen to be obtaining value for money at all times.

The school does not enter into any Hire Purchase agreements, Finance agreements or Finance Leases as this constitutes borrowing which is not permitted.

3.7 Personnel Matters

At St Mark's CE Primary School, at the start of every financial year the **Headteacher** uses a financial planning tool to calculate the salary costs of all members of staff, including increments,

where applicable. These details are used by the Finance and Premises Group for incorporation into the school budget planning process.

The ***HT Performance Management Panel*** undertakes an annual review of the Headteacher's salary, and recommends enhancements, if applicable, to the Full Governing Body for approval.

The Headteacher undertakes an annual review of all other staff, in accordance with the Governors' Pay Policy and reports to the Full Governing Body.

Details of all salaries are recorded as a confidential item in the minutes.

3.8 Payroll Matters

The payroll provider at St Mark's CE Primary School is HR Connect who provides payroll services to the specification laid down by the LA. The Headteacher, or designated deputy, signs off the monthly payroll reports once they have been checked for accuracy.

3.9 Safeguard of Stocks, Stores and Assets

All staff at St Mark's CE Primary School are responsible for the security of school assets. Co-ordinators, subject managers and class teachers safeguard their assets and annually check their asset to the schools central asset register, which is certified annually by the Headteacher or designated deputy.

Items of value are held in a locked cupboard/cabinet, wherever possible and all items are visibly security marked to deter theft with Asset Tags

Where assets are written off and disposed of, the Finance & Premise Group agrees this on behalf of the Full Governing Body and the agreement is minuted.

Where school assets are loaned to staff or pupils, details are kept on the asset register.

3.10 Income

At St Mark's CE Primary School, the Lettings Policy is reviewed and approved by the Governing Body.

Where debts are required to be written off, after every effort has been made by the Headteacher and Governors to recoup the monies, the Full Governing Body will approve up to £1,000. Approval to write off debts over £1,000 is required in writing from the LA Finance Business Partner CYPE.

We have agreed a level of cash to be held in school at any one time as £700. Cash will be receipted, recorded and banked promptly at all times.

3.11 The School Bank Account

St Mark's CE Primary School operates its school bank account in accordance with the regulations in the LA's Scheme for Financing Schools. The school operates only one current account for the administration of KCC official funds.

Bank account signatories are updated immediately there is a change in staffing and details are copied to the Schools Financial Services, as a matter of course.

St Mark's CE Primary School pays suppliers/invoices via online banking/BACS ensuring it adheres to all financial controls within the Scheme for Financing Schools.

Bank statements at St Mark's CE Primary School are received/printed out on at least a monthly basis and reconciled in accordance with LA guidelines. The Headteacher or designated deputy signs and dates the bank statement as soon as possible after the reconciliation has been checked.

3.12 Petty Cash - no Petty cash is held

3.13 NatWest onecard

St Mark's CE Primary School operates an approved **onecard** in accordance with the LA guidance.

The approved users are

School Business Manager – Graeme Lawrence - Monthly card limit £5000 – single transaction limit £1500

Breakfast Club – Toni Good - Monthly card limit £300

Caretaker – David Springate - Monthly card limit £500

School Administrator – Claire Chapman = Monthly care limit £250

Staff must not use their own cash, personal debit or credit cards for the purchase of any items for the school.

3.14 The Voluntary Fund - not applicable

3.15 Fraud and Irregularities

All schools must have a robust system of controls to safeguard themselves against fraudulent or improper use of public money and assets.

Schools must ensure they have:

- An Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption policy
- A Whistleblowing policy
- A Gifts and Hospitality policy

All Staff are made aware of these policies and particularly to whom they should report any concerns. As good practice this information is included in the induction process for new school staff and governors.

3.16 Data Protection

The school (as Data Controller) adheres to the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 including paying a data protection fee to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). The school pays £1,470 as determined by the ICO. The schools designated Data Protection Officer is Invicta Law, as specified by KCC.

3.17 Information Systems

St Mark's CE Primary School has a password protection procedure laid down in the staff handbook. Systems are backed up regularly and the backups held securely, virus protection is in place and is updated regularly and the school has a disaster recovery plan for the administration network.

3.18 Financial Administration

At St Mark's CE Primary School, three members of staff are trained in the use of the finance software and financial administration procedures, in event of staff absence. We also purchase a support contract through the Schools Financial Services which is reviewed on an annual basis, allowing us the option to purchase additional support, if required.