

Financial Regulations for Schools

September 2022

Financial Regulations for Schools

Introduction

Financial Regulations govern the way the Council controls and manages its financial responsibilities. These financial regulations apply to all Schools who receive their funding from the Local Authority under the legislative provisions in section 45-53 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Under this legislation local authorities must distribute the individual schools budget amongst their maintained schools using a formula which accords with regulations made by the secretary of state. The financial controls within which delegation works must be set out in a document by South Gloucestershire Council, this document is referred to as the Scheme for Financing of Schools ('the scheme'). This scheme sets out the financial relationship between the Authority and the schools maintained by the Authority. The scheme contains requirements relating to financial management which are binding on both the local authority and the governing bodies of schools. This includes a requirement for local authority funded schools to comply with these financial regulations for schools.

These financial regulations for schools are published in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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Definitions

1. Local Authority – South Gloucestershire Council is the local authority, referred to in these regulations as ‘the local authority’.
 2. The Chief Financial Officer is the Service Director – Finance. He/she may choose to delegate his/her oversight and responsibilities for these regulations to **the Service Director for Education, Learning and Skills supported by the Service Director for Business and Resources - People**.
 3. School(s) – the use of the words ‘school’ or ‘schools’ throughout these regulations refers collectively to the governing body, a committee of the governing body, the Head Teacher or other Headship arrangements at the school and other staff employed at the school, including contractors and agency staff operating the schools financial processes. In certain cases, the regulations refer specifically to the governing body or the Head Teacher.
 4. Governing Body – References to the ‘the Governing Body’ may refer to a committee of the governing body where delegated authority to carry out tasks is permitted, and those tasks have been properly delegated to such a committee by the Governing Body.
 5. Head Teacher – reference to ‘the Head Teacher’ may refer to other staff of the school where delegating authority is permitted and has been properly delegated by the governing body or Head Teacher.
 6. Regulations – the term ‘regulations’ in this context means the financial regulations for schools.
 7. Any points of clarification on these regulations should be initially addressed to the Audit Manager, Internal Audit Services, internalauditmail@southglos.gov.uk
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Summary of Changes to the Financial Regulations for Schools

The Financial Regulations for Schools have had a significant change to the overall layout. The table below provides details of the content's pages side by side:

Previous Version of Financial Regulations for Schools	Proposed Version of Financial Regulations for Schools
Financial Management	Definitions
Roles and Responsibilities	Governance
Annual Budget setting & Accounting Policies	Roles and Responsibilities
Budgetary Monitoring & Control	Governor Skills
Virements	Finance Committee or Equivalent
Capital Expenditure	Financial Reporting
Loans, Borrowing & Investments	Financial Systems
Legality of Commitments	Register of Pecuniary, Business Interest and Related Party Transactions
Financial Information & Reporting	Financial Expertise
Surplus and Deficit Balances	Strategy and Budget Management
Financial Administration	Financial Strategy
Roles and Responsibilities	Budget Management – Annual Budget Setting & Accounting Policies
Register of Pecuniary & Business Interests	Virements
Financial Systems	Staffing
Fraud Prevention, Detection & Investigation	Staffing Structure
Income, Banking & Bank Account Administration	HR, Salaries, Wages and Pensions
Risk Management & Insurance	Pensions Statutory Responsibilities
Internal Audit	Procurement and Value for Money
Purchasing	Scheme of Delegation and Authorisation Limits
Petty cash	Purchasing
VAT	Petty Cash
Salaries, Wages & pensions	VAT
Stocks & Stores	Commercial Activity & Additional Services
Property, People & Information	Loans, Borrowing & Investments
Information Security	Legality of Commitments
Voluntary (Semi Official) Funds	Surplus and Deficit Balances
Commercial Activity & Additional Services	Protecting Public Money
	Fraud Prevention, Detection, and Investigation
	Internal Audit
	Income Banking and Bank Account Administration
	Voluntary (semi-official funds)
	Property, Capital, Insurance & Risk Management
	Capital Expenditure
	Risk Management & Insurance
	Stocks and Stores
	Information Security

Where sections have had content changes applied, these have been highlighted in the table above in green. If the section is not highlighted in green, assume that it is mainly unchanged.

Further information on these changes is provided below.

Summary of Key Changes by Title

Governor Skills – new section to align with Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

Finance Committee or Equivalent – new section to align with SFVS, suggested terms of reference

Financial Reporting – new section to align with SFVS

Related Party Transactions – added to reflect new requirements for RPTs.

Financial Expertise – new section to align with SFVS

Financial Strategy – new section to align with SFVS

Staffing Structure – new requirement to evidence vacancy approvals, better alignment to SFVS

Pensions- updates from Payroll Manager on latest requirements.

Scheme of Delegation and Authorisation Limits – clarification of requirements

Purchasing – addition of purchasing cards and updates to procurements arrangements post transition out of EU.

VAT – updates post transition out of EU and any other updates for VAT Accountant.

Commercial Activity & Additional Services – ceasing the requirement for maintained schools to submit a return to internal audit regarding their breakfast and after school clubs. Requirement for regular separate reporting to Governing Board.

Insurance – Clarification of the governments Risk Protection Arrangements for schools

Information Security – updates to reflect national cyber security council links and latest guidance.

1. Governance

Roles and Responsibilities

- 1.01 Financial regulations apply to every member of the governing body and member of staff at the school including contractors and temporary staff engaged to carry out duties relevant to the financial management and administration of the school.
- 1.02 These regulations relate mainly to official funds. However, please refer to the section on voluntary funds and extended provisions for financial standards relating to these other types of funds.
- 1.03 These regulations shall not override any statutory provisions that apply and complement the statutory requirements laid down in the South Gloucestershire scheme for the financing of schools.
- 1.04 The governing body of each school is responsible for ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the schools financial resources. The governing body is given its powers and duties as an incorporated body. The statutory responsibilities of the governing body of a maintained school are detailed in section 21 of the Education Act 2002. Their key financial roles are to:
- Manage the school budget
 - Decide on how to spend the delegated school budget, depending on any conditions for maintained schools set out in the local authority (LA) scheme for financing schools and these financial regulations for schools
 - Be consulted by their local authority on funding
 - Ensure accurate school accounts are kept
 - Determine the number and type of staff and a pay policy in accordance with the school teachers' pay and conditions
 - Act as a 'critical friend' to the headteacher by providing advice, challenge, and support.
- 1.05 In practice governors will need to delegate to the Head Teacher some of their authority to conduct the management of the school's finances. The governing body must maintain a written record where decision making has been delegated to committees of the governing body and/or school staff. These regulations will specify where decisions cannot be delegated and must be referred to the Council's Chief Financial Officer. Where responsibilities have been delegated or devolved to other responsible officers' reference to the chief officer in the regulations should be read as referring to them.
- 1.06 The governing body has a statutory responsibility to support and challenge the headteacher. Members of the governing body do this to ensure:
- Resources are deployed appropriately in line with the school's priorities
 - Planned levels of financial performance are achieved
 - The school avoids incurring financial loss and waste
 - The school received favourable audit assessments.
- 1.07 The Chief Financial Officer is, for the purpose of Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs including maintained schools.

