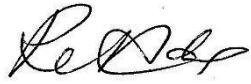



Sticklands Primary School

FINANCIAL PROCEDURES POLICY

Reviewed by the Finance Officer –
Ratified by the Full Governing Body –

STICKLAND'S CE VE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Adopted date:	March 2026
Signature of Headteacher:	
Signature of Governing body:	
Next review date	March 2027

FINANCIAL PROCEDURES POLICY 2025-2026

The objectives of this policy are to set guidelines for the establishment of sound and effective financial procedures. By complying with current financial regulations and adopting good working practices such as:

- establishing proper financial management arrangement and accounting procedures, in line with the LA, OFSTED and DfE recommendations;
- maintaining a reliable system of internal controls;
- ensuring that resources are properly allocated and that the principle of value for money is adopted;
- outlining the areas of responsibility within the school;
- ensuring that the requirements of accountability are fulfilled;
- ensuring appropriate training is undertaken by budget holders.

The school aims to operate in a transparent, ethical and accountable way which will promote effective management.

1. Responsibilities

1.1 **Governors** are responsible for ensuring that the school's finances are managed effectively and for approving and monitoring the budget. They should establish the financial limits of delegated authority. They complete an annual review of the school's financial controls (Schools Financial Value Standard-SFVS) which is returned to the LA by 31 March each year.

1.2 **The Headteacher** has overall responsibility for the school's activities and is therefore considered to be the person with overall responsibility to the Governing Body for the financial management of the school. The Headteacher should ensure that:

- the Governing Body is provided with financial advice
- proper and adequate financial systems and controls are in place
- accounts are prepared and maintained as required by the Governing Body and the LEA.

1.3 The Headteacher delegates most of the day-to-day financial management to **the Finance & Business Manager** while retaining ultimate responsibility.

1.4 **The Finance Officer** provides support to the Finance & Business Manager in the day-to-day operation of the financial systems.

2. Financial Planning & Monitoring

The budget is the financial dimension of the school development plan. By identifying and allocating financial resources, the school prioritises its targets and objectives and facilitates the achievement of its educational aims. By monitoring progress against budget the school can react promptly to variations against the plan to avoid deficits or excessive surplus balances.

Activity	Detailed task	Responsibility and other supports
Planning the budget	To estimate allowance, income, grants, etc	LA, Headteacher, Finance & Business Manager
	To identify and propose priorities in relation to the SDP	Headteacher, FGB, SMT, Finance & Business Manager
	To review and propose changes in staffing needs	Headteacher
	To draft budget options	Finance & Business Manager
	To evaluate budget options	Headteacher, Finance & Business Manager, Headteacher
	To prepare final draft budget	
Approving the budget	To propose final budget draft	Headteacher
	To approve & submit to LA by 1st May	FGB
Monitoring and reviewing the budget	To review monthly DES budget monitoring report and local financial system (eg Premier	Headteacher, Finance & Business Manager

	<p>finance) and investigate any discrepancies</p> <p>To report about financial matters to the FGB</p> <p>To produce a termly re-forecast of budget outturn and recommend action to maintain a balanced budget</p> <p>To approve the outturn and submit to the LA by 30 June, 30 November and 28 February each year.</p>	<p>Headteacher, Finance & Business Manager</p> <p>Headteacher, Finance & Business Manager</p> <p>Headteacher, FGB</p>
Virements	<p>To recommend vire-ments</p> <p>To approve virements</p> <p>To sign virement forms</p>	<p>Headteacher, Finance & Business Manager</p> <p>FGB</p> <p>Headteacher</p>

3. Payroll

Payroll is contracted to Dorset Council.

The school is responsible for:

Activity	Detailed Task	Responsibility
Staff Contracts	Ensuring all forms are completed during recruitment together with any variations of contract are sent to Dorset Council for processing. Once Dorset Council have set up the contract, check that the details are correct.	Headteacher, Finance Officer, Admin Officer
Weekly/monthly returns	To complete overtime claims and supply teacher claims and send to Dorset Council to meet payroll deadlines.	Headteacher, Finance Officer, Admin Officer,
Sickness Absence Return (SAR)	To complete monthly SAR for sickness or other absence.	Finance Officer, Admin Officer,
Notify Dorset Council HR	Inform Dorset Council HR of all joiners and leavers	Finance Officer, Admin Officer,
Monthly payroll printout	To check monthly printout for irregularities, including staff that have left or are not employed by the school. If actual payroll expenditure is different from budget, investigate any discrepancies.	Finance Officer
Nominal Roll	To check staff contract details are correct	Headteacher, Finance Officer

4. Purchasing

Purchasing procedures have been put in place to ensure that the school follows the fundamental principles of probity, accountability and value for money.

Segregation of duties is used wherever possible: requisition orders are placed by the Finance Officer and authorised by the Headteacher. Invoices are processed by the Finance Officer and cheques are signed by the Headteacher. It is not possible, however, to have complete segregation of duties due to the limitation of staffing arrangements.

The school is careful to apply the principles of value for money, the governors conduct an annual review of value for money which includes:

- Annual benchmarking
- Review of contracts
- Review of top suppliers
- Review of all orders over £9,999

All purchases estimated to be above £99,999 should be put to tender and comply with the Dorset Council Contract Procedure Rules. The governors should ensure that at least three contractors are invited to submit tenders.

Three quotations should be sought for estimates of £10,000 and up to £99,999 and a value for money review form completed for the purchase.

Estimates under £10,000 should follow the principles of value for money.

Non-order invoices are discouraged.

E-purchasing and telephone orders should always be authorised beforehand and supported by the issue of an official order. The same controls over purchasing goods and services apply regardless of how the goods are paid for (eg credit card, cheque, invoices settled by Dorset Council).

Budget holders are responsible for the management of their budget account within the limit of their budget and in relation to the School Improvement Plan.

The Governing Body must update annually a register of business interests for each member of the governing body and the headteacher.

The school abides by the terms and conditions of Procurement cards (P-cards) for schools.

Activity	Detailed task	Responsibility
Placing orders	Requisition orders	Budget holders
	Responsible for agreeing on requisition orders within limit of account budget	Headteacher
	Responsible for agreeing orders above limit of account budget	Headteacher

	Responsible for agreeing purchase above delegated limit	Governors
	Responsible for obtaining quotes	Budget holder
	Responsible for seeking tenders	Finance & Business Manager
	Responsible for placing official orders	Finance Officer
	Responsible for signing orders	Headteacher
	Responsible for placing summary orders	Finance Officer

Contd. Activity	Detailed task	Responsibility
Deliveries	Responsible for checking delivery against order	Budget holder
	Responsible for returning and/or exchanging goods	Budget holder
Invoices and Payments	Processing invoices for payment/Produces file for upload to Dorset Council for payment	Finance Officer
	Authorises Dorset Council invoice file for payment	Head teacher
	Authorised signatory of credit card	Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteachers
	Authorised signatures on delegated account (1 signature only)	Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteachers
	Authorised signatures on Voluntary Fund accounts (2 signatures minimum)	

5. Cash Handling for Delegated and Voluntary Fund Accounts

Cash handling should be kept to a minimum and whenever possible and practical, transactions should be done by cheques. Monies should be kept in a safe and secure place and promptly paid into the bank accounts.

Cash is usually collected for the following purposes:

- field trips
- revision guides
- uniform
- lettings
- personal telephone calls
- fund raising
- donations

Cash received should be promptly counted by the Finance Officer and put away in the fireproof safe.

Audit recommendations on safe limits and transit of money should be adhered to.

Petty cash money should be kept to a minimum. All expenditure should be supported by receipts identifying any VAT paid. Payment from the petty cash fund should be limited to minor items which have been approved in advance by the budget holder. Petty cash expenditure on individual items should not exceed £20.

The following guidelines should be followed when handling cash:

- avoid counting cash in public
- avoid leaving cash unsecured in an unattended area or room
- use the fireproof safe to store large amounts of cash
- receipts are given for cash received from lettings or on request

Activity	Detailed task	Responsibility
Collection of money	Collection of curriculum related money	Finance Officer (in her absence SIMS Officer and Finance & Business Manager)
	Collection of money from lettings	Finance Officer, Finance & Business Manager
	Collection of money for uniform	Finance Officer (SIMS Officer)
	Collection of money for fundraising, donations, private calls and other sources	Finance Officer

Cash received	Counting and recording of money	Finance Officer
	Preparing banking	Finance Officer
	Transporting cash to bank	Finance Officer
Petty cash management	Access to petty cash fund	Finance Officer, Finance & Business Manager
	Payment from petty cash fund	Finance Officer
	Recording of petty cash fund expenditure and receipts	Finance Officer

6. Reconciliation of accounts, financial reporting and collation of information

The school needs to continually monitor its financial progress and report on it to various bodies, such as the governors, LA, OFSTED and DfE.

The school also needs to complete various claims in relation to income and expenditure.

Information gathering is an important factor in the effective management of the school's finances.

The list of reports, claims and returns, and their submission deadlines, is usually defined by the LA or the DfE.

Activity	Detailed task	Responsibility
Reconciliation of bank statements	Monthly reconciliation of bank statements for Delegated and Voluntary Fund accounts. Investigation of discrepancies.	Finance Officer
Reconciliation of credit card statement	Monthly reconciliation of credit card statement to finance system	Finance Officer
	Agreed by	Headteacher
Reconciliation of online payment systems	Monthly reconciliation of online payment systems used by parents against income received to the bank, and payment monitoring records.	

