

# Schools Finance Maintained Schools



## Service Level Agreement 2026/27

## **Introduction from Service Lead**

Dear Headteacher, Chair of Governors and School Business Manager

Welcome to the Service Schedule for the Schools Finance Team, which contains all the information you will need about our service.

We have included some improvements to our offer for 2026/27 and hope that you will find these beneficial. We welcome any feedback and thank you for your continued support of our service.

We are now able to upload your agreed termly monitoring forecasts to ERP and this will allow you to view the projection on-line at any time. In addition, the monitoring forecast can be included in our monthly monitoring report for you to reference and in the termly monitoring report to aid comparison against the previous term.

We understand the financial pressures placed on schools and feel that the Monthly Budget & Transaction Download report may be of particular benefit at this time. If purchased this report will be downloaded and emailed to your school within 6 working days of the period (month) end. This report includes a percentage spent/received column along with new coloured key performance indicators. This supports schools to regularly monitor expenditure and income and maintain records and controls (available at all levels.)

In order to share our experience of the ERP system and support schools fully with this, we have created our own ERP Finance Review and Reporting Guidance and uploaded this to the Shropshire Learning Gateway for school's convenience. This guidance can also be purchased as a two-hour add-on training session.

We are finding that schools are using more and more cost centres and that sometimes this places more work responsibility on the Finance Officer. As a result, we are reminding schools that the Silver and Gold Service offer includes termly review/balance of up to two additional 'School' cost centres only, for example Sports Grant or Meals. If separate monitoring, projection and/or budgeting is required for more cost centres such as a SEN Hub, Extended School or for a Nursery, please see separate 'Finance Nursery and Extra Cost Centre Service Level Agreement.' If other budgeting and monitoring support is required separate from the school, please request a bespoke costing from your school's finance officer.

You will be aware that the Department for Education has requested that the local authority supports and oversees the production of three-year budget forecasts for maintained schools. Three-year budget forecasts should be completed by schools regularly and at least annually and shared with the local authority for review and/or support. Schools who buy into the School Finance Team's future year planning or Gold traded service can liaise with the finance officer regarding completion. To assist non-subscribing schools, we will provide a Future Year

Planning Template which can be used and then submitted to the local authority during the autumn term. Future year forecasting can also be purchased as an add-on to the Silver support level.

We hope that schools will find these updates useful and we look forward to working with you.

**Schools Finance Team Leader**

## **Description of our service**

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Schools Finance support services are available in three plans; Gold, Silver and Bronze with add on options as required (see appendix 1a and 1b) Bespoke services can be offered subject to availability, please enquire.

Our SLAs are charged on fixed basic sums plus a price per pupil including LA maintained nursery pupil numbers.

## **Individual responsibilities of our staff**

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<b>Roles</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Schools Finance Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responsible for the management of the Schools Finance Team</li></ul>
Named Schools Finance Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responsible for the support and guidance of individual schools' finances in line with the service level that they have selected.</li></ul>

## **Our obligations and requirements**

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**(subject to buyback level see appendix 1a & 1b)**

## **What we will do for you:**

Ref.	
	<b>Financial Advice &amp; Guidance</b>

<b>P1</b>	Access to a named Finance Officer as well as back-up as needed from a dedicated Team of Finance Officers
<b>P2</b>	Access to telephone and email Helpline (unlimited)
<b>P3</b>	Remote access support via Microsoft Teams
<b>P4</b>	Advice & guidance on current financial position
<b>P5</b>	On site visits to discuss financial position with Head teacher/SBM
<b>P6</b>	Communication with finance governors during finance committee meeting as directed by head. This can be substituted with second termly monitoring meeting
<b>P7</b>	Additional termly financial health check and alert service
<b>P8</b>	Ensure that accounting entries are within Consistent Financial Reporting regulations via exception reporting
<b>P9</b>	Finance updates available via Shropshire Learning Gateway and Weekly Email to schools
<b>Financial Inputting (subject to appropriate authorisation)</b>	
<b>P10</b>	Access to accounting system enabling interrogation and review of accounts as needed from our office base
<b>P11</b>	Input initial budget data into accounting system (including initial department budgets)
<b>P12</b>	Annually set up suite of monitoring reports
<b>P13</b>	Input journal transfers for Internal Recharges to other schools and Shropshire Council establishments linked to accounting system
<b>P14</b>	Input in year Budget Variations
<b>P15</b>	Support and input corrections and journal transfers within own schools' accounts
<b>P16</b>	Proactively consider and notify school of suggested journals and budget variations to ensure financial reporting is consistent with schools reporting requirements and planning
<b>P17</b>	Year-end accounting adjustments (accruals & prepayments) Including dealing with other grant funded activities which need to be accounted for separately to the school revenue budget such as extended school provision
<b>P18</b>	Dealing with internal Investment of planned surplus schools' balances. Please send your Letter of Intention to Invest from the following 1st April by 30th September
<b>Financial Reporting</b>	
<b>P19</b>	Provision of Staffing Budget Planner – prepared and integrated with HR offering live data plus ability to create scenarios and costings.