- 1.08 Substantial breaches of Financial Regulations must be reported to the Chief Financial Officer and may be treated as disciplinary offences. The South Gloucestershire scheme has a section on withdrawal of delegation. The Local Authority can issue a Notice of Concern for breaches of these regulations requiring the Governing Body to comply with provisions set out by the Local Authority in the Notice of Concern. The Local Authority has the ultimate power to withdraw a Governing Body's right to a delegated budget including establishing an Interim Executive Board to replace the Governing Body for breaches to these regulations.
- 1.09 To discharge the statutory responsibilities referred to in regulation 1.7 and 1.8 the Chief Financial Officer, or a representative, may attend any meeting of governors to observe, give advice and/or report on financial matters.
- 1.10 The Chief Financial Officer shall regularly review these procedures (delegated to the **Service Director for Business and Resources – People**) at least every 3 years. The Chief Financial Officer sets the financial regulations for schools, the local authority will consult the school's forum on any changes.
- 1.11 All members of the governing body and staff have a general responsibility for taking reasonable action to provide for the security of assets under their control, and for ensuring that the use of these resources is legal, is properly authorised, efficient and provides value for money.
- 1.12 The Chief Financial Officer may issue, from time to time, financial manuals, and instructions for the administration of the financial affairs of schools. Such instructions may provide further guidance on arrangements dealt with in these regulations. This could include the form and content of any new financial requirements/controls placed upon schools. Any instructions must include details of any documentation/reports required or any accountancy procedures to be followed.
- 1.13 Financial instructions, whether issued separately or included in the Schools Financial Manual, shall form part of these regulations.
- 1.14 Electronic copies of the regulations will be supplied to all schools for distribution. The Head Teacher must additionally ensure that members of the governing body have access to these regulations and any financial documents they may request.

Governor skills

- 1.14 The school should identify whether the governing body has the right skills. This analysis should be undertaken every 3 years, or if there are significant changes to membership. The school should identify actions to ensure there are adequate effective skills. **Additional guidance for completing a Governor skills audit can be found on the NGA (National Governance Association) website.**
- 1.15 The school should explain to parents and the wider community how they have assessed the skills of their governors, i.e., reports to parents and/or information on the school website.

Finance Committee or Equivalent

- 1.16 Governing bodies are responsible for setting their school's annual budget. The governing body may delegate some financial responsibilities to one or more committees. Where such a committee has been set up, the governing body must define in writing the terms of reference for the committee and the extent of its delegated authority, including parameters of its operations and any limits. This

delegated authority must be reviewed annually and when any significant changes to the membership of the committee occur.

- 1.17 The school should consider including the following in their finance (or equivalent) committee terms of reference:
- Recommendation of the annual budget to the governing body including the delegation of the budget responsibilities to budget managers
 - Regular monitoring of actual income and expenditure against each budget and revised forecast for the year
 - Awarding of contracts by tender up to a specified limit
 - Reviewing reports by internal audit
 - Monitoring of actual income and expenditure for any extended provisions (e.g., breakfast/after school clubs) including any business plans to ensure activity covers its costs.
 - Delegation limits above which the approval of governors is needed before goods or services can be purchased or money can be moved between budget headings (refer to section 2.14 virements and section 4.6 purchasing).
- 1.18 Where a school has opted to have a finance committee or equivalent, this committee should meet at least three times per year to enable the review of income and expenditure against budget.

Financial Reporting

- 1.19 The school must prepare clear and concise financial monitoring reports which will enable the governing body to review income and expenditure against the agreed budget. It should highlight variances and be accompanied by narrative to transparently explain matters arising and/or anomalies.
- 1.20 Financial monitoring reports must be produced and shared with governors a minimum of six times per year. Reports should include recommendations for any corrective actions to be taken.
- 1.21 The school should ensure that all staff are informed of the school's annual budget, how funding is allocated and profiled, and how the school's finances are monitored during the year.
- 1.22 Schools must submit financial information and reports to the local authority in line with the requirements and timescales stipulated in the scheme for the financing of schools.
- 1.23 Governing bodies must ensure that responsible budget holders:
- Receive reliable information to monitor their budgets
 - Are aware of their responsibilities,
 - Comply with the scheme for the financing of schools and the financial regulations for schools
 - Have received adequate training to carry out their responsibilities
- 1.24 Where supplementary accounting records are maintained, Governing bodies must reconcile these to the council's main accounting systems, or bank statements, on a regular basis (at least monthly but more frequently where necessary).

Financial Systems

- 1.25 Any amendments to approved financial systems or proposals to introduce new financial systems must be agreed in advance with the Chief Financial Officer.

- 1.26 The advice of the Chief Financial Officer must be sought regarding any matter that could, materially, affect the finances or financial systems of the Council before any commitment is made. The council will issue instructions around minimum requirements for schools where they opt to use other systems. This will be to reduce impact on the council's operations and schools must adhere to any instructions issued.

Register of Pecuniary, Business Interests and Related Party Transactions

- 1.27 It is important that Governors and school staff not only act impartially but are also seen to act impartially. Certain practices must be avoided such as obtaining goods and services, which may include an element of private use for governors or school staff. The school should have a policy and register on the acceptance of gifts, hospitality, awards, prizes, or any other benefit that might be seen to compromise their judgment or integrity and should ensure all staff are aware of it. The practice of purchasing gifts for members of staff from school budgets is to be discouraged. It is not recommended practice.
- 1.28 The governing body of each school must establish a register listing for each member of the governing body and school employee engaged in contractual or purchasing transactions/decisions on behalf of the school. It should also include any business and/or pecuniary interests they or any member of their immediate family have. This should include detailing if they are a staff member or a parent of a child at the school. The governing body must keep the register up to date and available for inspection by governors, staff, parents, and local authority representatives.
- 1.29 Governors and school staff have a responsibility to avoid any conflict between their business and personal interests and affairs and the interests of the school. They must withdraw from meetings while matters of a personal or pecuniary interests are discussed.
- 1.30 The governing body for each school should also maintain a record of any related party transactions (RPT). This transaction is a contract or an agreement between the school and a person or entity that has close links with the persons awarding the contract. A [template](#) for recording related party transactions is available on the Government website. Schools should check to ensure whether a nil return is required for the purposes of reporting within their School Financial Value Standard return.

Financial Expertise

- 1.31 The school should ensure that they have access to an adequate level of financial expertise to support its financial management and operations. This could be internal support or purchased from a third party. It should include cover for finance staff prolonged absence, i.e., more than 4 weeks.
- 1.32 The main areas of expertise to which the school should have access includes:
- Development of strategic financial plans
 - Understanding of and ability to operate good financial management practices
 - Understanding of national and local financial requirements for the school, and the school's own framework of financial control
 - Understanding and operation of budget setting and monitoring

- Operation, control, and monitoring of the financial systems
- 1.33 The school should ensure that all staff are informed of the school's annual budget, how funding is allocated and profiled, and how the school's finances are monitored during the year.

2. Strategy & Budget Management

Financial Strategy

- 2.01 The school must have a realistic, sustainable, and flexible financial strategy in place for at least 3 years, based on realistic assumptions about future funding, pupil numbers and known pressures.
- 2.02 Governors should be provided with 3 to 5 year projections including detail on the following assumptions:
- Projected pupil numbers
 - Free school meal numbers
 - Likely pupil premium income
 - Projections of required staffing
- 2.03 Schools should consider using [integrated curriculum financial planning](#) to help plan the best possible curriculum within the parameters of funding available.

Budget Management - Annual Budget Setting & Accounting Policies

- 2.04 Schools must abide by the local authority's accounting policies and procedures, including year-end procedures. Budget Management requirements are specified in the scheme for the financing of schools and these financial regulations for schools. Governing bodies are responsible for ensuring that the school complies with these responsibilities.
- 2.05 The local authority must notify each school of its budget share before the commencement of the financial year. The local authority is also required to publish a budget statement.
- 2.06 The governing body must establish formal processes and timetables to ensure that all relevant financial and non-financial factors are considered in the school's budget setting.
- 2.07 As soon as possible after 31st March each year, schools must establish the amount of any carry forward budget surplus or deficit. Schools are required to take this into account when determining their new financial year budget plans. Any budget surplus shall be earmarked for any current or future needs.
- 2.08 Each school is required to submit their budget plan approved by the full governing body by the 31st May of each year in a format to be determined by the local authority.
- 2.09 Revised plans approved by the governing body must be completed and forwarded as soon as practical after 31st October each year but no later than 30th November in the financial year to which it relates.
- 2.10 Schools are not permitted to plan for an unlicensed budget deficit (see paragraphs 4.39 to 4.43 for more information).

- 2.11 All reports and accounts provided to the local authority by a governing body must be on an accruals basis. A prudent approach must be adhered to, and the governing body must include all known commitments for the financial period.
- 2.12 The school's budget must link to the school's development plans and the school will be able to provide documents providing the basis of all budget assumptions and priorities. If the school intends to make or achieves surplus balances of greater than 8% up to 15%, an explanation should be presented to the governing body for their approval and sign off. Where surplus balances are expected to, or do, exceed 15% Governing Bodies must include within their budget submission a report on the use that the school intends to make of surplus balances. Balances exceeding 15% may be reviewed by the Schools Forum.
- 2.13 School staff should monitor the budget monthly. They must inform the governing body as soon as they become aware that the year-end outturn may be significantly different from budget projections. Explanations should be provided in narrative form where there are significant variances at out-turn.

Virements

- 2.14 The Governing Body should set a policy for the approval of virements. This may be where a transfer is required between budget headings to either correct changes of a technical accounting nature (technical adjustment) or if extra expenditure is needed on an existing budget head, then, providing equal savings can be made within the school's budget, or there are sufficient unallocated savings brought forward from earlier years, schools can transfer budgetary provision; such movement is known as virement.

3. Staffing

Staffing Structure

- 3.01 The school should review its staffing structure regularly to ensure it is the best structure to meet the needs of the school whilst maintaining financial integrity.
- 3.02 The school should ensure they have sufficient independent advice to inform the pay decision process for the senior leadership team of the school. The process should be closely correlated to educational outcomes and sound financial management.

HR, Salaries, Wages and Pensions

- 3.03 The governing body will ensure that all appointments are made in accordance with the school's policies and that appropriate delegations are in place and recorded and approved annually in the scheme of delegation.
- 3.04 Under no circumstances should staff approve changes to their own terms and conditions including, for the avoidance of doubt, pay decisions. Changes to the Head Teacher's pay must be authorised by an appropriate committee and clearly evidenced in the minutes of that committee.
- 3.05 Governing Bodies must ensure controls are in place to safeguard staff pay to ensure:
 - A vacancy review and approval process are in place so that vacancies are only filled where there is an established need, and a cost-effective alternative staffing arrangement is not available. There should be a documented audit trail for this approval process, templates are available from internalauditmail@southglos.gov.uk on request.

- There is sufficient budget provision for the appointment of new employees, this includes considering the future budget availability for permanent employments
 - The most appropriate method of employment (in the context of need and budget availability) has been considered, i.e., permanent, limited term contract.
 - That arrangements have been appropriately authorised and records of that authorisation are retained by the school
 - Non-teaching staff's job grades and pay rates should be determined using the job evaluation method and in the case of the LA maintained schools, the council's job evaluation scheme and grading structure.
 - That all payroll variations and new appointments are notified to the payroll service at the earliest opportunity possible and in accordance with agreed timescales, this includes staff who start working for the council, resign or are dismissed, transfer to another post or any other changes affecting the payroll
 - That an appropriate separation of duties is in place for payroll related activity and that there is monitoring and oversight of variations to pay
 - That there are appropriate controls and checks and balances over the use of overtime pay for staff. This includes the completion of an overtime form, detailing the name of the employee claiming overtime, the purpose of the overtime and number of hours claimed, the date and clear authorisation of the payment in line with the school's scheme of delegation.
- 3.06 The school cannot transfer all risks associated with the payment of staff to their payroll provider. The governing body has a responsibility to satisfy themselves that their payroll provider:
- Is suitably qualified and able to perform the role of payroll service on the school's behalf
 - Has the necessary arrangements in place to securely hold all records relating to pay, superannuation, national insurance, and income tax
 - Is making payments as required to any third parties, e.g., HMRC
 - Has issued guidance to schools' staff on the requirements for pension auto-enrolment and how to opt out of the scheme
 - Can provide information to the council for financial reporting purposes, as specified in any instructions issued by the council.
- 3.07 Employees have a responsibility to check the accuracy of their pay. They must immediately notify payroll services of any change in circumstances, or situations (such as payments received in error), likely to affect their entitlement. Should employees receive any payment to which they are not entitled, they must refund this to the council.
- 3.08 Complex and stringent rules govern circumstances where payment can be made to individuals without deducting national insurance or tax contributions. To avoid breaching these regulations, payments to employees must only be made through the payroll.
- 3.09 When the school engages staff/consultants/contractors outside of the payroll careful consideration needs to be made of these individuals' employment status. Schools should refer to the www.gov.uk website for further information about the requirements of IR35. Where individuals are working in any capacity on behalf of the school off payroll through an intermediary (IR35) the school should check the employment status using the <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-employment->

[status-for-tax](#) online tool. A copy of the result of any check should be retained by the school.

- 3.10 Where the council is the ultimate employer and there are any potential employment claims, advice should be taken from the council's HR provider.

Pensions statutory responsibilities

- 3.11 Where maintained schools including Foundation/Trust school's payroll is completed externally, they will be required to submit to the council a monthly contributions reconciliation (MCR) template by their payroll provider. This will include:

- the salary,
- employment and contribution details for all teachers employed in their school including supply,
- casual staff and visiting lecturers.

The template will include all the information that will be required to submit the ASR (Annual Service Return), including all changes to service or salary, pay increments/awards and any withdrawn service (i.e., strike action).

- 3.12 Schools and their service provider will need to comply with the statutory requirements under LGPS regulations and Teachers' Pensions. This requires the timely submission of correct data in accordance with The Pension Regulator's (TPR) Code of Practice and Record Keeping Regulations. Employers who do not comply with data provision may be subject to fines. As the employing authority, the council reserves the right to reclaim any monetary losses from schools because of any penalty applied to them in respect of late or incorrect data.