LMS return	Monthly preparation of LMS and VAT return Agreed by	Finance Officer Headteacher
Automatic reconciliation of allowance account (Autorec)	Monthly reconciliation of school's data with DES Agreed by	Finance Officer, Finance & Business Manager Headteacher
Travel claims	Checking travel claims prepared by claimant Agreed by	Finance & Business Manager, Headteacher
Threshold Grant claims	Termly preparation of Threshold Grant claims Agreed by	FGB Headteacher

Activity	Detailed task	Responsibility
School Census	Annual pupil census preparation Agreed by	SIMS Officer Headteacher
School Workforce Census	Annual workforce census preparation Agreed by	SIMS Officer Headteacher
CFR Return	Preparation of annual return Agreed by	Finance & Business Manager Headteacher
Financial Risk & Control Checklist	Prepare annual review of financial control for the Governing body	Finance Officer/Headteacher
SFVS (submitted to LA by 31 March each year)	Completed and submitted	Governing body

7. Lettings

The school has a lettings policy which establishes the general conditions for letting the school premises.

The charging policy is the responsibility of governors and lettings fees are regularly reviewed by the full governing body.

Records are kept of bookings and invoices.

A letting contract establishes the condition of let for each individual hirer.

Activity	Detailed task	Responsibility
Lettings fees	Establishment of charging policy	Full Governing Body
Contracts	Authorisation of lettings Preparation of individual letting contracts	Finance & Business Manager Finance Officer
Booking and Invoicing	Monthly preparation of booking forms and invoicing	Finance Officer
Collection of fees	Half termly collection of fees and follow up if necessary	Finance Officer

8. Voluntary Fund - NA

The school holds a voluntary fund which is used for the collection of money from sources such as:

- fundraising
- trips
- sundry

The fund is managed by the Finance & Business Manager and is audited once a year. Governors receive an audit report which is minuted.

Note guidance on voluntary funds available at <https://www.dorsetnexus.org.uk/Page/3920>:

9. Asset Register

The Governing Body is responsible for the safe custody and physical control of stores and equipment and is required to monitor the inventory of moveable, non-capital items.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that assets under his/her control are correctly recorded in the Inventory record.

Disposal of assets should follow the procedure set down by Dorset Council. (see Appendix 1)

A report detailing all assets written off should be presented to the Governing Body annually.

Activity	Detailed task	Responsibility
Updating inventory books	Recording of new asset	Finance officer Budget holder

	Physical check of equipment against relevant records	
Monitoring	Annual monitoring of inventory books	Headteacher
Disposal of assets	Disposal of assets with nil or nominal value	Headteacher
	Disposal of assets with market value	Full Governing Body

10. Annexes

10.1 List of people with access to safe

The following people are authorised to access the fireproof safe:

Headteacher
Finance Officer

10.2 List of people authorized to sign cheques

Headteacher
Finance officer
Upper PayScale teacher

10.3 Reference documents used for the management of school finances

Latest copies can be found at
<https://www.dorsetnexus.org.uk/Page/3920> including:

Dorset Schools' Annual Cycle of Financial Review
Scheme for Financing Schools
Dorset Council Contract Procedure Rules
School Financial Efficiency Policy

Appendix 1

Disposal of assets is part of the Scheme for Financing Schools – see extract below.

4.1 CONTROL OF ASSETS

Schools are required to maintain an inventory of moveable, non-capital assets, excepting goods sold generally as a normal day to day school activity, and must follow the Authority's procedure for the sale or disposal of surplus goods.

Moveable property surplus to the school's requirements must not be disposed of except by sale on the authority of the governors. The sale must normally be by public auction or competitive tender but, where neither is appropriate, the governors must adopt the method which best serves the interests of the school. Where the sale is to a governor or an employee of the school or the Authority, the written authority of the Chief Executive must first be obtained.

Schools may determine their own arrangements for keeping a register of assets worth less than £1,000. This should include anything that is portable and attractive, such as a camera.

The governing body must ensure that all inventories are reviewed at least once a year and all discrepancies reported to the governing body. A record of all items written off must be maintained.

Each governing body is responsible for the custody and control, and maintaining proper security arrangements for buildings, stock, equipment, cash, personnel and financial records under its control. All moveable property of the school shall as far as practical be marked as school property.

If it appears to the Head Teacher that there are deficiencies of equipment or stores, a report must be made immediately to the governors and the Chief Financial Officer, who may authorise the items to be written off. The Governors must maintain a record of all items written off. Where it is suspected that money or property of the school has been stolen or otherwise misappropriated, or that a financial irregularity has occurred see paragraph 4.17 below.