	The Staffing Budget Planner and guidance notes may be emailed to those schools requesting it.
<b>P20</b>	Termly monitoring and projection reports produced
<b>P21</b>	Prepare and email reports in advance of meetings (subject to sufficient time being given)
<b>P22</b>	Preparation and presentation of required finance committee reports
<b>P23</b>	Monitor salaries and highlight variations to budget
<b>P24</b>	Access to pie charts and ratios with your school's projected current year expenditure and income enabling comparison
<b>P25</b>	Access to multiple year Variance Report – compares previous year outturn against projected current year and future years with % and £ variations with tolerance indicators to support senior leadership decisions and planning
<b>P26</b>	Provision of costings, scenarios or detailed analysis reports from accounting system
<b>P27</b>	Preparation of school budget plan
<b>P28</b>	Prepare future year budget forecast
<b>P29</b>	Year-end financial statement
<b>P30</b>	Submission of Consistent Financial Reporting data to Department for Education
<b>P31</b>	Provision of Monthly Finance Review Guidance manual on the Learning Gateway
<b>P32</b>	Termly review/balance of up to two additional school cost centres, for example Meals /Sports Grant. If separate monitoring, projection and/or budgeting is required for additional cost centres such as a Nursery or Extended School please see separate 'Finance Nursery and Extra CC Service Level Agreement.' If other budgeting and monitoring support is required separate from the school, please request a bespoke costing from your schools finance officer.
<b>P33</b>	Download Benchmarking information and general interpretation of charts arising from Consistent Financial Reporting return to DFE
<b>Finance Training</b>	
<b>P34</b>	Finance administration training for new head teachers/school business managers/administrators to cover the schools finance team SLA, budget monitoring and finance administration overview and accounting system general ledger overview
<b>P35</b>	Refresher finance administration training for existing head teachers/school business managers/administrators to cover the monthly budget review guidance
<b>P36</b>	Finance management training presentation for governors, deputy head teacher or aspiring leader

<b>P37</b>	Nursery budgeting, monitoring and forecasting – see separate Service Level Agreement - appendix 1b
<b>P38</b>	Monthly budget & transaction download report – This report will be downloaded and emailed to your school within 6 working days of the period end. This supports schools to regularly monitor budget expenditure and maintain records and controls
<b>P39</b>	Other bespoke finance training
<b>P40</b>	Additional on-site visits
<b>P41</b>	Other: e.g. Pie charts enabling comparison, variance reporting, tailored financial analysis reports, multi-year budget forecast, ratios, monitoring additional cost centres

## What we require from you...

Ref.		Date required (if applicable)
<b>C1</b>	Arrange termly meeting between Headteacher and Schools' Finance Officer	
<b>C2</b>	Arrange termly Finance Committee/2nd monitoring meeting	
<b>C3</b>	Considering the needs of the School Development Plan, finalise the current and subsequent (where appropriate) year's budget plans.	
<b>C4</b>	Meeting between Headteacher and appropriate financial support to discuss:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actual Year End Carry forward</li> <li>• Finalising of the Budget Plan</li> <li>• Future NOR</li> </ul>	
<b>C5</b>	Keep all financial records up to date (e.g. governors' minutes in relation to financial issues)	
<b>C6</b>	Advise Schools' Finance Officer of the following, to assist with budget setting and monitoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing changes and number of supply days required</li> <li>• Budget variations</li> <li>• One-off changes</li> <li>• Multi-year changes</li> </ul>	
<b>C7</b>	Send copy of Finance Committee minutes to Schools' Finance Officer and Finance Governors	
<b>C8</b>	Arrange full Governing Body meeting before the end of June at which the relevant Committee should report and secure full approval of the budget plan.	

	Completed and signed Budget Plans must be submitted to The School Finance Team as soon as possible after approval.	
<b>c9</b>	Governors of maintained schools are responsible for completion of a Schools Financial Standard (SFVS) on an annual basis. Completed, signed SFVS returns must be submitted to the local authority's School Finance Team by the 31 March each year.	
<b>c10</b>	Maintained schools planning and managing a deficit budget must work in accordance with the local authority's deficit budget protocol with schools, available on the Shropshire Learning Gateway.	

## **Days/times during which Services are to be available**

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*Monday – Thursday	9am – 5pm
*Friday	9am – 4 pm

\*Subject to Finance Officer's working days. A limited service is provided during school holidays.

## **Contact information**

<b>For more information</b>	
Contact name	<b>Jo Morris</b>
Role	<b>Schools Finance Team Leader</b>
Telephone	01743 256244
Email	Jo.morris@shropshire.gov.uk

## **Charging and enquiries**

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For details on the various packages available for this service, including pay-as-you use options, or if you have any queries or issues regarding your service arrangements, please contact us on the above contact details.

## **Additional Services**

Additional services (pay as you go) will be billed at point of delivery. See Appendix 1a & 1b for Schedule of Charges.