

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Head of Finance

Salary: Grade 16, Point 53 – 59: £63,050 - £70,936 per annum

Main Job Purpose

The Head of Finance (HoF) is responsible for the financial management of the Trust, ensuring compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, whilst maximizing the value added and diversification funds.

They will be a key member of the Shared Services senior leadership team (SLT), reporting to the Chief Finance and Operations Officer (CFOO) and supporting colleagues in the delivery of the school's strategic and operational plans.

With a focus on service delivery the candidates will be able to demonstrate proven ability in senior leadership and financial control within complex organisations, leading people and resources effectively, thinking strategically, delivering results and motivating others. They will need to demonstrate high levels of energy and the ability to think and communicate with clarity, working in partnership with other leaders across the Trust, with the ability to execute efficiencies and business improvement initiatives that will drive the Trusts financial success and mitigate risks during a period of unprecedented challenge in the sector.

The role requires resilience and experience in delivering and managing change, someone who seeks continued improvement and not only rises to but also welcomes the challenge. A strong skillset in finance, strategic planning and execution, risk management and emotionally intelligent interpersonal skills are required. The HoF will have an entrepreneurial mindset coupled with first-rate analytical skills to oversee the strategy for income opportunities.

Whilst prior experience in the education sector is not a prerequisite, candidates must be able to demonstrate empathy and delivery that aligns with our mission of Flourishing Children, Flourishing Schools and Flourishing Communities, fully supporting SAST's values and ethos.

Main responsibilities and duties

- The post holder will lead the on developing the Trust's strategic financial strategy.
- The post will support the strategic development of the Trusts five-year plan by collaborating closely with senior leaders across the Trust, to enable effective decision-making that supports the Trusts educational strategy and delivery of outcomes for our pupils.
- You will ensure an effective and high-quality service is provided to schools and business teams. Leading a team of 11 team members you will focus on service delivery and partnership working. Providing high quality financial support and advice to ensure that the schools and
- business teams make the best possible use of resources, enabling them to deliver the best outcomes for pupils.
- Encouraging the effective sharing of best practice, and implementation of efficient operational solutions within the team, seek stakeholder feedback to drive continuous improvement of the service, and identify CPD needs to develop the team.
- The post will be responsible for all aspects of Finance including budget setting, monthly budget monitoring, transactional processing, statutory accounts and regulatory returns; along with maximising income generation and implementing cost saving initiatives.
- Leading on procurement and contract management for areas not covered within IT and Estates.
- Working with colleagues across the shared services functions to ensure all processes are efficient, effective, and aligned.
- The post holder will provide leadership, guidance, and support to the Team to enable them to confidently perform the duties of their respective roles.

Budgeting and Reporting

- Working with Headteachers, and relevant Senior Leaders to develop a strategic plan for the staff and resources of the Trust, referencing external benchmarking and monitoring tools to assess the efficient use of resources across the trust. Prepare the consolidated five-year financial plan for the Trust and as part of this exercise.
- Manage and support the Finance Business Partner Team and School Leaders in the preparation of the annual 3-year budget setting process, for submission to the Department for Education.
- Provide the CFOO and all applicable stakeholders with appropriate, regular, accurate and timely information about the Trusts finances, including management accounts, cashflow forecasts, variance analysis, benchmarking and balance sheet and control account reports.
- Responsible for the management of the financial performance of the Trust and individual budgets; working with budget holders to maintain a sustainable, accurate, value added strategic financial plan.
- Leading on other ad hoc modelling and analysis to support Trust wide initiatives.

Financial Management and Control

- Ensuring effective financial and resource management with secure and efficient systems and processes.
- Direct and oversee all functional aspects of the finance team, including all ledgers, reporting and payroll.
- Through sound management of the Trusts finances, ensure that working capital is adequate for the operation of the Trust and working capital requirements are kept under constant review.
- Overall control and management of amounts due to creditors, and management of debtors, maximising income opportunities and effective debt management.
- Overseeing effective HR, Payroll and Pension processes to ensure proper financial control and alignment to agreed budgets.
- Monitor the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of purchases to assess value for money and ensure that the Trusts charitable income is used to enhance the journey of our young people, including tenders processing, and enhanced financial controls.

Financial Compliance

- Working with the external Auditors with regards to the preparation of annual financial statements to conform to all relevant regulatory requirements. Liaison as required during the course of the annual audit, e.g. in connection with the drafting of annual financial statements, the auditors' management letter, and the drafting of letters of representation from the Trust to the auditors.
- Working with the Trust internal auditors to ensure that the annual internal audit programme for finance is agreed and conducted, responding to, and acting upon any findings or recommendations.
- Overall responsibility for financial regulatory compliance including submission of appropriate regulatory returns to the DfE, tax and VAT returns and to advise on other matters pertaining to HMRC, Charity law, Companies House, Company law, PAYE, and appropriate legislation where appropriate.

Knowledge & Skills

Essential

- Strong management and leadership skills, with previous experience in leading a finance team.
- Professional level accounting qualification (ACCA, CIMA or CIPFA).
- Experience of explaining financial matters to non-financial personnel.
- Experience of presenting complex data / information.
- Excellent analytical skills.
- Experience in budget management and budget setting.
- Excellent working knowledge of Microsoft Excel.
- Strong ICT skills.
- Able to work under pressure and prioritise workload.
- Partnership working experience, with good negotiation and influencing skills.
- Strong organisational skills.
- Effective communication skills

- Ability to work on own initiative.

Desirable

- Knowledge and understanding of accounting for Multi Academy Trusts.
- Working knowledge of academies.
- Experience with income generation strategies.
- Experience of preparing statutory accounts
- Knowledge of GDPR 2018 and Data Protection Act 1998.

Supervision and Management

- In this senior leadership role, the post holder will be required to work without direct supervision. Reporting through to the CFOO who will give direction on priorities and required outcomes as the basis for performance management.
- Full line management responsibility for the Finance Business Partner Team, and Financial Controller who oversees the Finance transactions and controls team.

Problem Solving and Creativity

Deals with changing and conflicting deadlines and frequent interruptions to work, supervision of staff and allocation of work.

Key Contacts and Relationships

Daily contact by telephone/face to face with Headteacher/Staff and other external stakeholders to the Trust.

Decision Making

The job involves working at a strategic level and requires independent decision making with autonomy. Significant consequences of solutions offered, and decisions made to school/Trust operations and financial position.

Resources

General Office equipment

Working Environment:

- This is a strategic post and there will be considerable conflicting work demands, deadlines and interruptions.
- The ability to travel is required, regular visits to cluster of schools as well as meetings and events.
- There will be requirement to work on complex and sensitive information, financial reporting, change management programmes.
- There will be exposure to situations involved in managing change.

Safeguarding Responsibilities for this post

Safeguarding responsibilities associated with this role will not include engagement in regulatory activity. It will have minimal contact with young people on a day-to day basis. SAST is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will have to meet the person specification, and the post is subject to safeguarding checks, including an enhanced DBS check and Children's Barred List check. The post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020.

This is not a comprehensive list of all tasks which may be required of the post holder. It is illustrative of the general nature and level of responsibility of the work to be undertaken, commensurate with the grade. The duties of this post could also vary from time to time due to new legislation, changes in technology or policy changes.