

TPM⁴Schools Newsletter

January 2017

Diocesan Offices, Clayton House, Walker Office Park, Blackburn, BB1 2QE.

For all enquiries, Mon - Fri, 8am - 5pm **TPM Office: 01254 958850**

Fax number for Job Requests, Mon - Fri, 8am - 5pm **TPM Fax Number: 01254 695975**

Email address for attention during office hours, Mon - Fri, 8am - 5pm **info@dbeservices.co.uk**

Emergencies outside office hours and Bank Holidays **01254 958858**

Visit our website at: **www.tpm4.com**



Let's enjoy today

If on the 1st January 2016 you'd put a bet on May; Trump; Leicester; Brexit and for good measure England whitewashing the Wallabies at rugby in their own backyard and winning every game in the year, I suspect that you may have already retired or at least have a very comfortable nest egg when you do.

We all spend a lot of our time preparing, planning and trying to anticipate the future. The future however is not ours and the longer you travel along life's journey the more you come to experience "black swan" events i.e. those things which are life changing but you could never have anticipated or planned for before they happen and can only explain by looking back at them. Some of the events of 2016 would easily fall into that category. The often-quoted ones are the First World War, Google and 9/11.

If you look back over your own life, your family, or your school and think about the things you worried about or planned for at some point in the past, you probably now think why did I

worry or, all that planning came to nothing because other things outside your control changed. Twelve months ago, the Government Policy was that everything would become an Academy by 2022; now there are other priorities and whilst there will be more Academies and the Government's desire for more hasn't gone away, it is no longer the single driving force. Now it's the new grammar school!

Those of you with small children may well have witnessed recently, after having been told by your children that they must have this or that for Christmas, a few days afterwards even though they got it, it is not the priority it was before Christmas. You may have come back to school thinking that some of the worries you had before Christmas are no longer important ... or perhaps they have now become urgent!

We spend an awful lot of time planning for the future and worrying about it. That's not to say we shouldn't have visions, dreams and aspirations but we also need to enjoy the present and enjoy the only thing we can have; the here and now.

I hope that whatever this New Year brings for you, your school, your family, your friends; whatever your dreams and aspirations and new year resolutions that you will be able to find time to enjoy today and whatever tomorrow brings; and rejoice in the what is, rather than the what might be.

I hope you have a very prosperous and happy New Year and enjoy the term ahead.
Best wishes, Peter

Who to call in an out-of-hours emergency?

Security or Fire Alarm problem

You need to ring your supplier. The number should be on the alarm panel but can also be found on our website: www.tpm4.com/emergency-contact-details/

Boiler problem

Please contact your boiler company direct. Their emergency number can be found on our website: www.tpm4.com/emergency-contact-details/

Everything other than Boilers and Alarms Call 01254 958858

(If you can't resolve your out-of-hours emergency please call or message Peter, our Chief Executive, on 07970 923141)

TPM School Portal

Since launching the TPM School portal in 2015, all school service reports are now uploaded and fully accessible to schools and you will also have access to your DBE Statements. The portal was further extended in May 2016 and we now upload all reactive invoices to the portal, for payment by the school. We have uploaded more than 2000 invoices in just 7 months!

This system is working well and early teething troubles have been resolved. Those schools who annotate their invoice records with a payment date, or 'payment organised' date, will not have heard from any contractor over the past few months. This is because we are now able to advise them when an invoice has been processed by the school, without troubling them. However, for those schools who do not include this information and where invoices appear to be overdue, we do have to ask the contractor to contact the school for a payment date as we cannot provide that information.

It is most important that we have the correct contact email address for the school as this is where your automatic notifications will come when something new is added to your portal. If you have changed email or would prefer your portal notifications to go to a different email address, please let Nicole know, nicole@dbeservices.co.uk

Should contractors contact you regarding invoices for jobs placed through DBE Services but which are not on your portal, please refer them to us so that we can look into this. Please do not ask contractors to re-send invoices as this may incur admin charges which will inevitably be passed on to the school. Please let us check this out for you in the first instance to avoid incurring any additional charges. Often, we discover the reason an invoice is not in your portal is that it was returned due to being incorrectly presented, or we have simply never received it.

