

RED HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL



Finance Policy

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Red Hall Primary School establishes and maintains effective systems of financial management, control and reporting.

This document sets out the financial arrangements within the school, including the roles and responsibilities of Management and Staff.

The aims of the policy are to ensure:

- The allocation of resources promotes the aims and values of the school;
- Resources are targeted on raising achievement and improving the quality of provision for students;
- Resources are used to support the educational needs of all students;
- The principles of Best Value are applied in the allocation and management of resources.

The school follows the guidelines for financial control and accounting outlined by the Local Authority - Scheme for Financing Schools & Guidance.

The Governing Body controls this Finance Policy and it is reviewed annually. All queries should be referred to the School Business Manager (SBM) or Chair of the Finance Committee.

2. Organisation and Accountability

The Governing Body

The Governing Body has a strategic responsibility for setting the school's educational and financial priorities and for ensuring effective management of the budget. This includes a legal requirement to agree the school's annual budget plan.

The educational and financial priorities for the school will be identified as part of the process of producing the School Improvement Plan.

The Governing Body shall establish proper financial management arrangements and accounting procedures and maintain sound systems of internal control including safeguards against fraud in compliance with the Financial Regulations contained in this document. These arrangements are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are adequate and are being complied with.

In terms of financial responsibilities, the role of the Governing Body is to:

- Ensure the delegated budget is used effectively and efficiently for the education purposes of the school;
- Set controls for both the financial and operational aspects of the school that are consistent with Best Practice and Statute as defined by the Financial Regulations for Schools;
- Ensure roles and responsibilities of the Governing Body sub-committees, Head Teacher and school staff are clearly defined and allocated;

- Receive and evaluate reports from the Finance Committee on finance matters;
- Review the delegated responsibilities annually.

The Governing Body delegates some of its powers within a committee structure as well as to the Headteacher. The Governing Body meets twice a term. Members and terms of reference of Governing Body Committees are reviewed annually.

The Governing Body and school staff has a responsibility to avoid any conflict between their business and personal interests and the affairs and interests of the school. All governors and associated members are required to declare any pecuniary interests which they may have i.e. links with any local businesses. This register is updated annually, and is open to examination by staff, parents and the Local Authority.

The Finance Committee:

In terms of financial responsibilities, the role of the Finance Committee is to:

- Review drafts of the annual budget and recommend the annual budget for the Governing Body to endorse;
- Monitor the actual income and expenditure and forecasts against the agreed budget;
- Authorise expenditure above the £15,000 limit which is delegated to the Head teacher;
- Maintain the Scheme of Delegation, recommending any required changes to the Governing Body;
- Review reports from Internal Audit and other external officers.

The full terms of reference of this committee is given in Appendix 1.

The Headteacher:

In terms of financial responsibilities, the role of the Headteacher is to:

- Advise the Finance Committee and/or the Governing Body on the position of the school budget;
- Ensure the Finance Committee and/or the Governing Body are provided with relevant and timely information for them to discharge their duties;
- Ensure the requirements of the Finance Committee and/or the Governing Body are carried out;
- Alert or inform the Finance Committee and/or the Governing Body of any matters considered relevant;
- Ensure all financial matters are undertaken in compliance with Local Authority guidelines;
- Manage the day to day budget in line with the expectations of the Finance Committee and/or the Governing Body;
- Authorise on behalf of the Finance Committee to vire between budget headings and if necessary allocate additional funds from reserves up to £15,000 at any one time to achieve the school's overall aims and objectives
- Ensure all financial returns to the Local Authority are completed and submitted within the required time scales.

The Head Teacher delegates the day-to-day activities of financial management to the School Business Manager and out-sources the duties relating to Budget Setting and termly monitoring to AVEC Partnership.

The Head Teacher ensures that an effective segregation of duties is maintained in all financial processes.

The School Business Manager:

- Assists the Head Teacher in the preparation of the draft budget;
- Monitors budget expenditure throughout the year;
- Provides periodic reports to budget holders and advice on budgetary matters;
- Ensures that budgetary control methods and purchasing procedures within the school are in compliance with financial regulations;
- Provides general support to the Head Teacher in financial matters.