- 3.13 All school staff should:

- Follow the policies and procedures approved by the governing body related to the safety and security of students and visitors to the school, including ensuring that the policies accord with latest guidance and legislation
- Follow the policies and procedures approved by the governing body related to staff appointments and conduct, including ensuring appropriate pre-employment checks are undertaken prior to commencing in post to confirm qualifications, suitability, references, DBS, and health screening.
- Seek advice from the school's procured HR service, where necessary and prudent to do so, in relation to staffing issues arising
- Ensure that the school has an up to date and approved whistle blowing policy which has been communicated to all staff and is freely available for their access
- Ensure all staff, as required by their role and position, have been subject to disclosure and barring screening and that evidence of this check is retained on their personnel file (note the actual check result, subject to current guidance, must not be retained)
- Ensure that personnel records of staff are held with sufficient security and are only held for the length of time advised by the school's HR service and in line with document retention policies
- National working time regulations (amended 2003) must be observed for all school staff
- Ensure that the school complies with national requirements and council policy relating to national minimum wage and living wage

4. Procurement and Value for Money

Scheme of Delegation and Authorisation Limits

- 4.01 In these financial regulations, various references are made to delegation of authority and authorisation limits. Expenditure should only be incurred, without further oversight, if authority to purchase goods and services has been delegated to a member of the school's staff by the Governing Body. The Governing Body retain overall responsibility for any decisions to spend.
- 4.02 Clear limits must be set to clarify when governors will be consulted on spending prior to the purchase being made. Decisions to incur expenditure for high value acquisitions should still be referred to the Governing Body (or a nominated committee of) to ensure transparency, good governance and to provide assurance over value for money.
- 4.03 The Governing Body is responsible for approving a scheme of delegation. This scheme should include, but may not be limited to:
- Decisions to purchase including setting levels
 - Approval of the budget
 - Authorising budget virements including policy
 - Authorisation of write offs
 - Authorisation of any disposals (in line with limits set in these regulations)
 - Approval of a licensed deficit recovery plan
 - Approval of any changes to lettings policy and new lettings
 - Approval of changes to the staffing establishment
 - Authorisation to fill a staffing vacancy
 - Authorisation to fill a staff vacancy (Head Teacher)
 - Authorisation to pay overtime, bonus, time off in lieu (in line with limits set in these regulations)
 - Authorisation of salary adjustments
 - Approval to operate an entity/service outside of the core role of the school, including review of business case (e.g., breakfast or after school club).
- This scheme of delegation should align with the terms of reference of the finance committee (or equivalent).
- 4.04 An Authorisation Limits document must be prepared and approved by the Governing Body to complement the scheme of delegation. The Authorisation Limits document must be made available to the Local Authority. The Authorisation Limits document should include, but may not be limited to authorisation of:
- Limits and assigned responsibilities for raising and authorisation of purchase orders
 - Goods received
 - Invoices for payment
 - Certification of travel and expense claims
 - Limits for purchases made using a purchase card
 - Checks to purchase card records
 - Petty cash expenditure, including signing cheques
 - Petty cash reimbursement claims
 - Issue of official receipts (in line with limits set in these regulations)
 - Invoices and credit notes issued by the school
 - Starters and leavers

- Overtime, extraordinary payments to staff, time off in lieu
- Notification of sickness

4.05 The scheme of delegation and authorisation limits document should be reviewed at least annually and approved by the full governing body. Internal audit has published recommended guidance for the setting of limits for authority to purchase and schools should pay due regard to this guidance to ensure robust controls are operating to safeguard value for money.

Purchasing

- 4.06 Governors must:
- monitor and challenge all purchasing activity to ensure it is necessary, in line with expectation and does not exceed budgets
 - Agree a purchasing policy which includes requirements for seeking quotations and tenders. Where the school has procurement cards these should also be referenced.
 - Ensure there are effective purchasing controls in place, including, an effective separation of duties in operation to minimise the risk to staff
 - Where a separation of duties is difficult to achieve due to limited staffing, the governing body should seek assurance that there is regular independent spot checking of purchasing activity.
 - Ensure that purchasing activity is only undertaken when formal approval has been received, in advance, in practice this means purchase orders must always be committed and approved in CIVICA prior to an invoice being received.
 - Ensure there is a procedure in place for staff to check and record when goods and services are received so that payment is only made on satisfactory receipt (except for certain exceptions see below)
 - On occasions where payment may be needed in advance of receipt of a good or service, that these situations are carefully monitored to ensure that the school does receive value from the payment
 - Ensure there are robust procedures in place for the usage, administration, and monitoring of payment cards, including, not sharing purchase cards, holding the card securely, promptly transferring expenditure to appropriate expenditure codes so that spending is transparent and regular spot checks and oversight of what is being bought.
- 4.07 The purchase procedures must be recorded, communicated to staff, and continuously monitored.
- 4.08 When procuring goods and services the Governing Body and staff of the school must consider the following:
- the scheme for the financing of schools when setting limits for obtaining quotations and tenders. (Currently tenders must be sought for purchases and contracts expected to exceed £75,000 over the life of the contract).
 - compliance with Public Contract Regulations tendering requirements for all procurement activity. (The current Public Contract Regulations threshold is £213,477 and £663,540 for light touch services e.g. educational supply)
 - The supplier/provider's health and safety competence and qualifications to perform the tasks being purchased
 - The financial stability and capacity of the contractor to perform the tasks being purchased
 - whether to seek advice on a range of compliant deals via [Buying for Schools](#).

- 4.09 Governors must ensure that they and all school staff are aware of the controls that should exist. All school staff should:
- Understand their responsibilities to maintain key controls over purchasing arrangements (this includes controls to prevent common purchasing fraud and invoice scams, such as mandate fraud)
 - Receive adequate support and training to carry out their financial responsibilities
 - Comply with the council's standards of financial management and be personally protected from associated risks.
 - Not, under any circumstances, use the council's ordering or payment systems for personal use or benefit.
- 4.10 Governors have a responsibility to ensure that due regard is being paid to value for money, this includes ensuring that:
- Limits for obtain quotations or seeking a tender have been agreed and set with the Governing Body for high value procurement.
 - For all purchases (even lower value) cost and quality considerations have been considered in the decision
 - The most cost-effective method of purchasing has been employed (it may be cheaper to purchase with a council purchasing card rather than raise a purchase order for certain goods and services)
 - Late payment of invoices could result in the school being liable for late payment charges under the "Late Payment of Commercial Debts (interest) Act 1988".
- 4.11 Governors and staff have a responsibility to prevent the risk of fraud and irregularity in purchasing. This includes the following:
- Being suspicious of unsolicited offers of goods and services, if it sounds too good to be true it usually is
 - Never, under any circumstances, allowing authorised signatories to pre-sign cheques (this is relevant for the imprest/petty cash account)
 - Being suspicious of emails/correspondence purporting to be from the Head Teacher authorising purchases (if this is not their usual method of authorising expenditure) – always check
 - Protecting against mandate fraud by ensuring the school has independent methods for verifying changes to bank account details for regularly used/high value suppliers.
 - Ensuring cheques/payments are not returned to the originating members of staff (except in exceptional circumstances). In most circumstances, payment must be made to the intended payee.
 - Schools have a responsibility to ensure they are not purchasing goods/services from suppliers actively engaged in the activity of evading payment of tax. The school should observe the requirements of the Criminal Finances Act 2017.
 - Ensuring that the risks of bribery in purchasing is understood, this could include, but not be limited to, suppliers offering inducements to staff to show favour on them in purchasing decisions.
 - Ensuring that all staff have clearly recorded all business interests (see Register of Pecuniary, Business Interest and Related Party Transactions, See paragraphs 1.25 -1.28) and are not actively involved in purchasing decisions where they hold an interest.
- 4.12 When ordering services such as painting, decorating, plumbing or any other general building works, the regulations stipulated within the Construction Industry Scheme

must be observed. The scheme requires that the Council acts as agent to HMRC, deducting income tax where appropriate, for the labour element only. Any enquiries relating to this matter should be referred to the Finance, Revenues and Welfare division of the Council.

