

THE ROLE

The Senior Finance business Partner is a qualified finance professional supporting the Director of Finance (DOF) in overseeing STAEG finance operations.

The postholder will build strong relations across the Group, developing clear understanding of each school's financial operations and providing tailored support and guidance. They will promote best practice, encourage collaboration and help embed consistent high quality financial management across the Group.

The role of the Senior Finance Business Partner is wide ranging with responsibility for staff management, financial and management accounting and reporting, cashflow management, compliance and budgeting.

The Business Partner is responsible for the effective financial management of the Group, ensuring strong financial controls, accurate reporting, and compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.

The role supports Senior Leadership Team by providing financial insight, budgeting, and strategic advice to ensure the school's financial sustainability.

Candidates must possess the ability to prioritise workloads effectively, maintain confidentiality, remain calm under pressure and use tact and discretion when dealing with people. The willingness to learn, to work as part of a team and to support the wider life of the school is essential.

The successful candidate will be trustworthy, discreet, organised and deadline-focused, taking a proactive, solutions-oriented approach with a collaborative leadership style.

You will act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep your knowledge and skills up-to-date and be self-critical.

This is a full-time, permanent position. The start date for this position as soon as possible.

This position involves contact with children and will amount to regulated activity as defined by Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE) for safeguarding children and safer recruitment.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The key responsibilities for this post are detailed below:

Financial Management and Reporting

Reporting

- Produce high-quality financial reports, analysis, and commentary for internal and external stakeholders, including production of Board papers in conjunction with the Director of Finance.
- Preparation of monthly financial reporting for budget holders, and monthly management accounts for the Finance Committee.
- Oversee month-end and year-end processes.
- Support statutory accounts production and prepare audits files.
- Manage the school's Fees In Advance (FIA) scheme.
- Develop advanced financial models and dashboards for strategic decision making.
- Monitor and report on capital projects and capex spend.
- Deliver financial insight and modelling to support new initiatives and evaluate financial viability of commercial projects.
- Manage fixed asset register and support capital project accounting.
- Review capital spend and ensure in line with Fixed asset policy and accounting standards.
- Perform annual impairment review of all asset and make necessary adjustment.

Planning

- Contribute to long-term planning, and financial oversight of the schools
- Coordinate the annual budgets and forecasts for the schools, ensuring alignment with group strategy and local priorities.
- Review and challenge budget with DOF, forecast and multi-year plan
- Co-ordinate quarterly reforecasts, providing commentary on expected results and deviation from budgets.
- Ensure alignment with group strategy and local priorities.

Building Relationships

- Develop a detailed understanding of each school's financial operations.
- Build trusted, collaborative relationship with school teams.
- Serve as key link between local finance and group functions, ensuring efficient communication and shared understanding.

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RESPONSIBILITIES (Continued)

- Promote best practices and champion group finance stands and policies.
- Work closely with on-site operational teams (Estates, Catering, Marketing, Admissions and Development) to drive financial excellence across all areas of the organisation.
- Translate complex financial data into clear actionable insight for non-financial colleagues.

Financial Controls and Compliance

- Ensure efficient and accurate financial operations including billing, purchasing, and credit control.
- Oversee financial systems, processes, and controls to maintain a robust financial control environment, efficient operating environment and accurate records.
- Manage and produce monthly cash flow forecasts for the schools to ensure optimal distribution of cash reserves.

Governance and Compliance

- Advise the DOF on all financial matters, including financial controls, risk, compliance, and policy development.
- Oversee the annual audit and tax processes and build strong working relationships with external auditors and tax advisors.
- Production and submission of quarterly VAT returns including partial exemption calculations and capital goods scheme considerations.
- Ensure compliance with all statutory financial reporting requirements including HMRC, and the Charities Commission.

Accounts and Transaction Oversight

- Oversee accounts payable and receivable and other general ledger activities including journal postings
- Manage cash flow and banking activities
- Authorise payments and oversee procurement
- Prepare and review monthly and yearly balance sheet reconciliation including bank reconciliation for all 3 schools
- Manage annual Insurance renewal and support insurance claims

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RESPONSIBILITIES (Continued)

Leadership and Collaboration

- Work closely with DOF and wider finance team.
- provide support and guidance to junior finance team.
- Work closely with senior leadership of all schools.
- Provide financial advice to non-finance staff.

Systems and Improvement

- Maintain and improve financial systems.
- Identify efficiency and value-for-money opportunities.
- Support alignment of systems and processes across schools.
- Identify opportunities for efficiency, automation and better reporting adopting latest AI tools.
- Lead and support transformation projects with the finance function.
- Champion the use of analytical tools to drive data led decision making.

In addition to the above, the post holder will carry out any other professional duties as reasonably required by the Chief Operating Officer or Director of Finance.

St Albans Education Group is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Applicants will be required to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

STAHS is a vibrant school supported by a diverse and enthusiastic community of staff, pupils, parents and alumni. It is important that our staff reflect the diversity of our community, and we therefore welcome and encourage applications from people of all genders and sexual orientation, those from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds, and those with disabilities.

The successful candidate will be required to fulfil all of the duties, as outlined in the job description. In addition to this, the candidate should possess the following competencies which are essential to this position:

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Commercially minded graduate.
- Qualified accountant (ACA / CIMA).
- Strong track record of financial management.
- Knowledge (or demonstrated ability to learn) of education sector.
- Strong technical skills (advanced Excel, power BI).
- Knowledge and understanding of data privacy standards.

SKILLS

- Attains and maintains appropriate skills and professional knowledge/ accreditations required for the role.
- Ability to manage expectations clearly by monitoring own progress against objectives and planning to ensure delivery.
- Ability to identify common problems or weaknesses in policy, procedures or protocol that affects service, and escalates these or puts in place solutions.
- Ability to think through wider consequences of own actions when assessing multiple demands and competing priorities.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Warm, welcoming and professional, behaving with discretion, integrity, honesty and always acting with due consideration of others within the STAHS community.
- Solution focused, strong attention to detail and able to work under pressure and juggle competing priorities.
- Responds effectively to emergencies or last-minute demands on time. Flexible, in approach when dealing with changing situations or priorities.
- Team worker, appreciates contribution of colleagues.
- Takes personal accountability and ownership of work, decisions and actions and demonstrates commitment to accomplish work efficiently and to the required standard.
- Willing to take on extra responsibility/ use initiative to overcome obstacles and ensure timely delivery of service.

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PERSON SPECIFICATION (Continued)

PHILOSOPHY AND ETHOS

- A commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and to follow the child protection procedures detailed in the School's safeguarding policy.
- Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children.
- Contribute positively to the overall ethos, objectives and aims of the School.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Support Health and Safety training initiatives and to actively participate in this area