Curriculum Leaders:

- Responsible for their individual budget allocations including monitoring their departmental spending;
- Ensure all requisitions for the purchasing of goods are detailed on the school's Order Requisition form (Appendix 2) and countersigned by the Head Teacher before being processed by the School Business Manager;
- Ensure that verbal orders are kept to a minimum, restricted to goods up to the value of £200 and only occur with the prior permission of the Head.

3. Pecuniary Interests

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the Governing Body to ensure that staff and governors do not directly or indirectly benefit financially when spending public money.

To control this conflict of interest, the school has established a register of pecuniary interests of governors and staff with financial responsibilities. Governors and staff are required to disclose any interest they have in any of the firms on this register. Additionally, they are asked to disclose any links they have with local firms (or national firms if relevant) that provide services to schools. This is referenced back to the school's current Supplier listing.

Governors and staff are required to disclose any interest as soon as they are aware of the link. The School Business Manager holds the Register of Pecuniary Interests and individual declaration forms. A blank copy of the declaration form can be found in Appendix 3 for information.

4. School Improvement Plans & Budgets

The Leadership Team of the school produce an annual School Improvement Plan (SIP). The aim of this plan is to develop a strategy for improvement in all aspects of the school. The SIP is linked to annual budgets and will reflect priority areas and long term goals.

The Governing Body reviews the SIP every term through the Head teacher's report when necessary and then aims to produce the annual budget that supports this plan for the coming financial year. The school always aims to produce a balanced budget with the approval of the Governing Body.

There will be an annual review of allocations in respect of department and curriculum budgets in order to review and assess need and future priorities. The Head will report to the Finance Sub Committee any known and potential changes that will significantly impact on the budget in order to consider action needed.

5. Budget Monitoring and Adjustments

The school out-sources its budget monitoring process to AVEC Partnership. A member of the AVEC team is assigned to the school and produces termly monitoring reports of expenditure against the budget in conjunction with the school which are then forwarded onto the Local Authority. He/she presents a report on the budget position to the Head Teacher each month. AVEC, in conjunction with the Head Teacher and School Business Manager, prepares additional reports for the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee will then report to the full Governing Body on a termly basis.

Any material variances in expenditure are reported to the Chair of Governors, Governing Body and Head teacher as soon as they are noted. In the management of the budget there is, on occasion, a need to transfer budgets with changing priorities. All such budget virements or adjustments are reported to the Finance Committee within the Finance Report and where the virement is above the Head Teacher's delegated authority, approval is sought at the Finance Committee meetings.

6. Internal Financial Control and Data Security

Internal Controls are reviewed annually based on this Finance Policy. The results of this review and any recommendations are presented to the Finance Committee/Governing Body. Any decision to change is then reflected in the Finance Policy. The school has also followed the School Financial Values Standard (SFVS) to monitor and enhance internal controls. This is an annual review process that will be conducted by members of the Finance Committee.

Staff members are properly trained in the financial systems and procedures in accordance to the requirements of their role. Only authorised staff have access to the Financial Management System. The Head Teacher undertakes regular reviews of financial training needs and ensures the appropriate resources are engaged to support this.

Due to the size of the school, there are not always full cover arrangements in place for key financial staff and management. Where such requirements are needed, the school uses external resources. These arrangements include the performance of key tasks and the transfer of responsibility during the period of cover.

All requests for goods and services are completed on a requisition form by a member of staff and upon approval by the Headteacher, the school office raises any orders.

Financial records are kept properly and securely in accordance with the requirements of the LA regulations.

7. Computer Systems

The School operates the Local Authority's Financial Management System, Agresso, and therefore is in accordance with the Scheme for Financing Schools, and the Authority's financial regulations and Contract Procedure Rules.

The school is registered in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Only authorised staff have access to the Financial Management System.

8. Purchasing

In respect of the purchasing of goods and services the school will follow the requirements set out in:

- Darlington Borough Council's Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules.
- The Authority's Scheme for Financing Schools & the Guidance to the Scheme
- The Finance Policy of Red Hall Primary.

