

FINANCIAL SERVICES GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Services for Schools maintained by Hertfordshire County Council

Reviewed by: Head of Financial Sustainability Services	Date: April 2026	Version: 1.1
Next review date:	Date: April 2027	

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

To help you decide the right service for your school and to understand what each of the elements mean, the definition of the tasks are below and advise which options can be added to the main service you purchase.

Bookkeeping Service – General Account Financial Processing

This digital service may cover a range of work depending upon the requirements of the school/setting including:

- Recording expenditure
- Recording income received
- Recording and reconciliation of petty cash payments
- Reconciliation to the bank statement
- Performance of the period end routine
- General upkeep and maintenance of the financial accounting software
- The service uses HFL OneDrive for you to transfer your information securely and swiftly to the team.

Available to:	Diamond – Included	Gold Option available	Silver Option available	Bronze Option available
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- **NEW** - BACS file generation ready for import into Arbor Finance (**No additional hours are required for this, if you wish to add this – please call**)

Accruals - generation and maintenance

Record items throughout the year which will need to be considered for accrual at the year-end (2026/27) e.g. trip income and expenditure. Check previous year's (2025/26) accruals are cleared.

Available to:	Diamond Included	Gold Option recommended	Silver N/A	Bronze N/A
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Payroll entry to Salary Monitor and Accounting package

- Entry of payroll including additional hours, expenses, unpaid days and Apprenticeship Levy (if applicable) from the payroll system to the salary monitor
- Entry to the accounting package Arbor/Access/FMS

Available to:	Diamond – Included	Gold Option recommended	Silver N/A	Bronze N/A
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Salary Monitor variance analysis

- Any variances checked against the budget software and nominal roll with queries discussed with school
- Variance comments are recorded on the salary monitor

Available to:	Diamond – Included	Gold Included	Silver N/A	Bronze N/A
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Comprehensive System Reconciliation

- A check of the accounting package to ensure that the system is recording information correctly, including a reconciliation of the VAT, system checks, capital reconciliation and, if purchase orders and sales invoicing are used, these are checked also.
- A number of reports need to be run from the system and entered to the spreadsheet and any anomalies identified and corrected.

NB: Schools who buy the Gold service as an option, will need to complete the steps below:

- Payroll reports authorised in accordance with the delegated authority of the school/ setting. The person with relevant responsibility in the school/ setting must check the monthly payroll report to ensure that the correct staff are being paid.
- Central Payments (also known as Biscuit and Central Billing) reports, coded to relevant budget accounts and authorised in accordance with the delegated authority of the school/setting.
- HFL Education invoice, coded to relevant budget accounts and authorised in accordance with the delegated authority of the school/setting.
- Other Direct Debit statements, coded to relevant budget accounts and authorised in accordance with the delegated authority of the school/setting.
- VAT receipts/invoices to support expenditure in respect of expenses, purchases via school/ setting commercial card and any other purchases, coded to relevant budget accounts and authorised in accordance with the delegated authority of the school/setting.
- Details and supporting documents provided for any electronic bank payments made, including future dated payments
- Summary reports from electronic income collection, for example for parent payments, coded to relevant budget accounts

Available to:	Diamond – Included	Gold Option recommended	Silver N/A	Bronze N/A
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Financial Reporting for Year End 2025/26 and Monitoring x 7

- Production of Year End 25/26 and seven further budget monitoring reports to P10.
- Meeting with the Headteacher or nominated officer to discuss the school/setting's current and future financial position and cash flow and advising of any changes that may impact the outturn of their accounts.
- This includes the preparation and review, in accordance with HCC deadlines, of the termly forecast to HCC. Our termly forecast appointment provides an in-depth review of your budget position and a revised outturn of the expected budget position of your school/setting at the end of the financial year.

Forecast for period to	HCC deadline
P5 - 31 st August	15 th October
P9 - 31 st December	15 th February

- Completion of year end in accordance with HCC specifications to the deadline set by HCC, including an outturn budget monitor that compares the year end position with the last agreed budget.
- Reconciliation of VAT returns to HCC monthly.
- Completion of the interim and final capital returns to HCC specification (where relevant).

