



School Debt Policy

Introduction

The schools governing body has a responsibility to have a debt recovery policy which ensures that appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school to receive all income to which it is entitled.

Aims and Objectives

- To ensure that the governing body complies with the Staffordshire Scheme for Financing Schools and Financial Regulations;
- To protect the delegated school budget;
- To apply this policy consistently to ensure debt is dealt with in a timely manner;
- To ensure further goods or services are not supplied to parents/carers or customers who have not paid for items already received or used.

The debt recovery process

St Thomas CE(VA) Primary has their own procedures in place which are used to collect income. However, in the event that payment is not forthcoming then an official invoice will be raised on the County Council's finance system which will lead to the Council's debt recovery procedures as follows:

- Invoice raised with payment terms of 28 days
- A reminder is sent 3 days after the 28 days has expired
- A final notice is issued before the school can request the debt recovery officer to contact the parent/carer at their home address (minimum value £150) or the matter referred onto the courts (minimum value £250).

Dinner Money

School meals should be paid for in advance via the online ParentPay system (or in cash via PayPoint). A maximum arrears limit of £10 is available on ParentPay dinner money accounts however this should only be relied upon in cases where a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance.

Debt advice letters will be sent home on a weekly basis when a ParentPay dinner money account goes into arrears.

Children may not be provided with a school lunch where the cost of the meal takes the ParentPay account beyond the £10 arrears limit. Until the account is returned to credit parents should provide a packed lunch for their child.

Where a child frequently presents for a school meal without available funds on the ParentPay account to cover the cost, the Headteacher may inform social services as these parents are failing in their duty of care by not providing food for their children at lunchtime

Breaktime Snack Service

Snacks will only be served when there is sufficient credit (ie not in arrears) available on a child's ParentPay dinner money account to cover the cost.

Extended school activities - Care Club

Care club fees should be settled via ParentPay, either in advance or at the latest within 7 days of a session being taken. The following action will be taken in the event of non payment:

1. A debt reminder letter will be issued.
2. Follow up reminders will be sent weekly thereafter.
3. After 30 days, for outstanding debts above £60, an official County Council debtor invoice will be raised.
4. Future use of the Care Club facility may be denied whilst a debt of £60 or above remains outstanding after 30 days.

Extended school activities - Breakfast Club

The daily breakfast charge should ideally be settled through the ParentPay system either in advance or at the latest within 7 days of a session being taken. The following action will be taken in the event of non payment:

1. A debt reminder letter will be issued.
2. Follow up reminders will be sent weekly thereafter.
3. After 30 days, for outstanding debts above £25, an official County Council debtor invoice will be raised.
4. Future use of the breakfast club facility may be denied whilst a debt of £25 or above remains outstanding after 30 days.

Music tuition

Music tuition fees should be paid termly in advance through Parent Pay. Parents will be advised each term how many teaching weeks there will be in the following term and by what date fees should be fully paid.

Non payment will result in lessons being withdrawn.

Board and lodging on residential visits

The board and lodging element of a residential visit can be charged to parents/carers and they are notified of the cost in advance and are given the opportunity to pay in instalments should they wish.

Payment must be made in full or a payment plan agreed with the Headteacher before the departure date or the child will not be allowed to attend.

Remissions

In some cases governors have agreed that certain categories of pupils are not liable for the fee or are eligible for a reduced fee for music tuition or residential visits. This is included within the Charging and Remissions Policy (reviewed annually).

Lettings

Contracts for lettings of the school premises will be drawn up as necessary between the school and the client in line with the charges and remissions policy.

Failure to pay on time will result in the debt being referred to the County Council for recovery. The letting agreement will be void and the client will be refused future hires.

Writing off debts

When all practical and cost effective methods of debt recovery have been exhausted by the County Council the school will be notified of the amount of debt that is considered to be irrecoverable.

The governing body will take into account the age and size of each debt and any advice from the County Council before making a decision to write off debt.

Approved by Governors: June 19

Reviewed by Governors: June 2020

Due for review: June 2021