

Saltergate Junior School



Debt Recovery Policy

PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY:

MRS M E OXER: HEADTEACHER
Mrs a Webber: CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

Revision Date	Revision Version	Previous Revision Date	Previous Version	Summery of Changes
10/12/13	New Policy			
Spring 2015	1	10/12/13	New Policy	None

This policy relates to money collected by the school for items set out in the Saltersgate Junior School Charging Policy.

This policy relates only to contributions for school lunches, residential visits, music charges and lettings, the only non-voluntary payments that the school collects. Where appropriate, this debt collection model will be used for any other monies the school wishes to collect in the future.

Within this policy, the use of the term 'parent' shall relate equally to parents/guardians and/or carers.

In individual cases of hardship, the headteacher and/or School Business Manager may, at their discretion, agree a repayment plan with parents in order to recover a debt. In the event that an agreed repayment plan is not adhered to, the conditions laid out in the remainder of this policy will apply.

School Lunches

Payment for school meals is expected to be made online using the schools payment system ParentPay.com in advance, in full, for the full week/term. Any payments made over the counter will still be entered online by admin staff.

The following procedure will be followed if payment is not received:

- ParentPay will alert parents that they have a low or negative balance if they have enabled their account in this way.
- At the end of each week a gentle debt reminder letter is produced via ParentPay and sent to those parents who are in debt via their child.
- A letter will then be posted out to parents when the debt reaches £10.00.
- If payment is still not received a further two letters will be sent at weekly intervals.
- If after taking the above steps, payment has still not been received, a further debt reminder letter produced from ParentPay will be sent advising you that your child must either bring a packed lunch to school or go home for lunch. No further school meals will be allowed until the debt is cleared.

Residential Visits

Payments for residential visits can be paid in instalments via ParentPay.com. An initial deposit, a second deposit and the remaining balance by instalments to suit the parent and by an agreed date. For payments not received, where alternative arrangements have not been made, the following procedure will be followed:

- Notice will be sent to parents to remind them that payment must be made in order for their child to be able to participate.
- The Business Manager will discuss with the parents concerned a payment strategy.
- If full payment has not been received one month prior to the start of the planned visit, the headteacher will contact the parent and remind them that their child will be unable to take part.

Music Charges

When pupils show an interest in playing a musical instrument, parents are asked to commit to paying music fees for the full year. These fees can be paid annually at a discounted rate or termly via ParentPay.com.

For payments not received, where alternative arrangements have not been made, the following procedure will be followed:

- A reminder letter will be sent out to parents, two weeks after the initial letter requesting their fees for either the term or the year.
- If after a further two weeks payment has still not been received a second reminder letter will be sent.
- If payment is still not received, a third letter will be sent informing the parent that if payment is not received their child will no longer be able to have lessons.
- After a further two weeks, if payment has not been received, the child will be withdrawn from lessons.

Lettings

Payments for lettings are expected to be paid in advance of the letting or on a monthly basis in advance for long term lettings. An invoice is sent when payment is due.

For payments not received, where alternative arrangements have not been made, the following procedure will be followed:

- A reminder letter will be sent out to the hirer two weeks after the letting has commenced.
- If after a further two weeks payment has still not been received a second reminder letter will be sent.
- If payment is still not received, a third letter will be sent informing the hirer that if payment is not received the letting contract will be terminated and the hirer will not be permitted to use the facilities.
- Dependant on the amount of the letting a debt recovery plan will be enforced via the authority.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF PARENTS REFUSE TO PAY?

If parents incur debts over the £30 threshold and continue to send their child to school without appropriate dinner or money (and they are not entitled to a FSM) then this may be a case for referral to Education Welfare. The decision to provide a meal in these circumstances lies with schools. Schools Catering will be happy to provide a normal meal or any combination of limited choice or cold meal but this will be at discretion and responsibility of the school.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF ADULTS REFUSE TO PAY?

If adults incur debts over the £30 threshold the decision to provide a meal in these circumstances lies with schools. Schools Catering will be happy to provide a meal but this will be at discretion and responsibility of the school.

HOW ARE PUPILS IDENTIFIED AS BEING ENTITLED TO A FREE SCHOOL MEAL?

The Free School Meals team will notify the school if a pupil is entitled to FSM and the School in turn will request the meals from Schools Catering. Streamlined checks on entitlement mean that applying for FSM is now a quick and simple process. Any queries about entitlement should be made to the Free School Meals team on 01302 734123 or 735338.

- A pupil should only be allowed a free school meal if the school has received authorisation for them from the Free School Meals team.
- The Free School Meals team will also inform the School who has claimed for them. If the pupil goes to live with someone else, for example a grandparent, their entitlement to free school meals will stop and the grandparent will have to apply. If this happens the school should notify the Free School Meals team immediately.
- It is important that the list of pupils entitled to free school meals is kept up to date. Any amendments should be reported to the Free School Meals team on one of the amendment sheets. The things we need to know about are:
 - **Moved school**
 - **Moved address**
 - **Change to who the pupil is living with**
 - **If the pupil starts paying**
 - **If the pupil is taken into Local Authority Care – if this happens the pupil is no longer entitled to free school meals.**

A new list will be e-mailed to the School at the beginning of each term. Any amendments to this list will be e-mailed to the School on a daily basis. The School must ensure that this list is passed on to the person that deals with it in the school.

Schools are responsible for notifying Schools Catering of the number of free school meals required.

WILL FSM BE BACK DATED AND IF SO FOR HOW LONG?

If a parent has been paying for school meals and then submits a successful claim for free school meals their entitlement will only be backdated to the date the form or request is received.