- 4.13 Where a purchase is made using a procurement card. The following controls must be observed in the usage of the card:
- Must only be used by the named individual on the card
 - All information relating to PIN numbers, passwords etc should be held securely and not shared with colleagues.
 - Card purchase statements should be independently reviewed, and
 - Any transactions must be promptly recorded to the correct expenditure detail code on the council's financial system to maintain financial reporting accuracy.

Petty Cash

- 4.14 Schools with only a small petty cash requirement may opt to use an encashment facility. If petty cash claims regularly exceed £250, the school must obtain an imprest cash account.
- 4.15 Requests to increase petty cash facilities should be referred to the Finance, Revenues & Welfare Service in the first instance. Imprest requirements may need to be referred to internal audit services for review and decision if they are excessively high.
- 4.16 The Head Teacher must maintain a bank mandate and details relating to the petty cash account should be recorded on the authorisation limits document. This information must be made available to Finance, Revenues and Welfare Service. The name of the petty cash account must include the wording 'imprest' and the name of the school.
- 4.17 All cheques must be personally signed (not pre-signed nor, signature obtained from a stamp) by an authorised signatory who must at the same time, be presented with documents supporting requested payments.
- 4.18 Cheque books must be held securely when not in use. Cheques must not be manually amended but cancelled and replaced where necessary.
- 4.19 The petty cash account must be reconciled regularly (at least every term). The associated documentation must be signed by the person undertaking the reconciliation and counter-signed by the Head Teacher. All discrepancies must be promptly investigated.
- 4.20 A separation of duties must be in place between those monitoring the account, and those who are operating the account.
- 4.21 Schools are not permitted to allow petty cash accounts to become overspent. A petty cash reconciliation and reimbursement claim shall be submitted on at least a termly basis and must not exceed one half to two thirds of the overall imprest level. The school will be liable for any fees incurred by the council for a school petty cash account becoming overdrawn.

VAT

- 4.22 Governing Bodies must ensure that school staff:
- Are aware of their responsibilities and account for taxable transactions

- Know how to obtain more detailed information and support and identify any training needs
 - Maximise the use of resources ensuring tax is reclaimed wherever possible and not charged to their budgets
 - Avoid financial penalties for the council
 - Refer to the VAT manual on the Council’s intranet (under ‘v’ on the A to Z directory). This contains a wide range of VAT guidance with links to additional advice and is kept regularly under review.
- 4.23 The council is normally able to reclaim all VAT, provided a valid tax invoice is held. School staff must obtain a valid tax invoice for all goods and services on which VAT is payable. Failure to do so will mean the gross amount being charged to the school budget. Care must be taken not to recover VAT to which the council is not entitled, for instance where VAT is incurred on payments made on behalf of third parties.
- 4.24 The school has a responsibility to check validity of VAT on authorisation of invoices. School staff should ensure that:
- Transactions where no VAT is paid are correctly identified as zero rated, exempt or outside of scope
 - There is a valid tax invoice
 - The correct VAT indicator is used
 - The VAT is correctly calculated
- It is possible to check the validity of VAT registration numbers online:
- www.gov.uk/check-uk-vat-number
- 4.25 Governing Bodies must ensure that tax is charged on income collected by the school when due. Liability is determined by the type of organisation being charged and the nature of the service provided.
- 4.26 School staff must correctly identify taxable income and customers. Any new sources of income where the VAT treatment is unclear must be referred to the Council’s VAT Accountant.
- 4.27 School staff must correct identify non-taxable items as zero-rated, exempt or outside the scope for output tax purposes.
- 4.28 The school must issue a tax invoice for taxable goods or services supplied to anyone outside of the council, this must be accounted for to HMRC. Where the value of the transaction covered by the invoice (including the VAT) is more than £250, staff must ensure that the following details are shown on the tax invoice:
- An identifying invoice number
 - Name, address, and VAT registration number of the supplier
 - The date of supply
 - Name and address of the person to whom the supply was made
 - The type of supply
 - A description which identifies the goods or services supplied including quantity, charge made excluding VAT and the rate of VAT
 - The total charge excluding VAT
 - The rate of any cash discount offered
 - Total amount of any VAT payable
- 4.29 Where the value of the transaction (including VAT) is £250 or less a “less detailed tax invoice” will suffice. Staff must ensure that the following details are shown on a “less detailed tax invoice”:
- Name, address, and VAT registration number of the supplier

- The date of supply
- A description which identifies the goods or services supplied
- The total amount payable, including VAT
- The rate of VAT

4.30 Receipts of dividends and interest must normally be net of tax deducted and accompanied by a tax deduction certificate from the payee. If a tax certificate is not supplied, one must be obtained from the payee. These must be forwarded to the Finance, Revenues and Welfare division of the council.

Commercial Activity & Additional Services

4.31 Governing bodies may decide to conduct additional activities to support the school. Additional activities can take many forms and may require employing additional staff to operate the activity. Examples of additional activities include, but are not limited to:

- Breakfast clubs
- After school clubs
- Sports Clubs
- Learning or research organisations (that sit outside of the curriculum)
- Holiday activity schemes
- Catering provision (owned and operated by the school)
- Provision of support for functions to other schools

4.32 The governing body must ensure the following for these types of activity:

- A clear and transparent business case and costing model has been established which is available for review and demonstrates that the activity will meet its costs through income generation
- Where a governing body decides to operate an activity at a loss, they must justify to the local authority how any shortfall will be met (this cannot be from the delegated budget)
- Provision is made for the payment of redundancy costs for staff if the provision needs to be ceased/wound up
- Schools have a responsibility to not generate excessive balances from activities and should have due regard to their purpose and role. Where net balances exceed £5,000, governing bodies should be prepared to justify how they will use the funds for the benefit of the school
- That the school is adequately insured for the purposes of the activity being pursued and their insurers have been informed of any change of use of any buildings or land,
- There is adherence to all relevant legislation (e.g. safeguarding, OFSTED, health and safety).
- There is security and control over the resources of the activity
- That there is no conflict of interest between the duties and responsibilities of staff employed to work for the school and for the additional provision.
- There is adequate contractual documentation as required to cover any legal considerations associated with any such arrangement
- On a quarterly basis the governing body should receive a report on the activity of the provision including a financial report clearly itemising associated costs and income.

Loans, Borrowing & Investments

- 4.33 Governing Bodies of schools may only borrow money (which includes the use of finance leases) with written permission of the Secretary of State. This provision does not apply to loan schemes run by the Authority or the use of purchase cards authorised by the Authority. The definition of borrowing predominantly covers cash loans from financial institutions but also includes finance leases which are equivalent to committing the school to a loan, which is a form of borrowing. Some equipment leases, including photocopier and IT equipment leases, may be finance leases, and therefore it is important that schools refer terms and conditions of proposed leases to the Authority for checking.
- 4.34 Schools must keep full records of any lease and/or rental agreements. Accounting regulations will require the authority to periodically request details from schools of all current lease, rental and hire arrangements. Information required may include (but, not limited to) a description of the equipment, the value of the equipment, the amount of rentals payable, the length of the lease, and any end of lease options. Also included may be any contracts for services (e.g. catering) where the supplier also provides equipment.
- 4.35 No loans from the school fund or other unofficial funds to the delegated budget or vice versa are permitted.

Legality of Commitments

- 4.36 Governors must have proper regard to the legality of their commitments and if there is any doubt they must consult with the Chief Financial Officer at the earliest opportunity.

