



# School Debt Policy

As agreed by the Full Governing Body – 19 March 2020

## 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

**(It will be necessary to consider each of the recovery processes listed below in line with the governing body's charges and remissions policy and amend where applicable)**

St Michael's Primary School 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/customer at their home/ business address (minimum value £150) or the matter referred onto the courts (minimum value £250).

## **Dinner Money**

Payment for schools meals should be made via parent pay

The school office will reconcile each week the payments received to the meals ordered and any discrepancy will in the first instance result in a text to the parent/carer to request payment. Any parent/carer that has not made payment by the end of the weekend will be telephoned if the debt is in excess of £5

Governors have decided on the following policy regarding unpaid meals:

- A meal will be served irrespective of whether the parent has paid and a basic meal (sandwich) only will be provided to pupils where the parent has not paid and has a debt in excess of £5
- The cost of this meal will be added to the debt outstanding
- If payment is still not received within 5 school days then the parent/carer will be informed that the matter will be referred to the County Council and recovery action will be pursued.

Recovery of debts will be in accordance with the normal County Council policy as noted above.

## **Extended school activities**

Payment for extended school activities should be made in advance and clearly marked in a sealed envelope with the name of the child, amount and day/s that the care is required.

Accounts are reviewed on a weekly basis and statements will be sent out to parents/carers every half term. If in the event that payment has not been made then at the end of the week parents/carers will be sent a letter and email requesting payment.

Any non-payment will result in the parent/carer being informed that they can no longer use the facility and the debt will be referred onto the County Council for recovery.

## **Music tuition**

Music lessons are provided by the school at a charge to the parent/carer of a child. Parents/carers are informed of the cost upfront and have a commitment to pay for a term regardless of whether the child continues with the lessons.

A statement is sent to the parent/carer on a termly basis asking for payment 4 weeks before the end of the preceding term. If payment has not been received within 2 weeks, a further reminder is sent. In the event that no payment is received the debt will be referred onto the County Council for recovery and pupils will not be allowed to continue with lessons for the following term.

### **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 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 some or all of; extended school activities, 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.

