

Corporate Requirements Framework for Schools 2025-26

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1. Timetable – Funding and Return Dates

1.1 Funding & Returns Calendar

Month / Period End	Funding Date – Transfer to School's Bank Account	Deadline for schools to complete period end procedure and submit their SMER
April	Tuesday 22 April 2025	Monday 19 May 2025 (Optional)
May	Wednesday 21 May 2025	Tuesday 10 June 2025
June	Friday 20 June 2025	Friday 18 July 2025
July	Friday 18 July 2025	Monday 11 August 2025 (optional)
August	Thursday 21 August 2025	Thursday 11 September 2025
September	Friday 19 September 2025	Thursday 9 October 2025
October	Tuesday 21 October 2025	Friday 7 November 2025
November	Friday 21 November 2025	Thursday 11 December 2025
December	Friday 19 December 2025	Friday 9 January 2026
January	Friday 16 January 2026	Friday 6 February 2026
February	Friday 20 February 2026	Wednesday 11 March 2026
March (Year End)	Wednesday 18 March 2026	Tuesday 24 March 2026

All schools must have completed their month end procedures and submitted their SMER by the date published above. If a school thinks they may not be able to report by the relevant deadline, they will need to contact the Schools Strategy & Corporate Team (SSCT) at the earliest opportunity to discuss the situation, please email bank.account@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

**The deadline for schools to submit their Year End return is 24th March 2026. Finance staff and Head Teachers will need to plan resources and workload accordingly to meet the deadline.*

Please notify us as soon as possible prior to 24th March 2026 if any of your staff are unable to answer any questions re their Year End returns over the Easter Holidays. SSCT need to

know this to enable them to complete the year end checking in accordance with CCC's closedown timetable.

Please note that the Easter holidays for 2025/26 are from 30th March 2026 to 10th April 2026 (inclusive).

1.2 Funding

Schools will be funded on the above dates (unless advised otherwise).

Schools will be reimbursed for VAT on a quarterly basis. Schools have to print VAT submittal report for every Quarter and make them available to SSCT on demand.

Primary Schools will receive their delegated budgetshare in 12 installments as set out below.

Month	Weighting of ISB
April 2025	12%
May	8%
June	8%
July	8%
August	8%
September	8%
October	8%
November	8%
December	8%
January 2026	8%
February	8%
March	8%

Special Schools and Maintained Nursery School will receive the fixed element of their funding in equal 12ths.

The monthly high needs funding process for mainstream top-up funding enables schools to have sight of the funding they can expect for the full financial year. The funding for each pupil is split out over the full year to reduce the fluctuations in funding amounts from month to month caused by pupil changes. The effect of any changes to funding will also be spread out over the course of twelve months.

Where there has been a change in total funding from the previous month there will also be an adjustment amount shown on your funding statement. This amount is calculated using the total funding paid to the provider for the year so far and calculating the adjustment needed to either raise or reduce the amount to bring it in line with the updated pupil list.

Separately to the above process, retro funding will be calculated for prior year (2024-25) to capture any changes to pupil lists that had not been updated by the end of the year. This will be done in June and again in August to ensure all changes are captured.

The process for Special Schools is the same as for mainstream, however the funding is based on an academic year rather than a financial year basis with retro payments made in November and February.

Please contact Statutory.Assessment&ResourcesTeam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk if you have any questions about the pupil data and Schools.Funding@cambridgeshire.gov.uk for any HN funding related queries.

Any funding / claw back not processed by the Local Authority before the end of any given financial year will be funded or clawed back in the next financial years funding statements.

1.3 Financial Reporting

Each school will be required to complete the School Month End Reconciliation (SMER) Form and import the Cumulative Expense Analysis (CEA) report or equivalent into the Budget Monitoring area of SBS, by the above deadlines. The School Month End Reconciliation (SMER) Form needs to be completed in full and then emailed to SSCT at schoolmonthendreturns@cambridgeshire.gov.uk long with the CSV file of the CEA used when uploading into SBS.

Schools will be required to submit at least quarterly forecasts to SSCT in the format required as determined by the LA. Schools with licenced deficits may be required to submit these forecasts more regularly in line with the terms of any deficit licence.

The Local Authority will liaise with the school to discuss any additional reporting requirements as necessary, and the LA may request further returns during the year over and above any reporting pattern in place.

The July 'month end return' will be optional, for those not working during the summer break.

2. Summary of Corporate Requirements

The corporate requirements cover:

- Requirement to reflect schools financial records on the authority's system at year-end. This is a statutory requirement imposed by government on local authorities.
- Ensure that schools are compliant by monitoring and reviewing their financial statements periodically and reporting to Officers as necessary.
- Corporate Policies – Ensure that schools adhere to all corporately owned policies such as the Scheme for Financing Schools (including School financial regulations).
- Deadlines – Notifying schools of deadlines in advance for funding and charging, period end returns, year-end reporting, escalation procedures and any other activity that the authority have a statutory responsibility for.

The Schools Strategy & Corporate Team (SSCT) is charged with the corporate responsibilities.

Schools should contact SSCT in the first instance for any finance related queries that the school may have. SBS support is provided by SSCT and the SBS Helpdesk.

Technical finance system queries should be directed to finance system provider or their designated support provider (eg FMS, BROMCOM, ARBOR & ACCESS = ICT Service Helpline)

The current contact details for SSCT are:

Jonty Holden – 01223 699066
Sam Walker – 01223 706794
Nicole Bone
Lewis Armstong

Please contact the team using email address bank.account@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Other useful numbers:
ICT Helpline (0300 300 0000)
NatWest Bankline helpdesk (0345 300 4108)

3. Chart of Accounts

Schools must use the structure as set out by the Local Authority, including Fund numbers (see table below).

Further, the finance system software allows schools to analyse their income and expenditure in more detail, at cost centre level. Schools are expected to use cost centres to manage their finances internally. However, excessive cost centres must be avoided. Some adaptation with ledger codes may be permitted but please speak to SSCT first if this is needed.

Finance System Structure		
Fund Number ('Tags' in SBS)	<p>Purpose – To identify significant funding streams and assist in producing Consistent Financial Reporting information. They should not be used for internal management control.</p> <p>These Fund codes MUST reconcile back to how much funding (in terms of budget) is expected for the year and also how much funding has been 'received' to date (in terms of actuals) on your financial return compared to your Funding Statement.</p>	<p>Fund Numbers to be used by Schools (Not all Funds will be used by schools):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 01 – Formula / Revenue (now includes EMAG, Standards Fund and SSG) 04 – Devolved Formula Capital 05 – Other Capital * 08 – Nursery (Day Care) 18 – Capitalised Revenue* 21 – Extended Schools (Bankers Only) 22 – Children Centres 23 – Cluster Activity (Banker Schools) 24 – Community Focused Activities 90 – Non-public funds (requires annual independent examination and must not relate to public funds as per CFR regulations) <p>* Fund-05, Fund-18, and Fund 90 are only to be used after consulting with SSCT.</p>
Ledger Code	<p>Purpose – To identify the classification / type of income or expenditure. Ledger codes can then be linked to cost centres for internal management control.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the school do not overtype descriptions of unused ledger codes.</p> <p>Schools must not add new budget / ledger codes. The chart of accounts for ledger codes is co-ordinated centrally and all new code requests must be submitted to SSCT.</p>
Cost Centre	<p>Purpose – Internal Management Control – Schools should use cost centres to identify specific areas which the school wishes to monitor and evaluate costs.</p> <p>Typical examples would include School Defined Activities and specific project work or curriculum areas.</p>	<p>Schools should use cost centres for internal management control purposes.</p> <p>There are no strict guidelines but schools may wish to continue with their current structure.</p> <p>The important aspect for the school is to maintain consistency and be able to use cost centres robustly once they are set up. Excessive cost centres must be avoided.</p>

Please note, the monthly funding statement includes details of the relevant budget / ledger codes with relevant fund allocation, this help schools to record funding in their financial system correctly.

The most up to date chart of accounts can be found in SBS. Please contact SBS.Queries@cambridgeshire.gov.uk for more information.

Schools must make sure that the latest chart of accounts is reflected accurately in their prime financial accounting software. The LA will communicate any updates as necessary and schools should action these as they occur.

This chart of accounts will be designed to reflect the DfE national reporting framework, Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR). Schools should familiarise themselves with the CFR framework and report their income and spend in line with this.

4. Security of Financial System

The school hold the prime accounting records including the financial system and must therefore ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to maintain the security and access to the financial data held on the financial system.

4.1 Passwords

Schools are advised to change their password monthly as this is used for auditing purposes to track use of the system by each user. If there are other members of the school who need to log into the finance system, they should have a separate Id and password set up by the school administrator.

5. Budgets – Reporting and Adjustments and Profiles

The Local Authority expects schools to **maintain their budgets and profiles throughout the year** to ensure that relevant, accurate up to date financial reports are provided and used within the school to assist in good financial management and to inform decision making.

It is recognised that some schools may include budget submissions of anticipated funding or budget claw back that is likely to happen during the financial year (particularly around the start of the academic year). This will generate a budget variance on the financial reports until the funding/claw back occurs. These variances are acceptable providing that the school can identify and justify the reasons and when they will be cleared.

5.1 Community Focused Activity Budgets

Financial information for Community Focused Activities needs to be reported within the school's data, but be clearly identifiable under its own fund area. SSCT will be able to advise on the appropriate fund number to use.

Fund 08 for Nursery

Fund 22 for Childrens Centres

Fund 24 for Community Focussed

Please ensure that Income is linked to:

CFR I16

CFR I17

Expenditure is linked to:

CFR E31

CFR E32

These areas should be self-supporting. Schools should regularly assess the sustainability of these activities and consider ceasing any activities that are not sustainable.

Schools should not charge more than the cost of the provision (therefore fees should be at or below cost). It is therefore important charging or fees structures are regularly reviewed.

5.2 Deficit Budgets

It is important that if a school is reporting a deficit that is addressed as part of the budget setting process. If schools are unable to recover the deficit within the 2025-26 budget, schools should get in contact with SSCT by contacting bank.account@cambridgeshire.gov.uk before the budget submission date of 23rd May 2025 so that deficit budget license can be progressed within the budget submission deadlines. Deficit licence applications will need to be signed off by governors.

Upon submission of a deficit licence application the LA will review and communicate the outcome of the application to schools as soon as practicable. Schools may be required to amend and resubmit their deficit licence applications where the LA deems it necessary.

Further guidance has been issued to schools setting out the mechanisms with which the Local Authority will support schools to manage and reduce deficit budgets. Further guidance can be found on Cambridgeshire LearnTogether.

6. Forecast Outturn Reporting

Regular monitoring and reviews are required throughout the year to enable schools to report their predicted outturn position to the Local Authority and Governors.

All schools must produce **forecast revenue outturn predictions** to show the expected year-end financial position. This should be done by updating the school's financial information, ensuring that the Forecast Outturn information is based on the latest information available. If there is a variance between forecast outturn and budget, this needs to be explained in the comments section of SBS.

The LA suggest this is done monthly. However, as a minimum, Schools must submit accurate revenue forecast outturn predictions as follows.

- September Month End submitted by 9th October 2025
- December Month End submitted by 9th January 2026

Where Schools have an agreed deficit license, they may be required to provide this information more regularly as set out in the terms of any in any deficit license. Although it is also important to be aware of the overall position including capital, the figure referred to in most correspondence is the main revenue position as reported on the final CFR.

Staffing costs account for the most significant proportion of any schools budget, and the salary information within SBS, needs to be updated on a regular basis, to reflect any changes to the staffing costs.

Schools are permitted to prepare revised budget plans throughout the year and submit these to their governors for approval. Schools are actively encouraged to undertake a thorough review at the end of Q2 and submit a revised plan for approval where the school sees a significant change to their original approved plan.

7. Non Public Funds – Independent Examination

Any schools holding Non Public Funds **MUST** submit to the local authority a signed off copy of the independent examination **each year**. These figures **MUST** reconcile to the figures reported at year end under Fund 90 of the schools financial returns (and Fund 90 can only be used with permission of SSCT).

All funds under the control of governors must be recorded in the schools financial system, either under Fund 01 if there are no legacy terms, or Fund 90 for legacy terms, where the governors do not have control, but can spend the funds.

Schools must check with SSCT (or the CFR regulations) whether transactions previously recorded as Non Public Funds could now be defined as Public Funds or not. Please contact bank.account@cambridgeshire.gov.uk if you have any questions relating to the legitimacy of items going through Non Public Funds.