Red Hall Primary purchasing procedures are as follows:

- Under normal circumstances prior evidenced approval must be obtained from the Head before any orders are placed (see order requisition form).
- In the Head's absence Approved Staff (in accordance with the schools authorised signatory list) may place orders up to a value of £2,500. Where the value of the order exceeds this amount, prior evidenced approval must be obtained from the Head.
- The Head may authorise purchases up to a value of £10,000. For purchases which exceed this value they must be with the full knowledge and approval of the Finance Committee. Quotes will be obtained as best practice.
- Orders will, routinely, be generated through the financial management system by the School Business Manager. Failure to do so may halt payment to the supplier, and result in the return of goods.
- All order requisitions must be countersigned by the Head before being processed.
- Verbal orders will be placed on an exceptions basis only with the prior approval of the Head and only on orders up to the value of £200.
- Budget holders will seek competitive prices and retain, as appropriate, sufficient information to justify the purchasing decision.
- All department and curriculum orders for the financial year must be placed by the end of the Autumn Term.

- The Administrator will certify the carrier's receipts upon delivery. The budget holder will then check the contents against the original requisition and certify the delivery note before passing it back to the Administrator. Any discrepancies must be reported to Administrator at this stage who will follow up the matter with the company.
- Invoices will be processed only when the goods have been received in a satisfactory condition.
- Darlington Borough Council will be informed of any changes to (SIMS, payroll and petty cash) authorised signatories.
- Leasing agreements will not be entered into without reference to the Local Authority's legal department and Financial Services.

Procurement

- The school will seek to adhere Best Value principles in the procurement of goods and services.
- The school purchases additional SLAs (Service Level Agreements) which are reviewed annually. These services ensure that all Best Value requirements are sought on the school's behalf in the procurement of goods and services through competitive tendering etc. However, for purchases outside this arrangement, significant procurements or where the school seeks to supplement this arrangement with additional prices etc. then the requirements of Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules will apply as below.
- Quotations will be sought where appropriate in accordance with the requirements of Financial Regulations.
- For contracts with a total value exceeding £5,000 a minimum of three quotations will be sought.
- For contracts with a total value of less than £5,000, although not necessary, at least two quotations will be sought for good practice.
- The requirements of Contract Procedure Rules will be followed for all purchases of works, supplies and services where tender arrangements apply i.e. above £35,000.
- Where appropriate, advice will be sought from the Authority when entering into new contracts.
- Should a quotation other than the lowest be accepted the reason for this shall be reported to the Finance Committee.

Tax

All VAT, Income Tax and Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) Regulations will be complied with.

9. Income Management and Banking

Other than the delegated budget, the school collects income from the following sources:

Students - for school trips/journeys

Students - as funding-raising donations

Students - payments for Lunch

Customers - for hire of school premises

All income collection is accounted for within the school office.

A record is kept for each type of income.

In the case of school dinner money payments, these are collected in form of either cash or cheque and are recorded accurately against the staff or pupil's record in SIMS. At the end of each week, the dinner money is reconciled and bank in the same method as other monies received (through an E-Return).

If a pupil's dinner money arrears are not paid promptly and reach £20.00 (two week's dinner money costs) then the parent is to be informed that their child is no longer able to take a school meal and must provide a packed lunch from home. An agreement for the arrears to be paid will be discussed.

If the parent fails to pay the outstanding amount within the agreed timescale, then the following letters will be sent:

1st letter will give the parent two weeks' notice to pay the outstanding amount

2nd letter will be sent asking for prompt payment, directly from the Headteacher

3rd letter will be sent with a copy to the Chair of Governors

If there is no response from the parent, then the matter will be forwarded to the Local Authority to seek help with Debt Recovery. If there is still no resolve, then the matter may be referred to the school's Governors to consider writing off the debt.

In the case of school trips/journeys and fund raising donations parents have the option to pay on line through our online payments system Parent Mail.

Money collected is banked promptly using Secure Cash Collection from Nat West Bank. Lunch money is collected and passed to the Administrator who will record the payment in SIMS against the pupil's name. The school uses Nat West Bank to manage its income. An e-return is completed weekly clearly stating where the income has come from.