Surplus and Deficit Balances

- 4.37 Governing Bodies must carry forward from one financial year to the next any surplus or deficit in net expenditure when compared with the school's budget share for the year, adjusted for any balance brought forward from the previous year.
- 4.38 Governing Bodies that anticipate at any time during the financial year, that they may incur a deficit by the end of that year, must notify the **Service Director for Business and Resources - People** in writing as soon as this position becomes known.
- 4.39 Governing Bodies must apply in writing to the **Service Director for Business and Resources - People** for permission to incur a deficit budget in accordance with the conditions set out in the Scheme for Financing Schools. Governing Bodies must support requests with an agreed recovery plan immediately as soon as it is determined there will be a deficit.
- 4.40 In accordance with the Scheme for Financing Schools, requests for licensed deficits must be considered jointly by the **Service Director for Business and Resources – People and Service Director – Education, Learning and Skills**. As part of agreeing a licenced deficit the Council will agree with the school monitoring and reporting arrangements required to ensure the deficit recovery plan remains on track.
- 4.41 The local authority cannot write off the deficit balance of any school. Governing Bodies must recover the deficit over an agreed period, up to the maximum period defined in the Scheme for Financing Schools. In exceptional circumstances **Service Director for**

Business and Resources – People and Service Director – Education, Learning and Skills can agree a longer period of recovery.

- 4.42 Schools should prepare a financial procedures manual for all staff who may be involved with income, orders, petty cash expenditure, school fund monies, inventories, and equipment.

5. Protecting public money

Fraud Prevention, Detection, and Investigation

- 5.01 Under no circumstances must governors or staff use council resources and/or assets for their own benefit.
- 5.02 The governing body must approve a counter fraud, bribery and corruption policy and ensure that all staff are provided with access and made aware of its contents.
- 5.03 Governors and school staff must report to the **Service Director – Education, Learning and Skills** and/or the Council’s Chief Financial Officer any occasions where they believe that financial regulations, or other council policies or instructions are not being followed, or where the school or council’s resources are at risk. Provided governors or school staff act in good faith, they will be fully supported when reporting under this regulation.
- 5.04 Prompt action must be taken by schools whenever a matter arises which involves, or is suspected of involving, any loss or irregularity or any circumstances that may suggest the possibility of such a loss or irregularity. This must include cash, stores, stocks, or other property held for the purpose of the school or in any other way affecting school finances or any breach of these regulations. The Head Teacher or any governor or other member of staff must immediately on its discovery, report the matter to the Audit Manager using the email address internalauditmail@southglos.gov.uk . Internal audit may thereupon take any action they consider necessary.
- 5.05 Although the chances of money laundering in a school setting are limited, the governing body must pay due regard to any guidance issued by the Local Authority relating to anti-money laundering regulations.

Internal Audit

- 5.06 The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for maintaining a continuous internal audit of schools' accounting and financial transactions, including any operations affecting the Council’s finances or financial arrangements.
- 5.07 The school’s records and accounts will be available for inspection, as necessary, by the Council’s internal and external auditors. Governing Bodies are required to co-operate with both internal and external auditors. Schools must provide a right of access to records for both internal and external auditors.
- 5.08 Internal audit services review the key risks and controls at schools on a risk assessed basis. The frequency of audit will be dependent on a number of factors including previous audit opinion, carry forward balances, changes in key personnel, OFSTED results and information obtained from the **Department for People**. Internal audit services will produce a report for the **Service Director – Education, Learning and Skills**, a copy will be made available to the

governing body and Head Teacher and a formal response is required from the school within 3 months of issue of the report.

- 5.09 The local authority may request internal audit services to undertake investigations where it is considered there is a risk of irregularity or where a deficit budget has been set and there is not a clear recovery plan. Where necessary, internal audit services may conduct a notice to improve visit. These visits will be funded by the local authority.
- 5.10 The governing body may commission internal audit services to undertake an internal audit for the purposes of self-improvement and achievement of value for money. However, in these circumstances the audit must be funded from the school's own budget.
- 5.11 A governing body's right to a delegated budget may be suspended if the financial controls within the scheme for the financing of schools have been substantially or persistently breached, or if the budget share has not been managed satisfactorily.

Income, Banking and Bank Account Administration

- 5.12 Governors may delegate responsibility for ensuring that all sources of income due to the school and the council are identified, collected promptly and that payments received are accepted, recorded, banked, and reconciled promptly and correctly. Schools should be expected to achieve best value in income generating activities.
- 5.13 Governors responsibilities for income should be to:
- Monitor and challenge when income is not received by anticipated due dates
 - Agree a lettings policy and the schools approach to lettings
 - Agree a schedule for all discretionary fees levied by the school
 - Agree the process for disputes arising from fee related matters procedure and policy for bad debts and write off (see below for further details)
 - Receive assurances from the school staff that fees levied will cover associated cost so that there is no strain placed on the delegated budget
 - Receive assurances that the funding formula has been received and is being used for its intended purpose.
- 5.14 Governing Bodies must have clearly defined and documented procedures for setting a budget for their income on an annual basis and monitoring against that budget as appropriate. They should have procedures in place to monitor income and expenditure trends so that anomalies can be promptly investigated.
- 5.15 Governors must ensure that they and all school staff are aware of the controls that should exist. All school staff should:
- Understand their responsibilities to maintain key controls over areas of income which they must collect and monitor
 - Receive adequate support and training to carry out their financial responsibilities
 - Comply with the council's scheme for the financing of schools
 - Be personally protected from associated risks.
- 5.16 Schools must only operate a bank account that conforms to the Scheme for Financing Schools and these regulations. In practice, this means:
- Using the Council's bank account (general fund) for distribution and holding of delegated budget

- A separate account for petty cash (which must be labelled Imprest and the name of the school)
 - A separate bank account/(s) for semi-official fund.
- 5.17 The organisation of bank mandates and changing authorised signatories shall be undertaken as follows:
- For the general fund - this must be organised via South Gloucestershire Council Corporate Finance.
 - For the Imprest bank account – this must be organised via South Gloucestershire Council, Finance, Revenues and Welfare Service
 - For Semi-Official funds - the Governing Body maintains responsibility for updating all other bank mandates.
- 5.18 The Head teacher must maintain a list of all bank accounts held and signatories to the accounts held.
- 5.19 Amounts due to the school should be collected at the earliest opportunity and where possible in advance of a service/goods being supplied. Consecutively numbered invoices should be used, and spoiled invoices marked as such and retained for audit inspection. The following safeguards/controls must be observed:
- Invoices and other forms of income correctly account for VAT
 - Income is not banked net of expenditure, or any other deductions made from income received (i.e. all income is banked fully and intact)
 - Personal cheques must not be cashed from money on behalf of the school or the council
 - Where possible a separation of duties in operation between collection and reconciliation/banking of income (where not achievable in small school settings regular monitoring of income levels and spot checking of income received must be undertaken)
 - A regular reconciliation is performed to compare income received to income banked on the financial accounting system of the council. Any anomalies to be promptly investigated.
 - Cash income collected should be banked promptly, where this is not possible, the school should have sufficient secure storage arrangements in place commensurate to the value of income held (further guidance on this is available on request).
- 5.20 Each person who receives money on behalf of the school must record an acknowledgement using only official stationery (e.g. receipt book, cash register, manual register). Where low value income is received (less than £50), individual receipts need not be issued. If there is a sufficient audit trail for electronic income received, no receipt should be issued.
- 5.21 A debt must only be considered irrecoverable after all appropriate measures have been taken to obtain payment. Governing Bodies are only permitted to write off debts up to the value of £2,000 which are related to their own income generation. Above this level the school must seek approval for the Chief Financial Officer (or Deputy Chief Financial Officer in their absence) at the earliest opportunity. This regulation must apply except in the following circumstances:
- The debtor is bankrupt or in liquidation and an independent written statement has been received indicating that no payment will be paid to the council
 - Legal action has been taken and the debt has been remitted by a court
 - The debtor no longer resides in this country.

