

1. School Funding

Link to school funding page on LMS where more information can be found is [here](#)

1.1. When will I know what my school budget share is for the next financial year?

The Authority Pro-Forma Tool will be submitted to the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) mid January. Draft school funding allocations will be issued to schools by 31 January, then when the ESFA have approved our budget submission we will issue final allocations to schools no later than the end of February.

1.2. What is a de-delegated budget?

There are some services which are provided by the LA to all maintained schools. The services are decided by vote at the Schools Forum, individual schools cannot opt out. The schools budget share is adjusted at the start of the year so schools are not expected to pay an amount to the LA during the year. Schools Finance will issue guidance as part of the year end timetable on allocating the de-delegated figures on FMS but this journal will not change the income figures.

1.3. How is growth funding calculated?

Information on growth funding is available on the LMS website and can be found [here](#)

1.4. What other grants am I entitled to?

The school funding page lists all grants paid to schools complete with links to the Government website. This is updated regularly and will provide information on all rates and payments as and when they become available.

1.5. Can a school go into deficit?

Schools are not permitted to plan for a deficit budget in normal circumstances, however this may be permitted in exceptional circumstances with the prior agreement of the LA. Schools should contact Schools Finance if they anticipate a deficit position at any point, there is further guidance on the LMS page [here](#)

1.6. What level of balances should schools hold?

A rule of thumb suggests primary schools should hold around 8% of balances (I01-I05 + I18) while secondary schools should hold approximately 5%.

2. Banking

Link to banking page on LMS where more information can be found is [here](#)

2.1. I've forgotten my PIN/Password for Bankline or locked myself out

Click on the 'request an activation code' on the second log on screen.

Log in to Bankline

Customer ID 116210 | User ID KFRANCIS | Wrong Customer ID or User ID? [Start again](#)

Scan this with your card reader

Enter the response code from your card reader

Enter the requested characters from your password

2nd 6th 8th

[Continue](#) [Cancel](#)

Not received your QR enabled card reader yet?
Please contact your Bankline administrator.

Need a new smartcard or card reader?
Please contact your Bankline administrator.

Trouble logging in?
You can [request an activation code](#) to reset your password. Your Bankline administrator can also do this on your behalf, or check to see if your smartcard is suspended.

2.2. I am receiving a message that Bankline does not recognise my email address

Either the user ID or customer ID has been entered incorrectly.

2.3. What if I can't remember my User ID or Customer ID?

Users should have an email with this information on it. If users do not have an email they will need to contact Schools Finance.

2.4. I have forgotten the PIN for my smartcard reader

The PINs are card specific, so a new card and PIN will need to be ordered. To do this, email Schools Finance at schoolsfinance@milton-keynes.gov.uk

2.5. How do I find out who are signatories on the bank account?

Schools Finance do not hold a list of signatories. Schools will need to contact NatWest for this information.

2.6. Should I consider using online banking for payments?

Yes! Online payments reduce fraud, involve less transactions on FMS and save money. To find out further information on the process please contact Schools Finance.

2.7. Can I have a school credit card?

Schools cannot have a credit card but can use the Electronic Purchasing Card Solution (EPCS card). Schools need to complete a cardholder application form, direct debit and declaration form which can be found [here](#) along with guidance on usage.

2.8. Can I increase my credit limit on my EPCS card?

Primary schools have a maximum credit limit total of £5,000 across all their EPCS cards and secondary schools have a maximum total of £10,000. Credit limits can be increased providing they don't exceed the total limit. To do this, the card amendment form needs to be completed which can be found [here](#).

2.9. How do I set up online payments?

Read the Operational Guidance Note for Online Banking on the LMS website which can be found [here](#) and follow the instructions.

2.10. Can I still pay suppliers by cheque?

Yes, but be aware fraudulent activity is more prevalent with cheque payments. Schools Finance recommend electronic payments are used.

3. VAT

3.1. What is the Councils VAT number for use by Local Authority Maintained Schools?

MKC registered VAT number is (GB) 121 4882 86

3.2. Where can I find my VAT reimbursement?

This is paid by the 15th of the month assuming the submittal has been sent in on time. Information can be found on the web remittance page [here](#).

