



# Property Services to Schools Agreement 2023/24

[gdbe-elevate.org](https://gdbe-elevate.org)

# School Buildings & Estates Property Services 2023-24

## Introduction

We are delighted to be able to offer our Property Services to Schools Agreement (PSSA) for 2023-24 and hope that your Church school will subscribe to the agreement for the forthcoming financial year.

Our key objective of our property agreement is to ensure that governors and school leaders are able to access high quality, professional advice in relation to your school buildings and property matters so you can make sound decisions which will help to maintain your school estate for now and the future.

We know that school budgets are under significant pressure so we have frozen the cost of subscription fees at the same level as last year's agreement whilst maintaining the core service and support that you expect.

We are grateful to all our Voluntary Aided Schools who choose to subscribe to our PSSA agreement every year; by subscribing you help us to continue to offer a valuable service which is tailored specifically for Church schools in our Diocese.

We look forward to working with you in 2023-24,



**Canon Alex Tear, FCCT**

**Diocesan Director of Education**



# Overview of our services for 2023-24

## Support included in the property agreement

The Property Services to Schools Service Agreement (PSSA) document in this brochure is designed specifically for Voluntary Aided (VA) Schools.

- Support & Advice to assist with the upkeep and development of your school buildings and estate
- Financial Management of Capital Building Projects
- Advice and guidance with bidding for capital grants, initiating and completing building projects
- Guidance on how to reduce your school's carbon emissions in line with the net zero carbon target for 2030
- Support with reporting to Department for Education
- Pooling/Clustering of DFC capital funds
- School Land and Trusteeship Issues



# Overview of our services for 2023-24

## What Governors can expect from the service

The Property Services to Schools Service Agreement (PSSA) document in this brochure is for Voluntary Aided (VA) Schools.

- Impartial advice, appropriate up-to-date information and guidance
- High quality services delivered to a high professional standard
- Understanding of each school's individual needs and distinctive nature
- Discretion and confidentiality where required
- School visits to review projects and condition of buildings
- Access to support and advice by e-mail and phone
- Integrity in accordance with Christian gospel values



# 1. Maintenance and development of your school buildings

## What Governors can expect from the service

- Advice on appointing property consultants, architects, quantity surveyors and other professionals
- Advice and assistance (in conjunction with your building consultant) with completing an Asset Management Plan (AMPs) for your school premises
- Advice and guidance on statutory compliance matters including support with the use of STATlog, an online compliance tool designed especially for site managers: <https://www.statlog.co.uk/benefits/site-managers>

## The use of Property Consultants

We expect governing bodies to receive proper and sustainable support from a professional property consultancy firm such as DHP, Synergy, Thomas & Thomas, WYG, Hampshire Property Services or another competent consultant experienced in working with schools and education sector funding.

**Please note that the PSSA does not include these professional consultancy services.**



## 2. Financial Management of Building and Capital Projects

What Governors can expect from the service

**Administration of the financial aspects of all building projects whether including Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), Devolved Formula Capital (DFC), Schools Condition Allowance (SCA), insurance claims or from other sources.**

- Obtaining Department for Education (DfE), Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Local Authority (LA) approvals
- Administering payments to contractors and professionals on behalf of the Governing Body
- Claiming and administering grant aid
- Compiling end of year submissions of grant spending for ESFA monitoring
- Liaising with and submitting returns to the DfE and ESFA
- Collecting governors' 10% and other contributions
- Monitoring the governors' available Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) and submitting end-of-year returns to the ESFA
- Banking of grant funds including DFC. Monitoring cash flows to ensure all grant aid is fully utilized



### 3. Advice and guidance with bidding for capital grants, and initiating and completing projects



#### What Governors can expect from the service

- Advice on and preparation of funding applications to the ESFA (and other funding bodies) for initiatives such as the Priority School Building Programme (PSBP)
- Advice and guidance in preparing applications for School Capital Allocation (SCA) funding projects
- A commitment to incrementally reduce your schools carbon emissions by working with Decarbonisation initiatives and grant funding opportunities.
- Attending client and governors' meetings during normal working hours in connection with major building projects.
- Dealing with issues as necessary when they arise between client meetings by Teams conferencing, email or phone
- Making sure that governors know what support and services to expect from their consultants and contractors etc.
- Guidance and training regarding building projects (what to expect, how a school functions alongside a building site, governor engagement and support for the head, learning from the experience of others etc.)
- Advice on the appointment of other professionals including planning consultants.