We do ask all our schools to process contractor invoices for payment as soon as received please, to ensure they are paid within a 30 day period wherever possible. We also ask that invoices are not left unprocessed for long periods such as school holidays.

Did you know that you can upload useful documents of your own to the school portal?

This is another benefit of the portal that schools may wish to use. If you need assistance with this or any other aspect of the TPM School portal, please let us know. We can either advise by telephone or arrange a visit if that would be more beneficial.

Pesky Pests?



Did you know that we can arrange a pest control survey for your school, **free of charge**? This would be undertaken by Rentokil who will survey the school and grounds for visible signs of pests and provide a report for the school to consider.

If this is of interest to your school, please contact Oliver@dbeservices.co.uk

Ensuring Contractors Sign In

We are very insistent with Contractors that they must sign in and sign out when visiting a school. We know this accords with practice in most schools and often the signing in and out provides evidence of when the Contractor was there, if invoices are disputed on the basis of the time the Contractor claims to have taken to do the work.

Whilst we stress to Contractors that they should sign in, it must be the school's responsibility to ensure that they do. We have recently experienced Contractors arriving before office staff and being admitted to the building by the site supervisor and not being asked to sign in. We have also experienced them being given visitor badges but without any member of the office staff having knowledge that they are in school. This can cause several issues not least on one occasion where we chased the company because school advised us that the Contractor had not arrived only to discover that the Contractor had been on site for over an hour having been let in by the site supervisor.

Please could you ensure that whoever lets the Contractor into the school requires them to sign in and to sign out in the normal place. It's not only just good practice it can save an awful lot of time both for the school and for us if disputes arise.

New Year Resolution to save money on school buildings? ... Simple checks could save you ££££££££

Over recent months we have kept a list of occasions where a callout could perhaps have been avoided with just a small amount of investigation. No names, no pack drill...we know how easily this can happen in the heat of the moment during a busy school day but here is our top ten list of Call-outs that could probably have been avoided.



The automatic front doors will not work.

The attending engineer found that the power to the doors had been turned off. This was rectified by simply pressing the switch. Please do check that relevant switches are on before calling. Labeling switches may help if you don't know what they operate.

The automatic doors keep opening and closing on their own.

The cause was found to be pot plants placed close to the doors. Whenever they moved they activated the sensor. This is a common issue particularly at Christmas when many schools experience alarm activations early in the morning caused by decorations moving when the heating system fires up.

The fridge in the kitchen is not working or coming on at all.

This was simply because it had been turned off at the plug. Always worth checking first!

The fridge is not working properly - the bottom is wet.

Most fridges have automatic defrosting mechanisms which drain through the back of the fridge. It is always worth checking the drain hole for obvious blockages before calling an engineer.

The water fountain nozzle is spraying water at odd angles and needs replacing.

The engineer found that somebody had put a piece of blue tac up the nozzle. If something looks unusual it is more likely to be an introduced fault than a fault in the system.

The water heaters in the toilets are not working and need replacing.

The water heaters were at ceiling height but the fact that they did not have any lights indicating they were connected to the electricity supply suggested, as was the case, that somebody had turned them off.

The door to the boiler house won't open and the mortice lock is jammed.

In the absence of the site supervisor it transpired that the school was simply using the wrong key. We recommend that keys are well labelled to remove the guess work when those who normally use the keys are not around.

The boiler will not fire and there is no heating in school.

Whilst this is potentially a school closing scenario, simple reasons included an empty oil tank, whilst simple solutions included pressing the re-set button!

The infant toilets are leaking.

When the contractor failed to identify any plumbing fault he nevertheless had to charge for the call-out. School later discovered that it was not the toilet leaking after all but rather an infant boy who had been relieving himself on the floor.

There is a strong chemical smell coming from the toilets.