Available to:	Diamond – Included	Gold Included	Silver N/A	Bronze N/A
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Bank Forecast for cashflow

The monthly monitor will be updated to include a cash flow and bank balance forecast to allow the careful management of the school's payroll, invoices and commitments.

Available to:	Diamond – Included	Gold Included	Silver N/A	Bronze N/A
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Submission of Financial Returns to HCC

Submission of all HCC returns remains the responsibility of the school/setting, and Finance Business Partners must receive authorisation from the school/setting of final figures prior to submission on Solero (on AnyComms).

Available to:	Diamond Included	Gold Option available	Silver N/A	Bronze N/A
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Capital Returns

A mid-year Interim submission and Final submission (just before Year End) is required to be provided to HCC to detail the capital spent or committed for that year. The dates are published on Herts Grid and a bulletin and reminders sent by the Financial Services Team. If capital is funding is provided through an alternative route to HCC, then these hours have already been removed.

Available to:	Diamond Included	Gold Included	Silver N/A	Bronze N/A
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Alerts and Technical Guides

To undertake the changes required on the Alerts and Technical guides (formerly bulletins) issued by HFL Financial Services Team. This might include coding changes, report changes and additional funding lines being added to either the accounting or budgeting software.

Available to:	Diamond Included	Gold Option recommended	Silver N/A	Bronze N/A
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Asset Register and Leases – School responsibility

The school/setting is required to maintain its asset register and, where required to do so, be able to provide supporting information to HCC on its assets. Schools and settings are also responsible for ensuring that they maintain and update the register of leases that HCC requires and to ensure that they comply with regulations that prevent schools/ settings from taking on finance leases.

Available to:	Diamond N/A	Gold N/A	Silver N/A	Bronze N/A
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Budget Support

Budget finalisation – May 2026 (for year 2026/27)

- Update any known staff changes – leavers/starters since March
- Include income for any final funding elements
- Update SEN income
- Review all other expenditure lines with school
- Look at 3 year picture to ensure the school does not forecast a deficit budget
- Consider and discuss actions required to balance the budget

Available to:	Diamond Included – digital	Gold Optional – digital	Silver Optional – digital	Bronze Optional – digital
	Optional face to face	Optional face to face	Optional face to face	Optional face to face

Budget submission to Solero

The Approved Budget Return (ABR), once agreed with governors and the school at Full Governing Body (FGB) in May, is submitted to HCC on Solero as per the financial Alerts and Guidance instructions.

Available to:	Diamond Included	Gold Optional	Silver N/A	Bronze N/A
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Budget loading to Arbor Finance system

The Approved Budget Return agreed with governors is entered to the Arbor Finance/FMS systems. Profiles of income and expenditure are set up with a range of options recommended via the bulletin guidance.

Available to:	Diamond Included	Gold Optional	Silver Optional	Bronze N/A
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Budget updates in Access including Alerts and Technical Guides

The Systems team completes a mid-year update (in the Autumn term) on the latest funding and formula factors and pay increases known at that time to maintain the future year forecast is as up to date as possible.

Staffing contract details in Access Budget software will be checked against the latest nominal roll. The budgeting software is then updated with the information provided by the school prior to the completion of P5, P9 and at March budget preparation, before the budget software is upgraded to the new financial year.

A balancing figure (in E24) is included to match the monitor with the budget software in P5 and P9 to allow future year forecasts. This is removed when the budget is upgraded into the next financial year.

Available to:	Diamond Included	Gold Optional	Silver N/A	Bronze N/A
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Budget Preparation – March 2027

- Update staffing to include all known current and future changes (school to provide detail)
- Include any other updates advised by the Access Budget Technical Guide
- Upgrade budget software into the next financial year 2026/27
- Check prepopulated amounts against the School Budget Share document, SBS
- Include all known school funding lines as directed by the guide not included in the Age Weighted Pupil Unit, AWPU

- Update Additional Targeted Funding (ATF), and SEN High Needs funding lines by anonymised pupils
- Update future pupil numbers based on HCC forecasts
- Start conversations on other income /expenditure lines

Available to:	Diamond Included – digital	Gold Optional – digital	Silver Optional – digital	Bronze Optional – digital
	Optional face to face	Optional face to face	Optional face to face	Optional face to face

Silver Service P3 and P7 QA, YE and mid-year workshops

Schools and settings that purchase the Silver service will complete their own monthly bookkeeping and monitoring. In P3 and P7 the Finance Business Partner will Quality Assure (QA) the school's completed monitor to ensure that the latest information has been applied. There is a minimum of 10 hours required for the service, but schools can purchase more if required. The first QA is in the summer term by 31st August and the second in the Autumn term by 31st December.

