READ SCHOOL
DRAX

JOB DESCRIPTION

HEAD OF FINANCE (SLT)

INTRODUCTION

Read School is a small independent day and boarding school for boys and girls aged 4-18, set within a supportive and ambitious educational community. We pride ourselves on providing a high-quality, pupil-centred education underpinned by strong pastoral care, excellent teaching, and sound governance.

We are seeking an experienced an **Head of Finance** to join the School's **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**. This is a key leadership role with responsibility for the full financial stewardship of the School and its associated trading company. The successful candidate will play a central role in shaping the School's long-term financial sustainability while ensuring robust day-to-day financial management and compliance.

The Head of Finance will provide expert advice to the Head and the Board of Governors, supporting informed decision-making and maintaining the highest standards of financial governance.

This is a permanent, full-time post offering a competitive salary and benefits package, within a professional, collaborative, and supportive working environment.

The benefit package includes a contributory pension scheme, free parking, free lunch during term times, in house training, and a generous discount on school fees for children attending Read School (pro-rata if part time).

Read School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All appointments are subject to enhanced DBS checks and other relevant pre-employment checks including the receipt of two references prior to commencement in the position.

Please complete an application form which can be found on the school website https://www.readschool.co.uk/

ROLE PURPOSE

The Head of Finance is responsible for all aspects of financial management within the School, including management accounting, financial accounting, taxation, statutory reporting, and compliance. As a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the role contributes strategically to the overall leadership and management of the School.

The post-holder is responsible to the **Head** for day-to-day financial management and to the **Board of Governors** for the proper conduct of the School's financial affairs.

The Head of Finance plays a vital role in ensuring the financial health and long-term sustainability of the School. This position requires a forward looking strategic thinker, an effective leader, and a trusted adviser who can balance commercial acumen with the values and ethos of an educational environment.

The successful candidate will combine strong technical management accounting expertise with excellent interpersonal skills and a genuine commitment to supporting the School's mission and community.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Strategic & Advisory (Senior Leadership Team)

- Act as the School's senior financial lead and a full member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Advise the Head and Board of Governors on financial strategy, policy, risk management, and long-term financial planning.
- Lead the preparation of annual budgets and multi-year financial forecasts for Board approval.
- Provide accurate, insightful, and timely financial reports to support strategic and operational decision-making.
- Support major projects, capital expenditure, and investment decisions with robust financial analysis and business cases.

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2. Financial Management & Reporting

- Ensure efficient, prompt, and accurate accounting for the School and its associated trading company.
- Prepare monthly management accounts, cashflow forecasts, and financial performance reports.
- Ensure timely completion of VAT returns, Payroll, tax compliance, and all statutory financial submissions.
- Lead and manage the annual audit process, liaising effectively with external auditors and professional advisers, in accordance with the Charities SORP and other relevant standards.
- Act as the primary point of contact with auditors, solicitors, tax authorities, and regulatory bodies.

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3. Operational Finance & Controls

- Ensure robust financial controls and procedures are in place and operating effectively across the School.
- Control and monitor expenditure to ensure adherence to approved budgets.
- Oversee payroll processing, ensuring full compliance with HMRC, pension, and employment regulations.
- Oversee pupil reporting, accounts payable (PL) and accounts receivable (SL), including fee billing, collection, and debt recovery.
- Oversee petty cash, credit cards, purchase cards, and expense processes.
- Maintain and develop financial systems to ensure efficiency, accuracy, and strong internal control.

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4. Team Leadership & Development

- Lead, manage, and support the finance team, including the PL/SL Clerk.

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- Set clear objectives and expectations, fostering a culture of accuracy, accountability, and continuous improvement.
- Ensure adequate cover, training, and succession planning within the finance function.
- Promote positive working relationships across the School, providing helpful and professional financial support to colleagues.
- Working collaboratively with other departments including the Site, Enterprise & Marketing and Admin & Operations and Teaching teams to ensure appropriate financial planning and control across the school.

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5. Governance, Committees & Wider Responsibilities

- Act as **Clerk to the Finance & Audit Committee**, preparing papers, reports, and minutes as required.
- Oversee pupil management and all associated invoicing processes.
- Respond to parent financial queries professionally and sensitively, as appropriate.
- Provide financial oversight of school trips and other pupil-related activities.
- Undertake additional financial analysis and project work as required by the Head or Board of Governors.
- Ensure all financial activities support the School's charitable objectives and regulatory responsibilities.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential Criteria

- Professionally qualified accountant (ACCA, CIMA or equivalent), or qualified by extensive relevant end-to-end management accounting experience.
- Significant finance experience, ideally within an educational, charitable, or not-for-profit environment.
- Strong knowledge and focus on cashflow, budgeting, forecasting and management accounting
- Ability to undertake VAT, payroll, and UK financial compliance requirements.
- Sound understanding of statutory accounts and audit processes.
- Proven ability to present complex financial information clearly to non-finance stakeholders.
- Experience of leading and developing a small finance team.
- High level of integrity, attention to detail, and professional judgement.

Desirable Criteria

- Experience of managing end-to-end finance processes in a small/medium sized company.

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