The contractor quickly identified the source of the smell. A rag impregnated with cleaning product had been deposited in the bin.

Despite the simplicity of the solutions, all these incidents legitimately incurred call-out charges. We thought it worthwhile raising these real issues if only to demonstrate that simple checks in the first instance really can save you money.

Ultimately though, our service is to assist you whenever you need a contractor. However, we do rely on the best information that you can give us so that we can determine the urgency and best type of contractor to deal with the problem.

Make New Year savings - it couldn't be easier!

Just by recommending a school to join the DBE Services TPM⁴ Schools scheme, you will save a **massive 50%** on next year's management fee when they join the scheme... and if that were not incentive enough, the joining school will also get their first season at half the cost!

Please note this % rate is a time limited offer for recommendations before 28th February 2017. If you would like to recommend a school or discuss further, please contact Peter on 07970 923141 or email:

peter@dbeservices.co.uk

Offer applies to current scheme members only.



Recommend a trusted contractor

If you know, or have used, a trustworthy contractor, who always provides excellent service and great value for money, we are always keen to hear about them. It may be that they meet our contractor requirements and could potentially be added to our supplier list. Just let us have their contact details and we will take it from there.

“The biggest real term cuts in school budgets for a generation”

The announcement in December about how the new funding formula for schools will be applied was, as with all political rhetoric, hailed as a good thing and maybe for some individual schools it might be. But what it did not say was that by 2020 funding for schools will have been reduced by £3bn. The only way most schools will be able to absorb the cuts will be by reducing staff and increasing class sizes.

We have very little, if any, influence on the government's funding policy but we do believe that there are savings to be made in the cost of running and maintaining school buildings. We have many years of experience in supporting schools with capital and revenue work and saving them money. We have never believed that it was a good use of public money for schools simply to do everything “they were told they had to do”. We are appalled at the way that schools are told by various organisations and companies that “the legislation says”; “it is statutory”; “you have to do it - if you don't you could go to prison”; “you can't use local traders unless they are on an LA approved list”; all of which, for many things, is simply not true. It is likely there is guidance, some of which is produced by contractor's professional bodies with all the potential vested interest that can bring; a British or European standard; a need to do due diligence; a duty of care but almost always a lack of clear guidance which places the onus on the Head and Governors to seek good advice.

We have no vested interest, we are owned by six educational charities, and happily offer free independent advice to any school. We see every school as unique so, to get advice specific to your school, you only need to ask. If you would like to talk through your schools needs just contact peter@dbeservices.co.uk and he will sort it for you. If a conversation does nothing else, it will at least give you the opportunity to reconfirm that you are getting the best for your school from your current providers.

Recruitment and Supply – Heads/Teachers/Non-Teachers

Throughout 2016 the number of schools using the services of **ITN Mark Education**, our preferred recruitment partner, has continued to grow with several schools reporting successful recruitment of permanent and temporary teaching and leadership staff. To date their success rate of filling long term and permanent vacancies with high calibre teachers and support staff remains high, with the agency reporting a 95% success rate and positive feedback from head teachers.

The partnership aims to deliver a fair deal to both schools and candidates through its preferential terms. Their discounted fixed charge rates and the free handover fee arrangement means schools may take a candidate onto their own contract without being charged a fee after 13 weeks of working on supply.

ITN Mark Education's ongoing commitment to nurturing a successful partnership with DBE Services can be seen in their recent investment in additional staff at their Manchester HQ. Their team of specialist recruitment consultants has grown, with the addition of four new staff - **Paul Greenwood, Sofia Grossa, Kristie Hodson and Dylan Johnston**. Together with a growing specialist Leadership Recruitment Team and their Head Teacher Advisor who can deliver bespoke CPD to our schools, they provide a comprehensive recruitment package.

To discuss any of the services provided by ITN Mark Education please contact the team in Manchester:

Tel: 0333 333 9882 / 0161 369 4405

Email: DBEservices@itnmark.com

Web: <http://www.itnmark.com/dbeservices>