



Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Debt Recovery Policy

1. Aims

- To outline the school's procedures regarding payment of services
- To work with parents to ensure a smooth, efficient operation for payment of services
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of school staff and parents

2. Rational

The school cannot sustain debt of any amount as this has a direct impact on the school budget. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents. The school is committed to ensuring the best use of public funds and needs support from parents to ensure that this is maintained.

The school is not obliged to provide services including Early Bird Club, Out of School Club and school dinners where payment is not forthcoming or where authorization for free school meals has not been received. Some schools are known not to provide a meal in these circumstances.

3. General Requirements

The Governing Body will take all reasonable measures to vigorously collect debts as part of its management of public funds. The school's debt recovery policy will observe the relevant financial regulations and guidance set out in the Scheme for Financing Schools and any other legal requirements.

3.1 Acceptable 'Credit Period'

In general payment for all goods and services supplied by the school should be collected in advance.

3.2 Early Bird Club and Out of School Club

As per the agreement and offer letter signed by the parent/carer, we recommend that payment is made a minimum of one week in advance and a credit balance is maintained at all times. Payment is required for all days booked even if the child does not attend, the exceptions being when school is closed. Should the child no longer require a place the parent/carer is to advise the school office at least 24 hours in advance, otherwise the parent/carer is still liable for charges. Should the parent/carer fall into arrears, the club will withdraw the child's place.

3.3 School Lunch

We ask that payment is made a minimum of one week in advance, using Live Kitchen, and a credit balance is maintained at all times. To enable the service to be efficiently planned, the school requires two weeks notice to change arrangements.

Should the parent/carer fall into arrears and fail to make a payment after a first reminder letter, a further letter will be sent advising the parent/carer that their child will no longer be entitled to a school lunch and that they should send their child to school with a packed lunch. Failure of the parent/carer

to provide their child with a packed lunch may result in involving the appropriate agency who will be responsible for an overview of your child's welfare.

3.4 Parents/carers may choose to pay via direct debit on Live Kitchen. If notification is received in school from Live Kitchen that the direct debit has not been paid, your child will no longer be entitled to a school lunch and you should send your child to school with a packed lunch. Failure to do so may result in a referral to an appropriate agency who will be responsible for an overview of your child's welfare.

4. Reporting of Outstanding Debt Levels

The Headteacher will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is regularly monitored. Suitable records will be maintained to detail individual debts and the total value of debt to the school.

4.1 Debt Recovery Procedures

Where payment from the parent/carer has not been received within the above acceptable credit period the following process should be applied.

First 'Overdue Payment' Reminder Letter

An initial reminder letter will be sent home, on Monday, requesting the account be credited with one week's full amount by the Wednesday of that week, warning that their child's club/lunch will be cancelled if payment is not received.

Second 'Overdue Payment' Reminder Letter (Warning Letter)

If full payment is not received by that Wednesday, Letter Two will be sent home advising their child's Early Bird Club/Out of School Club/school lunch place HAS been cancelled. Payment or a repayment plan must be made by Friday. A follow up phone call will be made to the parent/carer as they will need to make other arrangements.

Third (Final) 'Overdue Payment' Reminder Letter (combined amount equaling £50plus)

If by the following Monday no payment or response is made, Letter Three will be sent home advising this is a Final Reminder and payment must be received immediately otherwise the Council's Legal Service will be contacted.

5 Staff Debt Recovery

Staff debts can accumulate from staff school lunches they have taken. A standard Live Kitchen letter will be emailed on Monday advising of the debt. By the following Monday if the debt is still outstanding the same letter will be handed to them in person in the strictest of confidence and a school lunch will not be provided until the debt is paid in full.

6. Negotiation of Repayment Terms

Debtors are expected to settle the amount owed by a single payment as soon as possible after receiving the initial 'overdue payment' reminder.

However, if people are unable to pay;

The school may reduce or cancel a debt in certain circumstances. A sensitive approach to debt recovery will be carried out. An appointment with the Headteacher must be made as a decision regarding non-payment can only be made following a face to face meeting.

A debtor request for 'repayment terms' may be negotiated at the discretion of the Headteacher. A record of all such agreements entered into will be retained. In all cases, a letter will be issued to the debtor confirming the agreed terms for repayment. The settlement period should be the shortest that is judged reasonable. The Headteacher will decide whether any debtor who has been granted extended settlement terms will not be offered any further 'credit' and in future will be required to pay in advance.

7. Costs of Debt Recovery

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

8. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every year, or before if necessary.

Signed: Mr M McDonald

Monday – Check all accounts
Letter goes out to all parents with arrears
All debts over one week payment are also followed by a phone call
Wednesday – check debt account
Letter Two goes out to all parents still in arrears followed by a phone call advising parent that the issued has been escalated
Friday – check debt account
Letter Three goes out to all parents still in arrears followed by a phone call