JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

EMPLOYMENT DETAILS	
JOB TITLE:	Finance Manager
GRADE:	Kent Range I
ALL STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES:	• To live our values of collaboration, citizenship, sustainability and achievement. • To follow our schools' and Trust's policies and procedures. • To value lifelong learning and develop skills and knowledge. • To adhere to the highest level of safeguarding and child protection.
MAIN PURPOSE OF THE ROLE:	The Finance Manager will lead the day-to-day operations of the Trust finance function during a 12-month period of temporary organisational change, providing operational leadership and management of the finance team while the CFO is undertaking the fixe- term CFOO role. The postholder will ensure the finance service is accurate, compliant, responsive and customer-focused, with strong financial controls and clear processes across the Trust. The role is focussed on operational finance leadership, team management, controls, compliance, audit coordination, systems and service delivery.
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	Management Accountant, Senior Finance Officer and Finance Officer

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES	
FINANCE SERVICE LEADERSHIP AND TEAM MANAGEMENT	• Lead, manage and support the finance team. • Allocate, monitor and review the finance team workloads to ensure deadlines are met and the service remains resilient. • Provide day-today supervision, coaching and support to finance staff, promoting high standards of accuracy, accountability and customer service. • Hold regular team meetings, one-to-ones and developments conversations, identifying training needs and supporting continuous professional growth.
FINANCIAL OPERATIONS	• Act as the first point of escalation for operational finance matters, resolving issues promptly and escalating strategic or high-risk matters to the CFOO. • Oversee the effective operation of purchase ordering, accounts payable, accounts receivable, income processing and payment processes across the Trust. • Ensure that financial transactions are processed accurately, promptly and with appropriate supporting documentation. • Review and authorise BACS payment runs in accordance with Trust Scheme of Delegation and financial procedures.

	• Oversee banking processes, cash management arrangements approving bank reconciliations, ensuring any issues are investigated and resolved. • Monitor cash flow requirements and highlight any concerns to the CFOO. • Ensure journals, accruals, prepayments, income transactions and other month-end processes are completed by the appropriate team member and reviewed in line with internal procedures.
FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND COMPLIANCE	• Maintain strong financial controls and ensure compliance with Trust financial policies, delegated authorities and approval limits. • Support compliance with Academy Trust Handbook, DFE requirements and other finance-related statutory and regularity obligations. • Review finance procedures and recommend improvements to strengthen controls, reduce risk and improve efficiency. • Ensure accurate records are maintained and retained in accordance with statutory, audit and trust requirements. • Support the CFOO in embedding consistent, audible and transparent finance practices across all schools and central services.
SCHOOL SUPPORT AND BUSINESS PARTNERING	• Provide practical advice and guidance to headteachers, school business managers, budget holders and central team colleagues on finance processes and procedures. • Promote consistent application of procurement, purchasing, invoicing, income and approval procedures across the Trust. • Deliver or coordinate finance training and guidance for school and central staff where required. • Work with school leaders and the Management Accountant to ensure timely responses to finance queries, while avoiding duplication of the Management Accountant role in forecasting and financial analysis.
AUDIT, RETURNS AND STATUTORY COMPLIANCE	• Coordinate internal and external audit preparation, ensuring evidence and supporting documentation is complete, accurate and available on time. • Monitor audit actions and ensure agreed recommendations are implemented within required timescales. • Coordinate the preparation of VAT returns and other statutory returns, ensuring inputs are reviewed and submitted within deadlines. • Support the CFOO with information requests from auditors, ESFA, DfE, trustees and other regulatory bodies as required.
FINANCE SYSTEMS AND PROCESS IMPROVEMENT	• Oversee the effective use of the Trust finance systems and ensure users follow agreed procedures. • Support system developments, upgrades and process changes, ensuring appropriate training and communication is provided.