5.22 The Governing Body must maintain a record of all irrecoverable debts.

Voluntary (Semi-Official) Funds

- 5.23 Governing Bodies and Head Teachers must ensure that the standards outlined elsewhere in these regulations are followed for all voluntary funds as parents and other benefactors are entitled to the same standards of stewardship for such funds. Such funds must be accounted for separately using other accounting arrangements independent from those used to account for the school official funds.
- 5.24 Semi-official funds must be held in a separate bank account. The bank accounts and supporting records must be regularly monitored by the Head Teacher who has a responsibility to ensure that regular reconciliations are undertaken.
- 5.25 The Governing Body has responsibility for setting the accounting period for the semi-official fund and must appoint an independent auditor to promptly undertake a verification audit at the end of that accounting period. The Auditor must complete a school fund auditor's certificate and supporting documentation in the form of a short report and submit it to the governing body for approval.
- 5.26 Following governing body approval, the School Fund Auditors certificate must be submitted to internal audit services within 6 months of the accounting period ending. The school fund auditor must be independent of the school.
- 5.27 Governing Bodies must be aware of any responsibilities placed upon them in terms of financial management and reporting by the Charities Commission.
- 5.28 Governing Bodies must ensure that voluntary and private funds are covered by appropriate insurance arrangements.

6. Property, Capital, Insurance & Risk Management

- 6.01 Governors must ensure that they and all school staff are aware of the controls that should exist for property related matters. All school staff must:
- Understand their responsibilities for maintaining controls over property related matters. (Additional guidance for good estate management can be found [here](#).)
 - Report regularly to the governing body on any site health and safety checks performed and swiftly bring their attention to any issues that need promptly addressing, either through alternative arrangements or purchase of repairs to property
 - Not dispose of land or buildings, this remains the responsibility of the council or the religious organisation in the case of VA/VC schools (where process is governed by the School Standards and Frameworks Act). There are exceptions to this rule where the school has opted to become a co-operative trust and the freehold of its land and buildings have been successfully transferred by the council to the Trust.
 - Have arrangements in place to prioritise capital expenditure to where there is most need
 - Ensure there is adequate security in place for the site to safeguard against unauthorised access/damage/theft
 - Where CCTV is operated to protect the property, ensure that the school adheres to the requirements of the surveillance commissioner in operating clear policies and signage (for more information refer to: <https://www.atl.org.uk/advice-and-resources/rights-and-conditions/cctv-and-other-surveillance> and <https://www.ipco.org.uk/>)

- Ensure they have undertaken regular property inspections and keep key staff and governors informed of legislative changes affecting schools and particular risks.

6.02 Safeguard the fabric of the property and site by not making any major, changes and/or enhancements to the estate without prior authorisation of the **Head of Property Services** or associated Religious Organisation (for VA/VC schools)

Capital Expenditure

6.03 Section 16 of the Local Government Act 2003 and Regulation 25 of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 provide a definition of capital expenditure. Capital expenditure is principally in respect of acquiring, constructing, or enhancing physical assets (including buildings, land, and immovable equipment) which provide benefits over several years. In this instance, enhancement relates to works which are intended to lengthen the useful life of an asset, increase the open market value of the asset, or substantially increase the extent to which an asset can be used in the delivery of services. Capital is also defined more widely for example expenditure on computer software and on the making of loans or grants for capital expenditure by another body. The Government places strict controls on the financing capacity of the authority. This means that capital expenditure should form part of an investment strategy and should be carefully prioritised to maximise the benefit of scarce resources.

6.04 Governing Bodies may use part of their budget share to meet the cost of capital expenditure to enhance, repair and maintain their school premises. If the expected capital cost in any one year will exceed £25,000, then the Governing Body must notify the **Service Director – Education, Learning and Skills** and consider any advice from the **Service Director – Education, Learning and Skills** as to the merits of the proposed expenditure. If the Council owns the premises, then the Governing Body must obtain the consent of the local authority to the proposed works. Refer to the Scheme for financing of schools for more information (section 2.14).

6.05 Schools may incur expenditure of a capital nature on an approved project in a financial year and fund it over a period not exceeding four years, including the year in which the expenditure is initially incurred. Approval must be given by the **Chief Financial Officer** and the **Service Director – Education, Learning and Skills**.

6.06 A governing body or Head Teacher must not permit the use of any part of the delegated budget for the acquisition of any interest in land or buildings whether in the form of freehold, leasehold or otherwise without prior consent, in writing, from the local authority.

Risk Management & Insurance

6.07 Governors are responsible for ensuring that adequate risk management arrangements are in place. This includes ensuring:

- Governors and staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to risk management
- Receive adequate training and support to carry out their responsibilities
- Take risk management into account in the course of their work.

6.08 Governors and Head Teachers are responsible for the identification of potential risks of loss or damage to resources and operations they control. Risk could include liability for injury/death of employees or third parties, property damage,

theft/loss of equipment or finances and/or interruption to the working of the school, reputational damage, risk to pupils well-being.

- 6.09 The Governing Body should regularly assess the key risks affecting the school (at least annually) and consider the likelihood and impact of each risk. This could take the form of a risk register. The Governing Body could articulate their appetite to risk and approach to reviewing risk registers in a risk management policy.
- 6.10 All equipment valued in excess of £500, or likely to be attractive to thieves must be recorded in a formal inventory. This should be kept in a fireproof safe and/or electronically on a server off site. The accuracy of inventories should be checked at least once a year and certified by the Head Teacher. The inventory must contain the following information:
- Date of acquisition
 - Description of the asset including any unique identifying serial number
 - Cost
 - Location of asset
 - Details of any disposal/write off
- 6.11 The governing body should be promptly advised of any equipment that cannot be accounted for. The school should observe the requirements of their fraud prevention policy if it is determined property has been stolen.
- 6.12 Valuable equipment must be visibly security marked. A record must be held of all items issued to staff members for use during their employment. Leavers' procedures must include the requirement for property and equipment to be surrendered back to the school at the end of a staff member's employment. Staff may be subject to tax liabilities relating to benefits in kind if they retain the equipment for personal use and for an extended period of time.
- 6.13 Governors and school staff should have due regard to environmental legislation associated with the purchases of equipment and resources. Where possible, action should be taken to minimise the consumption or wastage of resources and/or the associated negative environmental impacts of resource usage. Similar considerations should be applied to the disposal of equipment and resources.
- 6.14 Obsolete, unserviceable, or unnecessary assets must be disposed of in accordance with the school's write offs and disposal policy and legislative requirements. Disposal of surplus items will usually be by offer to other schools, other council departments, tender or auction, although this requirement can be waived for low value items after consulting with internal audit services. All items must be disposed of for the best possible price and should only be spent for the purposes of the school.
- 6.15 The school must assess the health and safety risks to staff and others affected by school activities, e.g. parents, volunteers, visitors/contractors etc. They must introduce measures to manage those risks. The school must inform relevant staff and others who are likely to be affected about the risks and measures to be taken to manage the risks and ensure that adequate training is given to employees on health and safety matters.
- 6.16 Employees must co-operate with their employer on health and safety matters and carry out their work in accordance with training and instructions provided.