The external bursar conducts the periodic reconciliation of bank accounts to SIMS. Copies of the reconciliations are sent to the Authority.

The LA uses the information within the Bank Reconciliation to update its records on the school expenditure

All cash held in the school is securely stored in the school safe.

10. Petty Cash

The school uses cash held in the Voluntary Funds to service any petty cash needs. The use of petty cash will be kept to a minimum and will not be used for the purchase of goods and services where these can be

obtained through the official ordering system. On a regular basis, the school budget is charged to cover these expenses. This is done following the procurement rules as noted in Section 8.

- Petty cash will be paid to staff by the School Business Manager upon production of a school petty cash claim form, with accompanying receipt which is authorised by the Head.
- The Head of Department or authorised person (Curriculum Co-ordinator) must countersign all requests for petty cash.
- Petty cash reimbursement will be charged to the relevant Department or Curriculum allocations.
- Personal cheques cannot be cashed out of petty cash.
- The school will obtain bank statements monthly, which will be checked by the School Business Manager and authorised by the Head.

11. Lettings

The school may choose to let parts of the premises to outside users. Each such let is subject to the Hirer agreeing to abide by the school's Terms & Conditions of Use. Evidence of necessary qualifications and insurance cover will be obtained and kept on file.

Groups that use the premises have to pay an agreed rate that is negotiated annually. Payments for these regular lettings would be received by direct bank transfer each term in advance of a letting. The School Business Manager will manage the administration of lettings and maintain an overview of arrangements.

12. Inventory and Assets

The school has an Inventory Register recorded in electronic format. The School Business Manager is responsible for the maintenance of this register. The Inventory is reviewed and checked annually

Curriculum leaders will be responsible for the upkeep of the inventory of items pertaining to their subjects and the annual stock check of such items.

The ICT Leader and Technician will be responsible for the overview of the inventory of all items of ICT and multimedia equipment and for security marking, serial number collection and the annual stock check of such items.

The school and its assets are protected by window and skylight grills, external shutters to some windows, security fencing, external lighting, CCTV, internal sensors, burglar alarm, smoke detectors and fire alarm. Valuable assets are security marked using Smartwater or Security Etching. The security marking is noted on the Inventory Register.

All school property and equipment on loan must be booked out. Employees wishing to take property off site shall be required to complete and sign an Off-site equipment form (Appendix 4), which should be authorised by a school governor or the Head. Staff will be made aware that any loss or damage to equipment whilst in their care becomes their responsibility.

All write offs and disposals will be in accordance with the Authority's regulations. An inventory of stock removed/condemned (Appendix 5) is to be completed in respect of all write offs.

13. Voluntary and Private Funds

The school has a safe and efficient system for the custody and control of voluntary funds under the control of the Governing Body.

Voluntary funds and related records are kept separately from official school funds. The accounting procedures reflect the standards for accounting for public money as with the Delegated School Budget (School Main Budget) above.

All controls described in the Finance Policy also apply to the Voluntary Funds.

PFA (Parents and Friends Association)

- A treasurer will be appointed for the PFA.
- The PFA shall have a written constitution.
- All private accounts will be audited by an independent person who is not authorised to sign cheques, and who does not hold money in the account in question.
- The private accounts require two authorised signatures on cheques.
- All budgetary control methods will comply with financial regulations.
- Any inconsistencies in the accounts will be reported to the Local Authority auditor and the Finance Committee.
- The private accounts will be maintained entirely separate from the school budget.

Class Funds and Residential Funds

- Pupils will be issued with savings cards to record contributions towards major expenditure such as residential visits.
- Records of all contributions and associated expenditure will be kept on the prescribed Class Fund Form, which is available from the Administrator.
- Receipts must be obtained for all purchases made.
- All monies should be locked away to safeguard against loss or theft.
- Cash must not be retained in classrooms but handed over to Finance staff a daily basis and banked on a regular, at least weekly basis.