## 4. Pooling, Banking, Interest payments and receipts



### What Governors can expect from the service

The Diocese will continue the schemes to allow governors to pool DFC and manage this on behalf of governing bodies including:

- A **contingencies pool** allowing governors to borrow DFC to pay for unexpected emergency work in order to prevent immediate closure of the school premises or to address an immediate high risk to health and safety.
- The contribution levels remain at £2,000 for a school with less than 150 pupils and £4,000 for all other primary schools.
- Requests to use pooled DFC will be assessed by the Property Team. Only two schools have had to utilize this facility since it was introduced in 2007. The pools will operate immediately from the start of the financial year

A **general pool** for DFC where governors saving for a large project in a future year or when DFC will not be spent in the year 2023/24 or that would be lost under the 3 year use-it-or-lose-it rule. This DFC may be used by other governing bodies to advance projects. The maximum governors may borrow is normally one year's allocation of DFC should there be sufficient DFC available in the pool.





## 5. Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) Allocations



### What Governors can expect from the service

In the event of a Government change to DFC which would affect the governors' ability to spend DFC in either pool we will contact the governing body and agree how the DFC should be returned and spent. In the event of a Government change that would affect the governors' ability to repay DFC, the governors could repay DFC from any new type of capital grant or from other sources of capital.

The governors' 10% and other contributions towards the cost of building projects and fee charges under the PSSA can be a significant sum. **Governors are required to pay within the 21 day period following the start of the project.** We reserve the right to charge interest from the last date payment should have been made to the date cleared funds are received in our bank. The rate of interest charged will be the same as the rate earned on a school's deposits.

If payment of 10% and other contributions is made outside the 21 day period on two or more consecutive occasions the governors may be required to make all anticipated future 10% and other contributions in advance. If they fail to do so contractors' invoices may be referred to the governors for payment.



## 6. Assistance with school land issues and site trustees



### What Governors can expect from the service

- Advice on site ownership, **trust** deeds and trustees.
- Advice on control and use of school premises.
- Research into archival material relating to trust deeds, sites and premises matters.

Please note: Any fees incurred **from additional specialist advice from lawyers and other professionals** in connection with a building project, will be charged to the project.

### **The GDBE may choose to seek its own legal advice on matters to do with sites and premises.**

- Governors should also consult the DBE if they contemplate long term use of school premises by an external organisation; for example for a nursery or pre-school. Officers will advise on appropriate arrangements.
- ***It should be noted that school governors are not able in law to grant rights in land such as a lease or an easement.***

Short term casual lettings are permissible and do not require Diocesan approval.



# General help and advice



## What Governors can expect from the service

- Teams conferencing, telephone and email access and advice relating to the areas specified in this agreement
- A visit by a Schools Buildings Officer if requested and required
- Support in resolving difficulties and disputes associated with services provided under the PSSA.

### ***In return, we expect schools and their governors to:***

- Keep the School Buildings Team informed of relevant developments at the school or to the school site.
- Comply with the legal requirement to obtain written approval in advance of undertaking any capital works, changing the access to the site or a change in the age range of children attending the school.
- Notify DBE officers immediately of any significant Health and Safety issues.
- Be available for meetings or visits and give appropriate notice when requesting visits, meetings, project approvals etc.
- Pay all invoices promptly within the specified time.
- Must mandate the diocese to receive grant aid, including DFC, paid by the DfE/ESFA.



# The School Buildings Team



**Sarah Bourke**

**Lead School Buildings  
Officer**



**Mark Philpott**

**Interim School Buildings  
Officer**



**Heather Broadbent**

**Interim Capital Projects  
Officer**

# The Benefits of the Diocesan Services



- The School Buildings team has a proven track record of securing significant grant aid from government programmes
- The School Buildings team comprises highly experienced staff with significant project and financial experience in connection with school buildings and a record of project delivery and adding value
- The cost of the property service has been frozen at last year's subscription rates to ensure it remains affordable and good value
- The School Buildings team is part funded from the PSSA and the matching scheme for academies, and generally receives no financial support from parishes or other sources. A high level of participation in the PSSA is crucial to the GDBE's property services and support to schools which all VA schools benefit

# Our Subscription charges for 2023-24



- We know that school budgets remain under significant pressure and that every penny of school funding makes a difference to the education you provide for your children
- As a result, we have decided to fix our subscription charge at the same rate for all of our Voluntary Aided schools as in 2022-23
- For small schools with less than 120 pupils we charge a simple flat rate of £250 (ex VAT) per year which provides a full affordable service at excellent value
- For schools with more than 120 pupils, we calculate your subscription by using the number of pupils on roll (NOR)\* for your school and multiply this by £2.19 per pupil for example, if you have 121 pupils on roll, your subscription charge will be  $121 \times £2.19 = £264.99$  (ex VAT)
- Your school will be automatically sent an invoice for our service unless you specifically choose to terminate your agreement – the VAT is able to be reclaimed by VA schools

\*We use Get Information About Schools (GIAS) to certify the NOR



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Diocese of **Guildford** 

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