

11. Monitoring Controls

Under the Articles of Management, Boards of Management are responsible for the day to day running of the school with the Trustees / Patrons bearing ultimate responsibility. In practice, the Board of Management delegates much of the day to day administration of the school to the Principal. It is the responsibility of Trustees / Patrons to ensure that adequate controls and procedures are in place to ensure accountability and transparency.

Monitoring by the Department of Education and Science

The Department of Education and Science provides significant levels of public money to the Voluntary sector and since the implementation of the Education Act, 1998, it has a right of access to school accounts to the extent that they relate to State funds. To exercise this right, the DES is funding the operation of the Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU) under the aegis of the JMB. The objective of the FSSU is to provide assurance to the DES that schools are accounting for all monies received. In effect the FSSU gives the DES a form of monitoring control over the schools to which it has provided funding.

To exercise this control, a copy of school accounts will be sent to the Financial Support Services Unit each year. Trustees will be requested to submit an annual Declaration confirming that school accounts have been approved together with background information in respect of any auditor / accountant's report and a letter from the Board of Management indicating that all recommended accounting and control procedures have been complied with. The DES may also consider rotational reviews of schools over a five year cycle with particular emphasis on bigger schools.

Monitoring by Trustees and Boards of Management

Trustees bear ultimate responsibility for the operation of the schools and devolve power to the Boards of Management including certain financial functions. Monitoring controls by Trustees include:

- A system of budgetary control
- Approval of annual budgets
- Approval of annual accounts
- Approval of Capital Expenditure (including major repairs)
- Approval of proposed loans, bank overdrafts, hire purchase and lease agreements
- In particular, Trustees will focus on the requirements that
 - Financial reporting is timely, responsible, accountable and a true statement of the activities of the school
 - Financial liabilities are minimised and do not exceed approved limits
 - All income and expenditure from whatever source is reflected in the school's annual financial report
 - Best practice is being implemented by the Board of Management

Monitoring at Board of Management and School Level

Monitoring controls at school level will include the following:

- Review and approval of annual accounts by Board of Management and Trustees
- Review and approval of the annual school budget by the Board of Management and Trustees
- Review of monthly accounts and comparison of budget versus actual income and expenditure by the finance sub-committee and Board of Management
- Review of annual accounts and comparison of budget versus actual income and expenditure by the Board of Management
- Approval and control over the opening of bank accounts by the Board of Management and the use of bank mandates to determine authorised signatories and approved cheque signing limits
- Audit of annual accounts by registered auditors for all schools in accordance with procedures laid down in these Guidelines
- Ensure all transactions comply with all legal and Department of Education and Science requirements