Money Raising Activities / Donations

- All planned money raising activities should first be notified to the Head to ensure that they are in line with the aims of the school and to avoid any duplication of effort.
- All money obtained should be paid into the appropriate School Fund or Charity Account and a receipt obtained.

- The Administrator will, in the first instance, receive any donations made to the school, provide receipts and generate thank you letters, where appropriate.
- Donations will be kept separate from the school budget and will be paid into the School Fund, unless they are for a specific educational purpose, and the VAT can therefore be reclaimed, in which case they will be paid into the school budget.

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14. Personnel, Salaries and Wages

The school uses Xentrall's Payroll Service. All information regarding staffing is provided to the service to ensure the correct processing of individual pay. Payments reconcile automatically where records held in the Schools SIMS Personnel system correlate to the payments being made.

Authorisation of additional payments outside normal contractual payments is made in accordance to delegated powers.

Payment of incidental expenses are made in line with the guidelines set by the LA and as documented in the Financial Guidance to Schools.

Recruitment in school is controlled by the Head Teacher who has the authority to recruit at all levels. However, all recruitment needs are discussed and agreed at Finance Committee and especially at the time of Budget Setting.

Recruitment of Senior Management is carried out by the Head Teacher and members of the Governing Body. However, the Governing Body controls the process for Head Teacher recruitment.

The school follows a Pay policy based on the principles of recruitment and pay which also follows national guidelines on pay structures. All recruitment and pay is in line with this policy

15. Insurance

The Headteacher and School Business Manager ensures that the insurance cover is commensurate with the risks associated with the school and will notify the Finance Committee immediately if there are any material risks which are not covered.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Notifying the insurers/LA of any new risks (new property, equipment).
- Ensuring that the indemnity is not given to any third party without the written consent of the insurers.
- Informing the insurers immediately of all relevant matters (losses or other incidents).
- Ensuring that cover includes school property (such as musical instruments and computers) when off the premises.
- Maintaining a check to ensure that claims are processed within the required period.
- Ensuring that the police are informed of all claims where this is a requirement of the insurance.

Red Hall Primary is insured for:

Public liability: - legal liability to third parties (including volunteers) in respect of bodily injury or loss/damage to their property in connection with the activities of the school.

Employers' liability: - legal liability to employees in respect of bodily injury caused in the course of their employment with the Local Authority.

Contents (Balance of risks): - cover for the contents of schools participating in the Authority's scheme against losses arising from malicious damage, theft and accidental damage (other than damage resulting from fire, lightning, aircraft and explosion).

Personal Accident and Assault – Employees and volunteers

Libel and Slander – Employees and Governors

Fidelity Guarantee – Fraud or dishonesty by an employee, volunteer or governor.

Staff Absence – contributes towards the cost of teaching staff who have been absent from work due to illness for more than 3 working days. At present this is through SAS (School's Advisory Service) due to very competitive charges and more comprehensive coverage and will be reviewed annually.

Educational Visits – staff and pupils involved in trips and residential activities are insured through the Local Authority.

Staff who use private vehicles in the course of their work or to transport pupils must be insured for business use, and supply the school with copies of the following documentation:

- Copy of their valid insurance certificate.
- Copy of their driving licence.
- Copy of their vehicle registration certificate.
- Copy of their MOT certificate if vehicle is more than three years old.

When any changes are made to any of the documents listed above, a new copy must be made available, e.g. when insurance is due for renewal, MOT expires, penalty points on driving licence etc.

16. Conduct, Bribery and Corruption

All staff, governors, pupils and parents are encouraged to report any acts they consider to be improper and/or illegal.

The Darlington Borough Council's whistleblowing policy found within the Code of Conduct is used as the vehicle for reporting such acts or actions and is available to all staff. A copy is held in the School Office for pupils and parents.

17. Review Process

The Finance Committee will review the contents of this policy annually, usually in the Summer Term. The review considers any changes to associated publications such as the Financial Guidance to Schools issued by the Authority and ensures the policy complies with any such changes.

The review considers changes to the structure and members of the Governing Body and the school staff. Any changes in responsibilities are also recorded and updated in the policy or related procedures. Where elements of policy no longer apply, these are removed from the documentation. The Finance Committee then recommends the adaptation of the revised policy to the full Governing Body.

