

Schools Forum

16 January 2023

Schools Closedown 2022/23 Timetable

This report is for information

1. Recommendations:

That Schools Forum members:

- 1.1 Note the contents of the report

2. Purpose

- 2.1 To advise members of the closedown deadlines for maintained schools for the 2022/23 annual accounts.

3. Report Details

- 3.1 The Government deadline for local authorities to publish their audited accounts is July 2023. It is, therefore, critical for all stakeholders to work towards this new deadline.

- 3.2 Whilst it is acknowledged that the schools Budget/Finance Officer may complete some of the tasks on the schools' behalf it is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to ensure all tasks are completed and that deadlines for submissions are adhered to. This may involve opening the school during the Easter break if there is no remote access.

- 3.3 A summary of the critical deadlines is set out below. Unless stated otherwise all deadlines are 1pm on the dates stated.

- 10th February 2023 - Leasing returns
- 10th March 2023 – Timetable of Closedown Templates
- 24th March 2023 - Final Capital return

- 3rd April 2023 – Copy of Bank Statement - showing clearly the bank balance at the end of the day 31st March 2023. If

schools do not have electronic access, please liaise with your banks to ensure this deadline is met. We cannot process your Excel Closedown Template until we have this.

- 13th April 2023 – Year End Excel Closedown Template.

- 3.4 In order to comply with external audit and achieve the closedown deadlines set by the authority, the Schools Strategic Finance Unit (SSFU) will need to have the Excel Closedown Templates as and when they are completed. This will allow sufficient time for returns to be checked, queries resolved and uploaded to the Authority's General Ledger.
- 3.5 SSFU are asking schools to advise of the exact date that the Excel Closedown Templates will be submitted by either School Finance staff /Bursars or external Budget Officers. Please can this information be provided by 10th March 2023 to schools_financialservices@sandwell.gov.uk.
- 3.6 Unfortunately failure to meet the authority deadline may require setting an earlier closedown deadline in future, similar to the 2017/18 closedown process where a February actual and a March estimate was used, and submission of the Excel Closedown Template was in March. The authority however wishes to avoid this as it is recognised this causes additional work for all stakeholders involved in the process.

4. Recommendations

That Schools Forum

- 4.1 Note the contents of the report

Elaine Taylor – Finance Business Partner – Children's Services

Date: 09/01/2023

Contact Officer: Elaine Taylor