Senior Finance Officer

Job Details

Job Title	Senior Finance Officer
Salary	Grade 7 Point 26 - 30 - £38,510 - £42,123
Contract Type	Permanent, All year Round
Responsible to	Head of Finance
Location	Trust-wide / Manchester
Working Pattern	Full-time, 35 hours per week.
Travel	Travel between Trust schools will be required
How To Apply	Apply via SAM Recruit. If you experience any issues with your application or would like to find out more about the role, please contact HR at hr@ambitioncommunity.uk
Other Information	Hybrid following successful probation

Review and Amendment

This job description is intended to provide a clear outline of the main duties and responsibilities of the post; however, it is not exhaustive. The duties and responsibilities may be amended from time to time, in consultation with the postholder, to reflect the changing needs, priorities and requirements of the Trust.

The job description will be formally reviewed annually as part of the Trust's appraisal and performance management process. The CFOO, in consultation with the Head of Finance, may make reasonable amendments to the duties and responsibilities of the post where required to meet operational or organisational needs, provided that such changes remain appropriate to the grade, level and overall purpose of the role.

Any significant or material change to the nature or level of the post will be considered through the Trust's appropriate job evaluation and review processes.

Job Purpose

Working as part of the Trust Finance Team and reporting to the Head of Finance, the Senior Finance Officer will provide a professional and efficient finance service across the Trust.

The role will support schools and Trust colleagues with budget management, financial reporting, payroll, reconciliations, income and expenditure and day-to-day financial queries. The postholder will work closely with Headteachers, senior leaders, school business managers and other colleagues to ensure that financial information is accurate, timely and supports effective financial management.

This is a senior operational finance role, requiring good technical knowledge and the ability to work independently across a range of finance functions. The postholder will provide advice and guidance to colleagues and will contribute to improving financial processes and controls across the Trust.

Key Responsibilities

Area	Key Responsibilities
Budget Management	Support the Head of Finance and schools with annual budget preparation, budget monitoring and forecasting. Review expenditure against budgets, investigate significant variances and highlight financial pressures or areas requiring attention. Support budget holders in understanding their financial position and responsibilities.
Management Accounts & Reporting	Prepare monthly management accounts, budget monitoring reports and other financial information for schools and the Trust. Analyse financial performance, identify trends and variances and provide clear explanations to support decision making.
Financial Accounting	Maintain accurate financial records and process journals, accruals, prepayments and other accounting adjustments. Complete bank reconciliations and investigate discrepancies. Support month-end and year-end processes.
Financial Controls	Review purchase orders, invoices and expenditure to ensure compliance with Trust procedures. Support BACS payment processes, cash flow monitoring and the maintenance of appropriate audit trails. Identify and report potential control issues to the Head of Finance.
Payroll	Coordinate and monitor payroll information submitted by schools. Check payroll reports and reconciliations, investigate discrepancies and liaise with the payroll provider and schools to resolve queries. Ensure payroll information is accurately reflected in the finance system.

Income & Funding	Monitor income and ensure it is accurately recorded and reconciled. Support the administration and monitoring of grants and other funding. Liaise with local authorities and other funding bodies where required.
Debt Management	Monitor outstanding debts and support schools with debt recovery. Investigate differences between expected and actual income and ensure outstanding issues are followed up.
Finance Systems	Maintain accurate information within the Trust's finance systems. Produce financial reports and analysis and support colleagues in using systems correctly. Identify opportunities to improve processes, reporting and data quality.
Support to Schools	Provide day-to-day financial advice and support to Headteachers, budget holders and school-based colleagues. Explain financial information clearly and provide practical guidance on Trust procedures.
Audit & Compliance	Work within the Trust's Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation and procedures. Support compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook and statutory requirements. Assist with internal and external audits and provide information as required.
Continuous Improvement	Contribute to projects that improve financial systems, processes and reporting across the Trust. Support the development of consistent financial practices and contribute to achieving value for money.
Team Support	Provide guidance and informal support to finance colleagues and school staff where appropriate. Share knowledge and contribute to the development of an effective and responsive Finance Team.

Person Specification

Qualifications

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Working towards or willingness to work towards AAT level 4	✓	
AAT Level 4 or equivalent relevant finance qualification/experience		✓
GCSE English and Maths at Grade C/4 or above, or equivalent	✓	
Part-qualified or qualified accountant - ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA or ACA		✓
Relevant continuing professional development	✓	

Experience

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Significant experience working in a finance environment	✓	
Experience of budget monitoring and financial reporting	✓	
Experience of preparing or supporting management accounts	✓	
Experience of reconciliations, journals, accruals and month-end processes	✓	
Experience of payroll administration and reconciliation	✓	
Experience of maintaining effective financial controls	✓	
Experience of working with financial management systems	✓	
Experience of investigating financial discrepancies and resolving issues	✓	
Experience of working with non-finance colleagues and providing financial advice	✓	
Experience of supporting internal or external audits		✓
Experience within a school, academy trust or local authority		✓
Experience of education funding and grant management		✓
Experience of improving finance systems or processes		✓

Knowledge and Skills

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Good understanding of accounting and financial management processes	✓	
Good knowledge of budgeting, forecasting and budget monitoring	✓	
Understanding of financial controls and reconciliation processes	✓	
Good understanding of payroll processes	✓	
Strong Microsoft Excel skills	✓	
Experience of using finance/accounting systems	✓	
Ability to analyse financial information and identify trends and variances	✓	
Ability to explain financial information clearly to non-finance colleagues	✓	
Understanding of the Academy Trust Handbook		✓
Knowledge of education finance and academy funding		✓

Personal Qualities

Criteria	Essential
High level of accuracy and attention to detail	✓
Well organised and able to manage competing priorities	✓
Able to work independently and use initiative	✓
Able to identify issues and escalate appropriately	✓
Strong communication and interpersonal skills	✓
Professional, approachable and customer-focused	✓
Able to handle confidential and sensitive information appropriately	✓
Reliable, flexible and willing to support the wider Finance Team	✓
Commitment to continuous improvement and value for money	✓
Commitment to safeguarding and the Trust's values	✓
Willingness to travel between Trust's schools	✓

General Duties

All Trust employees are expected to:

- Work in accordance with Trust policies, procedures and financial regulations.
- Maintain confidentiality and comply with data protection requirements.
- Contribute to the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people.
- Comply with health and safety requirements.
- Participate in relevant training and professional development.
- Contribute positively to the work of the Trust and its schools.
- Undertake other reasonable duties appropriate to the grade and nature of the post.

Safeguarding

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All employees are required to comply with the Trust's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures and to undertake safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

The successful candidate will be required to demonstrate an understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and to act promptly and appropriately where there are concerns about the welfare or safety of a child or young person. This includes maintaining professional boundaries, confidentiality and appropriate conduct at all times.

The Trust operates safer recruitment procedures, and the appointment will be subject to the appropriate pre-employment checks, including an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check where applicable. The Trust reserves the right to undertake any further checks required in accordance with current safeguarding legislation and guidance.