3.3. What is my user name/password for the web remittance system?

The user name is the school code including letters (eg S*1234). The password can be obtained by emailing Schools Finance.

4. Leasing

Link to leasing page on LMS where more information can be found is [here](#)

4.1. Should I lease or purchase outright?

Schools must consider the financial implications of both leasing and purchasing. There will be many factors which determine the decision taken (examples include, but aren't limited to, whether it is an operating or finance lease, are funds available to support outright purchase, cost of each method) and these must all be considered.

4.2. What do I need to do to set up a new lease or extend an existing lease?

All leases must be approved by MKC before they are agreed. There is a briefing note on leasing which can be found [here](#) which should be read before completing the lease application form and provides information on which documents need to be provided.

5. Reporting

Link to reporting page on LMS where more information can be found is [here](#)

5.1. What needs to be sent to Schools Finance and when?

The reporting timetable differs between high risk and other schools. The timetables can be found [here](#).

5.2. What happens at year end?

A year end timetable will be issued towards the end of January and can be found [here](#).

5.3. When do budgets have to be submitted?

Budgets must be submitted on 1st May and 1st November each year. A timetable, template and supporting documentation will be published and must be used. From April 2021 schools will be also required to submit a three year plan to the LA between 1st May and 30th June each year.

5.4. What is Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)?

DFC is a source of capital funding for maintained schools and academies which is put towards any capital spend the school may occur. Schools are responsible for managing H&S risks – this means having safe buildings and H&S management in place for other risks. Note – Voluntary Aided schools or the diocese are paid DFC directly from the ESFA.

5.5. What other reporting must be done?

A Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) return must be completed between 1st January and 31st March each year. A Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) report must also be completed and the return date will be confirmed within the year end timetable. Guidance on both returns will be on the reporting page on LMS which can be accessed using the above link.

5.6. Is there a forecasting template that can be used?

Both the original budget template and the revised budget template have a tab that can be used for forecasting. The variance analysis will be monitored against the most up to date budget. A link to the template is [here](#).

5.7. Is there a three-year plan (3YP) template that can be used?

From the financial year 2021/22, schools will be required to submit a 3YP to the LA on an annual basis. A 3YP is fundamental to a schools financial planning. The DfE recognise the difficulty in producing a 3YP without complete information on future levels of funding but state:

“This is no different to other parts of the public sector. And while there will always be uncertainties relating to future forecasts, they can still provide important insight into any emerging financial issues, allowing schools and LAs to take appropriate mitigating action”

A 3YP template is currently in development by Schools Finance and will be available in time to meet the new requirement for schools to produce a 3YP.

5.8. What is a voluntary fund?

A voluntary fund is an additional bank account managed by the School that manages payments from external sources (eg PTA, Friends of Schools, Donations). This must be audited every year and a copy of the signed accounts sent to Schools Finance no later than 6 months after the year end of the voluntary fund. The audit statement must also state that no dedicated school funds have been administered through the school fund account.

6. Financial Regulations

[Link to financial regulations page on LMS where more information can be found is here](#)

6.1. What is LMS?

LMS stands for Local Management of Schools and includes the processes and procedures both the LA and Schools must follow as well as detailing governing body responsibilities.

6.2. What is the Local Guidance on this page?

The local guidance takes the scheme for financing school and adds local regulations. These must be followed by all maintained schools.

7. Miscellaneous

7.1. How do I account for staff who work across two or more schools?

Guidance is available on LMS and can be found [here](#)

7.2. Can I install or set up additional systems or software?

Schools need to contact the LA in the first instance, guidance is available on LMS and can be found [here](#)

7.3. What extra support can Schools Finance offer me?

Schools Finance can offer both one-off and regular support with financial and strategic planning, 3WRs, budgeting and many other services. Contact the Schools Finance team for more information.

7.4. Where can I find the agenda and minutes from the Schools Forum?

Follow this link by clicking [here](#)

7.5. How long should documents be retained?

Follow this link by clicking [here](#) for further information.