- 6.17 Governing Bodies must take steps to minimise potential losses through preventative measures. Effective action to manage risks will represent a judgement between the probable risk and the cost or effort required to safeguard against it.
- 6.18 Not all risks are insurable. Where it is possible and cost-effective/prudent to insure against major risks, the Governing body has a responsibility to ensure that such insurance is in place. This includes ensuring:
- Staff have received adequate support and training to carry out their financial responsibilities
 - Adequate insurance cover is in place for all potential liabilities the school may face

That Governors and staff are personally protected from associated risks.

- 6.19 Governors and Staff must ensure that day to day procedures work towards protecting the interest of the school. This includes ensuring:
- The school has competent health and safety advice from an independent H&S Provider of their choice to help them meet their health and safety duties. The provider is expected to be registered with a recognised professional body, e.g., Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) and be made aware of the standards contained within the 'Health and Safety Standards for SGC Schools' document.
 - The school has support in place with statutory and regular checks of the site and associated equipment undertaken.
 - They are prepared for the impact of emergencies and incidents through the compilation and regular testing of business continuity and emergency plans
 - They limit losses once they arise through rapid and appropriate action

They take prompt expert advice (where appropriate) and work is undertaken in the best interests of the school to limit further damage.

- 6.20 The Risk Management and Insurance team provides an offer of insurance cover for all schools. In accordance with the Scheme for the Financing of Schools, schools are responsible for ensuring they have adequate insurance cover which is at least as good as the relevant minimum insurance cover arranged by the council. Schools may opt to join the Secretary of State's Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) for risks that are covered by the RPA. Where a school has opted to purchase their insurance cover via the council, the insurance section must be notified immediately of:
- All new risks and liabilities which may require specific insurance cover
 - Any alteration which may affect existing insurance
 - Any loss, damage or claim likely to give rise to a claim by or against the school

All leases of property granted by or to the school which involve a transfer of insurance cover.

- 6.21 Where a school opts not to purchase the council's insurance offer. They must take account of the minimum level of insurance cover that each school must have, this is available from the council's insurance section. Any incidents impacting assets that belong to the council, should be notified to the council's insurance section.
- 6.22 An ex-gratia payment relates to compensation or settlement made to employees in respect of loss or damage to clothing or personal belongings which occurred in exceptional circumstances at work or during the performance of their duties and which was not due to the employee's fault or negligence. Any proposal to make such a payment by the Governing Body must be discussed and agreed, in advance with the

Service Director – Business and Resources - People, the Risk Management and Insurance Manager and a representative of the Service Director – Legal and Governance.

Stocks and Stores

- 6.23 The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring there are proper controls over stocks and stores to prevent unnecessary expenditure and/or loss.
- 6.24 The Head Teacher must be responsible for the custody and physical control of the stocks and stores of consumable items held in the school.
- 6.25 Where stocks and stores form part of a trading account, e.g., catering (where catering is wholly owned and organised by the school), or individually have a significant value, stock records must be maintained. All such records must be kept in a form that gives sufficient information to ensure that receipts and issues can be readily identified to confirming documentation and balances in hand.
- 6.26 Head Teachers must pay particular attention to the control of liquid fuel deliveries and storage. They should ensure that where staff check deliveries, they are vigilant in relation to reading quantities of fuel in both holding tanks and delivery vehicles.
- 6.27 Any stocks or stores held must not be more than normal requirements except in special circumstances approved by the Governing Body.
- 6.28 Head Teachers must arrange regular stock checks and ensure that all stocks are checked at least annually by a person other than the usual storekeeper. Significant surplus or deficiencies must be advised in writing by Head Teachers to the Governing Body with adjusting entries on stock records being referred to such notifications. Any cases of potential misappropriation should be reported to internal audit services internalauditmail@southglos.gov.uk
- 6.29 Surplus stocks and stores over a value of £100, unless transferred to another department within the school, must not be disposed of without the written authority of the governing body. Consultation should also take place with the Local Authority's Property Services team regarding possible use elsewhere within the Local Authority and best options for method of disposal.
- 6.30 All proceeds from the sale of items purchased from public funds or donated to the school and therefore owned by the school, must be paid directly into the school's bank account as income to the school budget.

Information Security

- 6.31 Governors must ensure that they and all school staff are aware of the controls that should exist for information related matters. All school staff should:
- Follow the school policies and procedures relating to the retention, control, security and disposal of data and information
 - Ensure that the school has adequate security over their data and information systems and as well as completing mandatory ICT Security and Information Sharing training, all staff are regularly reminded of their responsibilities. (Additional information is available from the [National Cyber Security Centre](#). Schools can also demonstrate good practice by attaining [Cyber Essentials Certification](#).)
 - Adhere to the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

- Maintain a software inventory (responsibility cannot be transferred to a third-party provider) containing details of software, number of licences, expiration date and any identifying serial numbers.
- Ensure that the school has adequate security over their data and information systems and staff are regularly reminded of their responsibilities, this could include password controls, locking computer screens when not in use, back up arrangements, security of systems and applications, firewalls. This should be detailed in a school's IT Policy.
- Consider the merits of procuring a specialist IT advisor to provide the school with guidance on security and system related matters
- Have due care and regard for paper based sensitive information, for example: ensuring all sensitive data is locked away securely when not in use, not taken off school premises unless necessary, making use of redaction policies to limit data availability, taking due care with information on photocopies and fax machines.
- For data in paper form, such as printed documents or handwritten notes, how to appropriately control, mark and securely dispose of it where it contains personal or sensitive data. Additionally, conversations are verbal data and are needed to be treated as accordingly, discussed in setting appropriate to the topic, not with non-entitled people present or in areas where you can be overheard and that any recorded conversations or notes are deleted and not recoverable.
- Ensure the school is aware of its responsibilities in relation to the Freedom of Information Act. This includes requirements for policy and procedural documentation and adhering to national timescales for responding to requests. For more information refer to: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-freedom-of-information/>

6.32 The United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act, 2018 (DPA 2018) apply to personal data. Schools are each individually data controllers under the provision of these regulations, and as such are each individually responsible for adherence to its requirements. The accountability for the data protection of personal information cannot be transferred to a third party through the purchase of a service and remain the responsibility of the school. Schools are recommended to:

- Refer to the Information commissioner's office website to obtain an overview of the school's responsibilities (<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/>)
- Consider procuring access to a specialist adviser, as needed, to ensure compliance with the requirements of the regulation
- Consider any commercial/partnership/shared activity that the school may be engaged in. Such arrangements will need to be governed by a contract and it is recommended that a contract addendum is used to ensure both parties comply with their specific Data Protection accountabilities
- A Data Protection policy must be in place and approved by the governing body which ensures personal information is handled in compliance with the DPA 2018/UK GDPR requirements
- Consider regular training in Data Protection for governors and staff as mandatory to demonstrate compliance with the regulations
- Conduct a review of the management of the school's data to consider whether any prompt redress is needed to minimise risk of penalties.

Version Control

Version 1.0 – 21 st May 2019	Consultation with Schools Forum
Version 1.1 – 1 st September 2022	Key changes highlighted at the beginning of this document.