In addition, it is a requirement that schools purchase and attend our mandatory Year End 2025-26 finalisation workshop in April 2026 (which is delivered both digitally and face-to-face). Silver schools should book these through the [HFL Education Hub](#). Attendance is also required for the digital Year End 2026-27 preparatory workshops in September and January. Schools will be emailed a link directly to book on to these workshops.

Available to:	Diamond N/A	Gold N/A	Silver Included	Bronze N/A
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Financial Services Systems Helpdesk

Support for the Arbor Finance and Access Budgeting software will be provided by the Financial Services Systems Helpdesk.

The Systems Helpdesk is open from:

Monday to Thursday 8.45am to 4.45pm

Friday 8.45am to 4.15pm

Telephone: 01438 544466

Email: support@hfleducation.org

Available to:	Diamond Required	Gold Required	Silver Required	Bronze Required
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CPD Training modules

Our Financial Helpdesk Contract now includes 16 comprehensive CPD sessions, delivered through a blend of live and on-demand formats. Covering all key financial areas for maintained schools, this service supports robust compliance and confident financial management

Available to:	Diamond Required	Gold Required	Silver Required	Bronze Required
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Access Budgeting Software Licence

A licence is required to use the budget software to forecast staffing and other budget costs. The software is prepopulated with your School Budget Share and adapts the inflationary factors in the background using the latest information provided by HCC and the DfE. There is also a mid-year update (in the Autumn Term) completed for these factors, using the latest information known.

NB: Schools must not change their budgeting software without approval from HCC.

NB: Schools should not change their background inflationary factors without consultation and guidance as this can cause serious errors in budget forecasting

Available to:	Diamond Required	Gold Required	Silver Required	Bronze Required
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Arbor Finance Licence – General Account

A main finance licence is required to operate the Arbor finance software to enable your school accounts to be processed throughout the year and at year end to be submitted to HCC to comply with the Financial Handbook for schools. *This licence is purchased through DMS01 MIS and Finance Framework.*

NB: Schools must not change their accounting software without approval from HCC.

Available to:	Diamond Required	Gold Required	Silver Required	Bronze Required
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Arbor Finance Additional Licence (e.g. Fund Account)

A main Arbor Finance licence is required to be able to purchase an additional licence. Schools are likely to use this for their Fund Account and if there are additional Governor Accounts. *This licence is purchased through DMS01 MIS and Finance Framework.*

Available to:	Diamond Optional	Gold Optional	Silver Optional	Bronze Optional
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Fund Account Bookkeeping

The Bookkeeping Team offers this digital service to support Arbor finance schools to comply with the Financial Handbook and maintain the appropriate records to report to Governors and HCC. The cost is a flat rate for 1 year and Service Delivery Managers can provide a quote if further years' bookkeeping is required. A school cannot be audited unless all the fund account paperwork has been posted/recorded.

Available to:	Diamond Optional	Gold Optional	Silver Optional	Bronze Optional
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Fund Account Audit (and additional accounts) – Face-to-Face service

This service provides reassurance to the School and Governors that financial compliance is in place for each additional account. Recommendations will be provided if there are areas that could be improved. A certificate will be issued to each school that achieves the audit standard. The price quoted is for an audit for 1 year. Each additional year that requires auditing will need to be charged. Please contact the Service Delivery Managers for a quote.

NB: The fund account must be maintained throughout the year and audited annually.

Available to:	Diamond Optional	Gold Optional	Silver Optional	Bronze Optional
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Additional services

We can support schools and settings with all areas of their financial management and reporting. It is not possible to provide a comprehensive list, but we would be pleased to discuss your specific requirements.