WALTHAM LEAS
PRIMARY ACADEMY

Job Description & Person Specification:
School Business Manager & Chief Financial Officer (SBM / CFO)

Job Description

Job Title:	School Business Manager & Chief Financial Officer (SBM / CFO)
Salary / Grade:	NJC point 36 - £48,738
Reports To:	Headteacher (Accounting Officer)
Working Hours:	Full-time / Term Time + 3–4 weeks (Negotiable)
Responsible For:	Finance, HR, Operations, Estates & Health & Safety, Procurement, and IT Infrastructure
Governance Line:	Functional reporting and compliance accountability to the Board of Trustees and the Resources & Risk (RAR) / Audit Committee

Main Purpose of the Role

The School Business Manager & CFO is a core member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and serves as the designated Chief Financial Officer under the DfE Academy Trust Handbook (ATH).
The SBM/CFO is the primary strategic financial and business advisor to the Headteacher (Accounting Officer) and Board of Trustees. The postholder holds overall strategic direction and operational oversight for all non-teaching functions, ensuring total financial probity, robust internal scrutiny, statutory charity compliance, and full adherence to DfE/ESFA regulations, while optimising resources to enhance educational outcomes.

Key Responsibilities

1. Strategic Financial Management, Charity Accounting & ATH Compliance

- **CFO Statutory Role:** Fulfil the role of Chief Financial Officer as defined in the Academy Trust Handbook (ATH), ensuring robust financial controls and compliance across all trust operations.
- **Charity & Statutory Accounting:** Lead the preparation of annual statutory audited financial statements in compliance with the Academies Accounts Direction (AAD),

Charity SORP (FRS 102), and Companies Act 2006.

- **Financial Strategy & Forecasting:** Formulate medium- and long-term financial plans, robust multi-year budget models, and sensitivity analyses aligned with the School Development Plan.
- **Budgeting & Management Accounts:** Prepare and present annual balanced budgets and monthly management accounts (including cash flow forecasts, balance sheets, and budget variances) for the Headteacher and Trustees in accordance with ATH standards.
- **Financial Systems:** Maintain and optimise the Trust's accounting and budgeting software (Access Education Finance & Access Budgets), ensuring accurate general ledger, chart of accounts mapping, and reconciliation routines.
- **ESFA Statutory Returns:** Lead the timely and accurate submission of all ESFA financial returns, including the Budget Forecast Return (BFR), Annual Accounts Return (AAR), Land & Buildings Collection Tool (LBCT), and Chart of Accounts mapping.
- **ATH Governance & Delegations:** Oversee compliance with ATH rules regarding Related Party Transactions (RPTs), registers of interest, delegated authority limits, and ESFA prior-approval requirements for novel, contentious, or severance payments.
- **Internal Scrutiny & External Audit:** Coordinate external audit processes and lead the Trust's internal scrutiny program, reporting directly to the Audit / Resources & Risk Committee on risk management and audit findings.
- **Capital & Procurement:** Manage cash flow, investments, and capital grant submissions (e.g., CIF). Lead procurement processes ensuring Value for Money (VfM), competitive tendering, and robust contract management.

2. Human Resources, Payroll & Pensions

- **HR Leadership & Compliance:** Oversee recruitment, personnel administration, single central record (SCR) financial cross-checks, and employment contracts.
- **Payroll & Pensions Management:** Oversee the accuracy of monthly payroll processing and statutory pension submissions for the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) and Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).
- **Severance & Policy Compliance:** Ensure any special severance or redundancy payments strictly follow ATH ESFA approval rules and employment law.
- **Trade Union & Policies:** Maintain and review HR and personnel policies in consultation with trade union representatives and legal advisors.

3. Estates, Facilities, Health & Safety

- **Health & Safety Designated Lead:** Act as the Trust's designated lead for Premises and Health & Safety compliance, ensuring statutory compliance (Legionella, Fire, Asbestos, Fixed Wire, etc.) and a safe environment.
- **Asset & Site Management:** Formulate and manage the Trust's asset management plan, capital development projects, and preventative maintenance schedules.
- **Contract Management:** Lead procurement and performance management for estate services, including cleaning, catering, grounds maintenance, security, and utilities.

- **Risk & Emergency Planning:** Maintain the Trust Risk Register, lead business continuity planning, and ensure disaster recovery plans are regularly updated and tested.

4. Operations, IT Strategy, Cyber Security & Governance

- **Operational Leadership:** Line manage administrative, finance, premises, and ICT support teams, fostering a high-performance, customer-focused culture.
- **IT Infrastructure & Cyber Security:** Oversee the Trust's IT strategy, ensuring robust infrastructure, cyber security resilience (in compliance with ATH reporting requirements), and GDPR/Data Protection compliance.
- **Trustee Reporting & Governance:** Prepare high-quality strategic narratives, financial packs, and risk updates for Board of Trustee meetings and sub-committees.
- **Income Generation:** Actively seek ethical income generation opportunities, including facility lettings, community grants, and commercial partnerships.

Person Specification

Category	Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
Qualifications	• Level 4+ SBM Qualification (CSBM/DSBM/Level 6 Diploma in SBM) OR relevant Degree in Finance/Accounting/Business. • Full or partial professional finance qualification (AAT Level 4, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA, ACA) OR demonstrable CFO-level financial management experience within an Academy or Charity.	• Full CCAB / CIMA professional accounting qualification. • IOSH or NEBOSH Health & Safety Certificate. • Level 6/7 Diploma in School Business Leadership (DSBL).
Academy & Charity Experience	• Proven track record of senior financial management, multi-year budget modeling, and statutory accounting within an Academy Trust (SAT/MAT) or Charity Sector	• Successful track record in bid-writing and grant procurement. • Experience managing non-financial operations in a school (Estates, Catering, IT, HR).

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	environment. • Direct experience preparing annual accounts under Charity SORP (FRS 102) and the Academies Accounts Direction (AAD). • Experience leading external financial audits and internal scrutiny reviews. • Proven experience in procurement, competitive tendering, and managing capital grants (e.g., CIF).	
Technical Systems & Software	• High level of proficiency in specialised school/charity financial accounting systems and Excel (pivots, vlookups, scenario modeling).	• Direct working experience with Access Education Finance & Access Budgets (Access Group). • Experience with school MIS systems (e.g., Arbor, SIMS, Bromcom).
Knowledge & Governance	• Comprehensive working knowledge of the Academy Trust Handbook (ATH) and ESFA regulatory frameworks. • Strong understanding of Charity Commission rules, VAT for academies, and statutory reporting. • Knowledge of academy statutory financial returns (BFR, AAR, LBCT). • Strong understanding of employment law, HR protocols, and safe recruitment in schools. • Working knowledge of	• In-depth understanding of the National Funding Formula (NFF), GAG funding allocation, TPS, and LGPS regulations.

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	Health & Safety legislation, risk assessment, and GDPR.	
Skills & Attributes	• Exceptional strategic planning, analytical, and problem-solving skills. • Outstanding communication skills with the ability to report clearly to Trustees and challenge senior leaders constructively. • Uncompromising integrity, discretion, and resilience under regulatory scrutiny.	• Experience managing multi-disciplinary teams (Finance, HR, Premises, IT).