

# GREENFIELD NURSERY SCHOOL

## Charging and Remissions Policy Incorporating Debt Recovery Policy



Status:	Statutory
Date written/Reviewed:	January 2019
Date of Next Review:	January 2020
Approved By:	
Date:	

## **Greenfield Nursery School – Charging and Remissions Policy**

(based on the guidance provided in the 'Governors Guide to the Law')

At **Greenfield Nursery School** we recognise the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities can make towards the children's personal and social development eg cooking, short walking trips to the park or shops and special visitors. We aim to promote and provide such activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the children.

Any charge made by the school must meet the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1996. We endorse the guiding principles contained in the Act, in particular that no child from disadvantaged families should have his/her access to the curriculum limited and that no child will be prevented from taking part because of financial barriers.

In general, no charge can be made for admitting children to maintained schools. Where education is provided wholly or mainly during school hours, it must be free. However the school may charge for activities outside of school hours where these are not a necessary part of the curriculum. Fees for non-funded 2 year olds, however, are covered below in Child Care Charges.

### **Voluntary Contributions**

The Headteacher or Governing Body may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

- Any activity which takes place during school hours;
- School equipment;
- School funds generally.

The contribution must be genuinely voluntary and children whose parents/carers are unable or unwilling to contribute will not be discriminated against. Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity financially viable, then it will be cancelled. Parents will be charged for activities organised outside the school day (3 hour session).

### **Qualifying for remission or help with charges**

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the governing body has agreed that some activities and visits for which charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents/carers in particular circumstances.

### **Late collection of children**

Any child who is not collected from Nursery or Pre-school within a reasonable time at the end of the session, and without previous notification of an exceptional and good reason why the child is being collected late, will then be considered as requiring provision of care outside funded hours. Children remaining after the morning session will be cared for within our Lunch Club and the standard fee charged of £5. Children remaining after the afternoon session will be charged after the first 10 minutes at £1 a minute, as additional staff are required to provide for their care.

## Child Care Charges

Charges for child care will be reviewed regularly (at least annually) by the Governing Body. Fees reflect the cost required to provide high quality, safe and stimulating care for each child which will be sustainable.

- The first payment will be for one half term's fees *in advance* and are due on or before the first day of that half term. Payments are accepted through parent/carer workplace voucher schemes and via school online banking.
- When paying by an employer childcare voucher scheme, payment of fees must be set up to be received by the first working day of the half term.
- If fees are not paid by the first day of the half term, the child's place will be temporarily withdrawn until payment has been made.
- A late payment charge of £20 will be added to outstanding fees.
- A timeline for collecting fees is in place and is strictly adhered to. Where fees are paid persistently late or not at all and no explanation given, we will be forced to terminate the child's place with immediate effect.  
\* There may be rare exceptions at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- If parents wish to purchase additional sessions (over and above the government funded hours per week) parents/carers must complete a booking form, giving 24 hours' notice, and make the required payment online.
- One month's written notice is required from parents/carers if a child is leaving Greenfield Nursery or requires an alteration to existing requirements.
- We are unable to make refunds.
- Charges for Breakfast and lunch club also need to be booked and paid for half termly in advance. The charge is £5 per session. If parents/carers are working a certain number of hours they may be entitled to tax credits to help meet the cost of this care.
- An invoice or Receipt will be issued for Child Care Payments

## **Greenfield Nursery School – Debt Recovery Policy**

(based in guidance set out in Financial Handbook for Schools and any other legal regulations)

**Greenfield Nursery School** will take all reasonable measures to vigorously collect debts as part of its management of public funds. A debt will be written off only after all reasonable measures (commensurate with the size and nature of the debt) have been taken to recover it.

### Debt collection Procedure in respect of Child Care Charges

- Initial reminder will be informal and made either in person (when a parent/carer comes to collect/drop off the child) or by telephone. Normally, Admin will undertake this having built up a good relationship with parents/carers.
- If the amount is still outstanding the following week further contact will be made with the parents/carers reminding them of the outstanding amount and method of payment.
- A first formal reminder letter will be issued after 2 weeks from any informal reminder/date of supply.
- A second reminder letter will be issued in 3 weeks after the first reminder letter.
- Irrespective of the time the debt has been overdue, in the First week back after each half term parents/carers are advised that their child's place is at risk until settlement is made.
- The school will keep an accurate record of outstanding debts, including date of supply, responsible adult involved, amount, reminder dates and a copy of the letters sent.

### Debts arising from Hiring and other services

The terms of hiring must be stated in the signed Letting agreement and are required to be adhered to. A record will be kept of all such agreements including the date, value, due date and identity of the debtor. Admin at the School will ensure payments are made on time. Failure to make payment as agreed will be referred to the Headteacher who will decide whether an extension can be permitted or the facility withdrawn.

*(Monitoring of outstanding debts may be differentiated by type eg if Pre-School debts prove more of a problem than those for lettings of premises then the frequency and degree of monitoring should reflect this)*

All correspondence and invoices should state the date by which payment is due and provide the online banking details (and reference where relevant).

### Costs of debt recovery

Where the school incurs material additional costs in recovering a debt then the School will decide whether to seek to recover such costs from the debtor. This decision and its basis will be recorded. The debtor will be formally advised that they will be required to pay the additional costs incurred by the school in recovering the debt.

Reporting of outstanding debt levels

Admin staff will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is known/can be determined at any time.

The Headteacher will report bad debts to the Governing Body at least annually and they will review the level of outstanding debts to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debts is effective. Approval may be given to 'write off' small uncollected amounts.

**Bad debts**

- The governing Body will not write-off any debt belonging to the school which exceeds £500. Any sums above this will be referred for formal agreement of the County Council's Finance Director obtained before writing off (through SERCO). If any debtor has a number of debts which together exceed the write off limit then these will be treated as a total amount.
- A formal record of any debts written off will be maintained and will this be retained for 7 years.
- Greenfield Nursery School will not initiate any legal action to recover debts, but will refer any debts which it has not been able to collect (unless a decision to write-off the debt is demonstrably a reasonable course of action) to the County Secretary to consider taking legal or other action to recover the debt.
- The school will NOT write-off any debt belonging to the County Council or another party. If in doubt as to the appropriate action to collect any such debts, the school will seek advice promptly from officers of the County Council.

**This policy was agreed at the FGB in February 2019 and will be reviewed in Spring 2020 (unless a change is required before this)**

**Signed:** .....  
**Chair of Governors**

**Date:** .....