



Nurturing to Learn

FINANCE POLICY

Elms

School Finance Policy

1. Introduction

The Governors of Elms 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

Elms School Finance Policy will adhere to the following principles;

- The responsibilities of the Governing Body, its committees, 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 Governors recognise that Special Schools are now subject to the Balance Control Mechanism when reviewing the current position

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 received, 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 petty cash is strictly controlled
- The use of a NatWest **onecard** is strictly controlled

The School does not operate a voluntary fund but administers fundraising receipts with the same amount of rigour.

- 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 Elms 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 (e.g. the School Voluntary Fund).

The Full Governing Body of Elms 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 Monitoring Pair 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
- Monitoring of the financial position of the school on a regular basis
- 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 may be delegated to other members of staff at the discretion of the Headteacher and this delegation should be documented in the Finance Policy.

3.2 Internal Financial Controls

The internal financial controls operated by Elms 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

Elms 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 Monitoring Pair. A monitoring report is taken to all meetings of the Finance Monitoring Pair 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 Monitoring Pair

Virements from £8,000 to £15,000 – The Finance Monitoring Pair

Virements over £15,000 – The Full Governing Body

3.5 Insurance

Elms 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.

Elms School is insured as standard through the Safe Hands (RPA) scheme and therefore recognises that only cash held on site up to £3000 if held in a safe/strongroom or £250 if held in a locked receptacle (other than safe/strongroom) is insured.

3.6 Purchasing

At Elms School, budgets are delegated to key stage co-ordinators and class teachers. 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.

All new staff are inducted into finance procedures as part of their generic induction.

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 <http://www.kelsi.org.uk/policies-and-guidance/finance-guidance-and-policies/scheme-for-financing-schools>) in summary:

- For orders in excess of £8,000, but less than £ 50,000, three written quotations are obtained and submitted to the Finance Monitoring Pair for approval and report to the Full Governing Body
- For orders of £50,000 or over, no fewer than three competitive tenders are sought and submitted to the Full Governing Body for approval

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.

With this in mind, the school also adopts the procedure where quotations are sought for all purchases over £3, 000, as a matter of good practice except in an emergency.

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 Elms 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 Monitoring Pair for incorporation into the school budget planning process.

The Headteacher's Performance Management Committee 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 Elms School is Elms School who provide payroll services to the specification laid down by the LA. The Headteacher, or Deputy Head, signs off the monthly payroll reports once they have been checked for accuracy.

3.9 Safeguard of Stocks, Stores and Assets

All staff at Elms School are responsible for the security of school assets. Co-ordinators, subject managers and class teachers safeguard their assets and maintain asset registers, which are checked at least on an annual basis and certified by the Headteacher or designated deputy. Other school assets are recorded on a general asset register, maintained and updated by the school office.

The school have adopted a procedure whereby keys and other assets are signed for when issued. Records are held within the Business managers office.

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

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

Where school assets are loaned to staff or pupils, a loans book is completed and signed when borrowing the item and again when the item is returned.

3.10 Income

At Elms 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 £250 Cash will be receipted, recorded and banked promptly at all times.

3.11 The School Bank Account

Elms 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.

Elms School pays suppliers/invoices via online banking/BACS ensuring it adheres to all financial controls within the Scheme for Financing Schools.

Bank statements at Elms School are received/printed out on at least a monthly basis and reconciled in accordance with LA guidelines. The Headteacher or Deputy Head signs and dates the bank statement as soon as possible after the reconciliation has been checked.

All cash will be counted and reconciled by two members of staff.

3.12 Petty Cash

Petty Cash is held securely at all times and the limit for petty cash is £250. At Elms School, petty cash transactions are kept to a minimum and the maximum value of any one transaction is £30.00. All staff obtain proper VAT receipts for petty cash purchases, wherever possible, as this demonstrates value for money in respect of the school budget and satisfies legislative requirements.

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

Personal Reward cards must not be used in conjunction with any school purchase

3.13 NatWest onecard

Elms School operates an approved **onecard** in accordance with the LA guidance. The approved users are:

John Dexter, Headteacher: Monthly card limit is £3000

Sean Mohan, Head of STLS: Monthly card limit is £1800
Trevor Moody, Food Tech teacher: Monthly card limit is £1000
Gillian Clark, Welfare Officer: Monthly card limit is £500
Alison Roberts, PA to Head and Office Manager: Monthly card limit is £2000
Claire Black, Admin Officer: Monthly card limit is £2000

3.14 The Voluntary Fund – Not applicable

3.15 Fraud and Irregularities

All staff at Elms School are aware of the LA's Whistleblowing arrangements and to whom they should report concerns. These details are available to staff in their staff handbook.

3.16 Data Protection

Elms 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). Elms School pays £35 as determined by the ICO.

3.17 Information Systems

Elms 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 Elms School, two 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.

Appendix B

All order requests must initially be signed by the budget holder, but then countersigned by The Executive Head or Head of School in his absence before order placed. A list of authorised signatories, containing name, position, budget held, and value of budget should be included as an appendix to the schools Finance Policy. The finance office holds a copy that includes a specimen signature for each budget holder.

This document should be updated annually as part of the budget setting process.

Budget holders for year 2023-2024

Name	Position	Delegated Budget Held (indicate if person is the authorised deputy)	Budget Value	Specimen signature*
John Dexter	Executive Headteacher	All Budgets	n/a	
Sharon Spiller	Head of School	All Budgets	n/a	
Debbie Worman	Assistant Head Primary Inclusion	Reading	£2,000	
Rachel Butterfield	English teacher	English		
Amy Yates Michelle Brayford	Maths teacher ICT Teacher	Maths/ICT	£2,000	
Kelly Silk	Science teacher	Science	£2,000	
Deborah Pallant	Art teacher	Art	£4,000	
Susan Ward- Jones	Design & Technology teacher	Design & Technology	£4,000	
Trevor Moody	Food tech teacher	Food Tech	£7,000	
Gareth Nicolls	Assistant Deputy Secondary Learning	PE	£2,000	

Sean Marsh	Site manager	Site	£30,650	
Hayley Thomas Lorraine Wright	HLTA HLTA	Breaktime (& Thrive) Thrive	£1,000 £2,500	
Mikyla McIntosh	HLTA	Speech & Language	£500	
John Dexter Sharon Spiller	Executive Head Head of School	Music History/Geography RE PSHE	£500 £500 £500 £500	

Agreed by:

Head teacher.....

Chair of Governors

Date:

Date: