

Christ Church Primary School, Hampstead

Purchasing procedures and best value statement **January 2013**

Authorisations of purchases

All purchases to be pre-authorised by the head teacher

- Paper order forms (e.g. GLS stock orders) – signed by head teacher before they are sent
- Internet orders (e.g. Euro office ink cartridge orders) – order orally authorised by head teacher before purchase and printed copy of order signed by head teacher
- Petty Cash spending (e.g. ingredients for class cooking) – individual purchases over £30 need oral authorisation by head teacher before spending, all petty cash reimbursement forms signed by head teacher before reimbursement
- Orders by email (e.g. IT equipment purchased through Camden's procurement service) – head teacher to authorise by email and print paper order
- Work by contractors (e.g. supply and installation of additional network points) – quotations signed by head teacher before work is carried out

The head teacher can authorise purchases only up to £5000 (with the exception of staff costs).

Governors Finance Committee authorisation needed for purchases above £5000.

The head teacher can authorise changes to contracts/service level agreements worth under £5000 per year; if contracts are worth more than this, any changes must be authorised by the Governors Finance Committee.

Tendering process

A 'competitive tendering/research into alternatives' process takes place for goods or works over £500.

The process may include:

- research into alternative suppliers and their costs (e.g. review of alternative providers of school council playground chair)
- asking for quotes from several companies (e.g. to glaze front office door)
- large scale tendering process with written bids submitted for any work over £5000 (e.g. for installation of heating system – tendering managed by LDBS)

Business interests

An up-to-date register of governors' business interests is maintained. The staff handbook also contains the following reminder re business interests to staff involved in purchasing:

'All staff involved in purchasing resources are reminded that they should declare any business interests they have with companies or contractors they are purchasing from before the purchase is authorised. Business interests include companies or individuals which involve family or friends of the staff member or which benefit the staff member directly.'

Best value statement

The Governing Body is accountable for the way in which the school's resources are allocated to meet the objectives set out in the school's improvement plans. Governors need to secure the best possible outcome for pupils, in the most efficient and effective way, at a reasonable cost. This will lead to continuous improvement in the school's achievements and services

What Is Best Value?

Governors will apply the four principles of *best value*:

- **Challenge** - Is the school's performance high enough? Why and how is a service provided? Do we still need it? Can it be delivered differently? What do parents want?
- **Compare** - How does the school's pupil performance and financial performance compare with all schools? How does it compare with LA schools? How does it compare with similar schools?
- **Consult** - How does the school seek the views of stakeholders about the services the school provides?
- **Compete** - How does the school secure efficient and effective services? Are services of appropriate quality, economic?

The Governors' Approach

The Governors and school leaders will apply the principles of *best value* when making decisions about:

- the allocation of resources to best promote the aims and values of the school.
- the targeting of resources to best improve standards and the quality of provision.
- the use of resources to best support the various educational needs of all pupils.

Governors and school leaders:

- will make comparisons with other/similar schools using data provided by the LA and the Government, e.g. RAISE, quality of teaching & learning, levels of expenditure
- will challenge proposals, examining them for effectiveness, efficiency, and cost, e.g. setting of annual pupil achievement targets, expansion of school
- will require suppliers to compete on grounds of cost, and quality/suitability of services/products/backup, e.g. provision of computer suite, redecoration
- will consult individuals and organisations on quality/suitability of service we provide to parents and pupils, and services we receive from providers

Governors and school leaders:

- will not waste time and resources on investigating minor areas where few improvements can be achieved
- will not waste time and resources to make minor savings in costs
- will not waste time and resources by seeking tenders for minor supplies and services.

The pursuit of minor improvements or savings is not cost effective if the administration involves substantial time or costs. Time wasted on minor improvements or savings can also distract management from more important or valuable areas.

Best value decision making

Governors and school leaders will make decision on purchasing which take into account an assessment of need and obtain goods and services which provide "best value" in terms of suitability, efficiency, time, and cost.

Measures in place include:

- competitive tendering procedures (e.g. for goods and services above £5,000)
- procedures for accepting “best value” quotes, which are not necessarily the cheapest (e.g. suitability for purpose and quality of workmanship)
- procedures which minimise office time by the purchase of goods or services under £1000 direct from known, reliable suppliers (e.g. stationery, small equipment) – arrangements such as these and any regular service contracts are reviewed every two years
- consideration is given to any cost savings which can be made by sharing resources or purchasing with other local schools

Monitoring and review

These procedures will be reviewed regularly by the Governors Finance Committee to ensure they are an accurate reflection of current best practice.