



Job Description

Job title: Compass Finance Officer

Reports to: Regional Finance Manager

Responsible for: To provide professional leadership of school financial management across Compass schools

Scale: Greenwich: PO2/3

Contract: Permanent, 1 FTE, 52 weeks,

Usual or main location: Trust regional office currently Alderwood in Greenwich but may be asked to visit other schools where necessary.

Job Purpose:

To provide professional administration of school financial management across a number of schools. Supporting and working with the Regional Finance Manager and in collaboration with the Chief Finance Officer to ensure the sound financial management of all schools. Promoting the highest standards of business ethos within the administrative function of the schools and strategically ensuring the most effective use of resources in support of the schools 'development planning.

Key aspects of the role include:

Leadership and Strategy

- In the absence of the Regional Finance Manager, take delegated responsibility for financial decisions
- To direct and train the Assistant Finance Officer
- To manage financial administration across the schools
- Ensure that the schools are operating in-line with the Trust's financial policies and procedures
- To ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory financial requirements

Financial Resource Management

- Support the Regional Finance Manager to submit the proposed budget to the Headteacher for approval and assist the overall financial planning process
- Use the agreed budget to actively monitor and control performance to achieve value for money
- Identify and inform the Regional Finance Manager of the causes of any variance and discuss with the school any action to be taken.
- Update staffing details and on-costs to manage annual salaries and wages forecasts

- Advise staff responsible for delegated budgets with clear procedures that enable them to monitor their budgets
- Provide ongoing budgetary information to relevant people
- Support the identification of finance streams available to fund the school's proposed activities
- Maximise income through lettings and other activities
- Monitor the effectiveness and implementation of contracts and service agreements
- Ensure all income and expenditure is correctly coded to nominal accounts

Statutory Funding and Income Management

- Check that general annual grant for the school is in line with the budget
- Periodically ensure all non-GAG funding has been agreed and received in line with any agreement
- Other income:
 - Ensure all non-statutory income has been agreed and acknowledged upon receipt
 - Ensure all sales invoices are raised on a timely basis and approved prior to issue.
 - Review sales contracts' outstanding balances and ensure invoices are generated in line with lettings
 - Review monthly aged debtors' reports, and investigate and chase overdue items including school trips and dinner monies

Purchase Ledger

- Manage the purchasing of goods and services, ensuring that orders released to suppliers are in accordance with the Trust's financial procedures, are posted correctly and goods/services are received before payment is made
- Ensure that all creditors are paid in a timely basis as part of periodic payment run preceded by authorisation of invoices
- Manage invoice queries and ensure compliance with Internal Controls, escalating issues to the Regional Office Lead
- Periodically produce and review aged creditors report and ensure any overdue or debit balances are resolved. Review in line with supplier statement and reconciliations.

Cash Management and Banking

- Review and ensure online payments arising from suppliers invoices are authorised in line with Trust policies
- Process receipts to the bank.
- Complete monthly bank reconciliations
- Review and authorise manual cheque payments and monitor the schools' cash flow to ensure that payment runs are sufficiently covered by cleared cash balances.
- Post on a regular basis all remittance from the parent pay system (Currently Brom Com)

Financial Month-End / Year-End / Statutory Returns

- Complete all month-end processes and activities
- Support the production of monthly forecasts with the Regional Finance Manager
- Work with the Regional Finance Manager to produce the first draft of year-end accounts and audit working papers
- Carry out monthly review and reconciliation of all control accounts to Nominal Ledger balances – Payroll, Teachers Pensions, LGPS, National Insurance

Annual Audit

- Prepare documentation for audit and respond to audit queries as set by the Chief Finance Officer.
- Support the preparation of all other audits or inspections from DfE or Education Skills Funding Agency

Payroll

- Review and investigate variations in pay and deductions and document explanations submitted to finance by the Office Leads
- Ensure staff loans or other benefits (e.g. child care vouchers) are correctly accounted for and control accounts or other means are used to minimise errors
- Post wages journals
- Update the budget software for staff changes and vacancies.

Procurement & Contracting

- Review purchasing for adherence to the financial scheme of delegation on quotes and prices.
- Identify and check all new suppliers that could fall under IR35

Other

- Ensure good records are maintained and archived documents can be identified and retrieved with relative ease
- Carrying out additional and varying duties from time to time, without changing the general character of the position or the level of the responsibility entailed
- Adhere to professional business standards of dress, courtesy and efficiency in line with the ethos and specialism of the academy
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Developing self and working with others

- Promote and maintain a culture of high expectations for self and others
- Regularly review own practice, set personal targets and take responsibility for own development, seeking advice and support from relevant colleagues

Scope:

The post-holder will be based at a regional office and will be expected to work across the Trust, travelling from time to time to school sites. This job description needs to be

considered in the context of a developing and evolving situation and, therefore, responsibilities described here may be adapted to meet changing needs.

Safeguarding:

The Compass Partnership of Schools is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All offers of employment will be subject to full safeguarding checks and an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Equal Opportunities:

The Compass Partnership of Schools is an equal opportunity employer. We welcome applications from all suitable candidates, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age or other protected characteristics.

Person Specification

Experience

Essential:

- A minimum of 2 years' experience in a finance officer role within a school or college
- Experience of working with school finance packages. (PS Financials would be an advantage but training will be given)
- Ability to process finance documentation without supervision
- Understanding/experience of financial policy and procedures
- Strong problem-solving skills and attention to detail
- Pro-actively produce information for the Chief Finance Officer
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Desirable:

- Developing and managing strategic financial plans
- Experience of financial reporting to trial balance
- Forecasting and budgeting
- Previous School Experience would be advantageous

Qualifications

Essential:

- Extensive use of Excel and CSV files
- Mathematics and English Grade C/5 or above
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Desirable:

- Finance or accounting qualification

Knowledge and Skills

Essential:

- Strong knowledge of using Microsoft Excel
- Excellent written English and verbal skills
- Excellent organisational skills
- Professionally discreet and able to respect confidentiality
- Be vigilant to the risks of fraud and cyber crime and ensure working practices comply with best practice
- Willing to undertake training and other CPD activities in order to further develop the specialist skills needed for the role
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills (verbal and in writing)
- Ability to use own initiative
- Ability to multi-task and prioritise workloads in order to meet deadlines
- Ability to work well under pressure in order to meet deadlines
- Flexible and able to adapt to work with staff at all levels
- Ability to work with minimum supervision
- Able to work in a busy office environment
- Persuasive, articulate and confident manner

Personal attributes

Essential:

- Willing to embrace and develop the vision of the Trust
- Integrity
- Self-confidence

- Adaptability to changing circumstances and new ideas
- Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children and young people
- Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- High expectations of self and others
- Committed to equality of opportunity for all

Evidence to move from PO2 to PO3

- Has worked for the Trust for 3 years
- Shows leadership in budget preparation and forecast monitoring
- Shows leadership in audit preparation for at least 1 school.
- Shows leadership in other finance areas.