The following transactions are actually public funds/transactions (not non-public funds):

- School trip income (CFR mapped to I12),
- School trip expenditure (CFR mapped to E19),
- Charity fund raising (CFR mapped to I13),
- Charity donations paid out to a charity (CFR mapped to E24),
- Before and After School club income (CFR mapped to I08),
- Before and After School club expenditure (staffing = CFR mapped to E07, general costs = CFR mapped to E24, catering = CFR mapped to E25),
- Book Fair sales (CFR mapped to I08),
- Plant sales (CFR mapped to I08),
- Photo commission (CFR mapped to I08),
- Uniform sales (CFR mapped to I08),
- Uniform expenditure (CFR mapped to E24),
- Sale of material, calculators etc (CFR mapped to I08),
- Donations for the school or governing body (for very high value individual donations - please seek advice from SSCT (CFR mapped to I13).

The following are neither to be reported under public funds or non-public funds, and would need to be operated on a cash basis by a co-ordinator collecting income at the school from staff or parents only:

- Gifts
- Leaving presents/cards
- Flowers
- Tea or coffee and Milk

8. Other Capital

8.1 Capitalising Revenue

If you have insufficient Capital funds, but have a genuine capital project (for building works, ICT, or equipment) that you intend to pay for using **excess school revenue** (Fund 01) funds, the relevant amount of revenue funds will need to be transferred to Capital. However, this type of transfer can only be actioned if all other capital (DFC and External Capital Donations) has been used up, and the school is not at risk of deficit in the next two years.

With the low level of available DFC funding, capitalising of revenue will need to be considered as part of the overall budget setting process and be reviewed during the year as capital schemes/projects arise.

Transfers require prior approval by **SSCT, before any order is placed** and must be completed before the last working day in February each year (this means work complete, and invoices paid by then). Schools are advised to avoid ordering or performing capital works/receipting goods during February, March and April to ensure this cut off is met, and to ensure a clean break regarding capital purchases at year end (whether DFC or capitalising). Any capital works or orders that have to go through during February to April, must be discussed and highlighted with SSCT in advance.

Please contact bank.account@cambridgeshire.gov.uk with the relevant information concerning the project, before ordering, and to arrange the transfer or for further information, as specific codes and funds must be used.

A de minimus level of £10,000 is set for capital expenditure other than that funded by DFC. This applies for new building constructions, vehicles and plant and equipment (including ICT). Expenditure at or above the de minimus level should be treated as capital expenditure. Expenditure below the de minimus level must therefore be met from the delegated revenue budget share or other external funding sources and reported through revenue.

There is no de minimus limit for Devolved Formula Capital. All DFC funded expenditure should be treated as capital. Devolved Formula Capital must be used in line with the DFC guidance which states its purpose is to maintain and improve their buildings and other facilities, including ICT or can be pooled across the LA with the schools' agreement.

8.2 Property Section - Fund 05

All amount received as LA Funded Capital Reimbursement (property Reimbursement from Eddie Garner) should be coded to

Particular	Ledger code	Cost Centre	CFR
Capital Receipt	88888888-05	LACAP (CEDEV)	ZZZ
Spend	99999999-05	LACAP (CEDEV)	ZZZ

8.3 Mobilising Local Energy Investments (MLEI) loan income and spend – Fund 05

Any new MLEI loan given to a maintained school will be given via the funding statement. Please code the income to 65181000-05, on CFR category CI01.

Please code the expenditure to the relevant capital spend code e.g., 11010100-05 (CFR CE02) for building and construction - including purchase of solar panels.

9. Payroll Control Reconciliation

All Schools must check as part of the month end procedure that the Payroll Control code always shows the outstanding (unpaid) elements of payroll that have not been paid out of the bank. It is unusual, especially if you use EPM that all elements will be taken out of the bank at the same time.

Please ensure as part of your month end procedure that you do a mini reconciliation to make sure the balance does add up to what has not been charged yet – If you have differences you will need to investigate and resolve within that month.

10. Bank Reconciliation

All Schools must do the Bank reconciliation as a part of month end procedure.

11. VAT Reconciliation

All Schools should do a VAT reconciliation on a monthly basis and any variances must be investigated.

12. Deficit Schools

All Schools applying for a deficit license must ensure that they follow the reporting requirement set out in the deficit protocol document. Where a deficit licence is approved, the school must also comply with any conditions set out in any deficit licence. Failure to do so will result in a formal escalation process being implemented.

The deficit licence process and other useful information can be found on [Cambridgeshire LearnTogether](#)

These corporate requirements supplement other regulatory requirements which schools are also bound to follow. These include:

- Cambridgeshire Scheme for Financing Schools
- Cambridgeshire Procurement Standing Orders
- Cambridgeshire Deficit Budget Protocol (Annex D)