Appendix 1

Terms of Reference

Finance and Personnel Committee

Finance

- In consultation with the headteacher, to draft the first formal budget plan of the financial Year
- To establish and maintain an up to date 3 year financial plan
- To consider a budget position statement including virement decisions at least termly and
- to report significant anomalies from the anticipated position to the Governing Body
- To ensure that the school operates within the Financial Regulations of the County Council
- To monitor expenditure of all voluntary funds kept on behalf of the Governing Body
- To annually review charges and remissions policies and expenses policies.
- To make decisions in respect of service agreements
- To make decisions on expenditure following recommendations from other committees
- To ensure, as far as is practical, that Health and Safety issues are appropriately Prioritised
- To determine whether sufficient funds are available for pay increments as recommended by the Headteacher
In the light of the Headteacher Performance Management Group's recommendations, to determine whether sufficient funds are available for increments
- To advise the Governing Body on priorities, including Health and Safety, for the maintenance and development of the school's premises
- To oversee arrangements for repairs and maintenance
- In consultation with the Headteacher, to oversee premises-related funding bids
- To oversee arrangements, including Health and Safety, for the use of school premises by
- To establish and keep under review an Accessibility plan
- Additional items which individual Governing Bodies may wish to include

Personnel

- To draft and keep under review the staffing structure in consultation with the Headteacher
- To establish a Salary Policy for all categories of staff and to be responsible for its administration and review
- To oversee the appointment procedure for all staff
- To establish and review a Performance Management policy for all staff*
- To oversee the process leading to staff reductions
- To keep under review staff work/life balance, working conditions and well-being, including the monitoring of absence
- To consider any appeal against a decision on pay grading or pay awards
- Additional items which individual Governing Bodies may wish to include

- The Headteacher Performance Review Group could be formed from this committee, but its members should have received the appropriate training
- Disqualification –any relevant person employed to work at the school other than as the headteacher, when the subject for consideration is the pay or performance review of any person employed to work at the school

Appendix 2

Please see attached Order Form.

Appendix 3



RED HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Declaration of Business and Personal Interests

Governor	Date	Name of Business or Organisation	Nature of Business or Organisation	Date interest began	Relationship (where held by a relative)	Date Ceased

Appendix 4

RED HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Loan of Equipment Permit



1. No item of school equipment should be removed from the premises or taken home without first completing this form and approving the loan with the Headteacher. Where an item is on long-term loan no end date needs to be completed but all loans will be reviewed yearly.
2. Priority will be given to borrowers who wish to use equipment for school purposes. However, borrowing for personal use is allowed if it increases the security of the item or the transferrable skills of the staff member e.g. ICT. The equipment is released only to the borrower for the use in his/her home and must not be used or taken elsewhere unless it is with prior approval and for the benefit of the community.
3. We do have insurance cover for items that are borrowed from the school. This applies as long as the form is completed fully. Where items are carried between home and school appropriate security measures should be taken whilst the item is in transit.
4. Equipment must be signed out and back in by a school governor.

Name:

Article/s to be borrowed (include amount/model/reference/security number etc)

.....

Date borrowed: From..... To.....

Where normally kept:

Reason for borrowing:

I agree to take all precautions to ensure the security of this item.

Borrower's signature: Date:

Authorised by: Date:

Date returned:

Condition checked by:

Appendix 5



RED HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Inventory of Stock Removed

Item	Date	Reason	Head's Signature	Governor

Appendix 6



PETTY CASH REIMBURSEMENT FORM

Before this order can be processed you must ensure:

- **It has been authorised**
- **It does not exceed your budget limit**
- **The purchase represents value for money.**
- **Re-imbursments will not be processed without a receipt**

Name:	
Position:	
Employee Number:	

Total to be re-imbursed:	
Budget Area to be charged:	

Full description of the purchase:

Signed:..... Dated:.....

Approved by: _____

Signed:..... Dated:.....

For Office Use Only

Paid Stamp:	
Payment Ref:	
Transaction ID:	
Date:	
Processed by:	