	• Identify opportunities to improve efficiency, automation, reporting workflows and service quality across the finance function
COLLABORATION AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS	• Maintain good working relationships with schools, central team colleagues, suppliers, auditors, banks, system providers and other external partners. • Communicate clearly and professionally with finance and non-finance colleagues, translating requirements into practical and accessible guidance. • Work collaboratively with the CFOO, Management Accountant and wider central team to support Trust priorities and operational resilience.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	• Maintain up-to-date professional knowledge through self-reflection, professional learning and engagement with current finance practice. • Actively pursue development opportunities relevant to the role, supported by the Trust. • Participate fully in the Trust appraisal and professional growth processes.
SAFEGUARDING	• Recognise and report any concerns about pupils' safety, wellbeing, behaviour or development, following school safeguarding procedures. • Maintain safe working practices, professional boundaries and confidentiality when working with pupils and families. • Support pupils' wellbeing, inclusion and positive behaviour, ensuring a safe and secure learning environment for all.

- This job description outlines the duties of the post at the time of publication.
- The post holder may be asked to carry out other reasonable duties without changing the role's general responsibilities.
- Priorities will be reviewed through performance management and may be adjusted to reflect Trust needs during the fixed-term period.

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<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">PERSON SPECIFICATION</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Qualifications and training</th></tr>
<tr><th>Essential</th><th>Desirable</th></tr>
<tr><td>AAT qualified, part-qualified accountant, or able to demonstrate equivalent experience in a finance management role.
Educated to A Level standard (or equivalent), including GCSE Grade C/4 or above in English and Maths
Evidence of ongoing professional development relevant to finance management, financial controls and leadership.</td><td>Full AAT qualification or willingness to work towards a relevant accountancy qualification.
Leadership or management development qualification.
Finance systems, procurement or audit-related training.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Skills and experience</th></tr>
<tr><th>Essential</th><th>Desirable</th></tr>
<tr><td>Significant experience in a finance role with responsibility for financial operations, controls and service delivery.
Experience of leading, supervising or line managing finance staff.
Experience of managing accounts payable, accounts receivable, purchase ordering, payment runs, banking and reconciliations.
Experience of working with financial procedures, approval limits, audit evidence and compliance requirements.
Strong organisational skills with the ability to manage competing priorities, deadlines and team workloads.
Excellent communication skills, including the ability to explain finance processes clearly to non-finance colleagues.
Strong IT skills, including Microsoft Excel, Word and Outlook</td><td>Experience working within an education environment
Experience leading Trust-wide or multi-site Finance services
Experience supporting internal or external audit processes
Experience delivering finance training or guidance to non-finance staff.
Experience using IRIS Education, PS Financials, Invoice Matcher, IMP Planner or similar education finance systems</td></tr>
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CYGNUS ACADEMIES TRUST

Knowledge	
Essential	**Desirable**
• Good understanding of financial controls, segregation of duties, audit trails and financial compliance. • Knowledge of procurement, purchasing, invoicing, income and payment processes • Understanding of budgetary control and the links between operational finance processes and management reporting. • Knowledge of data protection, confidentiality and secure handling of financial information. • Awareness of safeguarding responsibilities in an education setting.	• Knowledge of the Academy Trust Handbook and DFE finance requirements. • Knowledge of academies accounts, VAT in schools or charity/public sector finance requirements. • Knowledge of school funding, academy budgeting or school financial procedures

Personal traits

The successful candidate will be

- Credible and able to quickly build trust with senior leaders, school colleagues and the finance team.
- Highly organised, methodical and able to manage competing priorities calmly and effectively.
- Detail-focused with high levels of accuracy and professional pride in their work.
- A proactive problem-solver with a positive, solution-focused approach.
- Able to provide constructive challenge while maintaining strong professional relationships.
- Committed to fairness, equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Adaptable and open to change, with a continuous improvement mindset.
- A role model for the Trust values and behaviours

Additional requirements

The successful candidate will have

- Evidence of an enhanced DBS check, or willingness to undertake one.
- Suitable references from their previous employer.
- Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

Signed:	Date:
Name:	School: