



Date written: December 2013  
Re-ratified: December 2016  
Date for review: December 2019

## Debt Recovery Policy

### **Introduction:**

The school's Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school to receive all income to which it is entitled. Outwoods Primary School will therefore take all reasonable measures to collect any monies owing to it as part of the management of public funds. Collecting money from parents or carers is a sensitive area; we deal with issues of debt collection with sensitivity and confidentiality at all times.

### **Aims and Objectives:**

At Outwoods Primary School we comply with all Staffordshire requirements for Financial Regulations for Schools (May 2012) with regard for the following aims:

- To make sure there are sound and proper financial procedures in school for dealing with the school's finances;
- To ensure that proper controls are in place;
- To provide a clear framework for managing school finances;
- To protect the school governors, headteacher and school employees.

### **Procedures:**

As the school uses the SAP Finance System for invoices and payment, the County Council Income Team will carry out standard debt recovery procedures on behalf of the school.

The following procedure will be employed for all outstanding debts (of 14 days or longer):

- A gentle reminder (slip, telephone, text or one to one)
- A formal letter (by pupil mail, e-mail or post)
- A second formal letter (Recorded post)
- A third letter informing the debtor that the debt has been referred to the Governing Body
- A fourth letter inform the debtor that the debt has been passed to the County Council Income Team.

When all practical and cost effective procedures have been exhausted by the County Council Income Team, the Director of Finance and Resources will notify the school of the amount of the debt that is considered to be irrecoverable and should be written off. Writing off a debt

will lead to a charge being made on the school budget as the income was credited to the school budget when the invoice was raised. The Governing Body must:

- approve the writing off of any debt in relation to the school budget;
- take into account their review of the age and size of the debt together with the advice from The Director of Finance and Resources;
- consider the use of a small claims court procedure.

### **Dinner Money:**

From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014, Outwoods Primary School will implement a strict debt policy relating to the school meal service.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents/carers. Every parent/carer will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents/carers give this policy their full support. No parent/carer would take their child to a restaurant and expect them to be given food without paying; the same applies at school.

**Payment for school meals** should be paid in advance by sending cash or cheque (made payable to Staffordshire County Council) in an envelope marked with the child's name, amount enclosed and days school meals are to be taken. Meals can be paid for daily, weekly, half termly or termly.

### **When payment for school meals has not been received**

We cannot allow dinner money debts to accumulate above two weeks and therefore expect that parents owing more than this provide a packed lunch.

Payment reminder slips are sent out on a daily basis. If the weekly payment for school meals is not received by Friday of that week a letter/text message will be sent to the parent/carer. If debt payment is not received by Friday of the second week of non-payment, the school will write to the parent/carer to inform them that meals will be suspended on Monday of the third week and that they must provide a packed lunch.

Every effort will be made by school to make personal contact to ascertain whether financial difficulties are present and then advise accordingly. The school will work hard with the family to agree a solution which is not to the detriment of the child. All reminders (copies of letters, record of verbal reminders) will be kept on file.

Once the arrears have been paid we are happy to resume school meal provision.

### **Consequences of non payment for school meals**

If payment of the debit is not received within seven days, the Headteacher reserves the right to refer the debt to Staffordshire County Council's debt collection department.

**Outdoor Education:**

All children in KS2 have the option to attend an outdoor education centre annually. Parents 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. Cheques are made payable to Staffordshire County Council and are processed via the SAP finance system.

**Breakfast Club:**

Payment for Breakfast Club should be paid in advance by sending cash or cheque (made payable to Staffordshire County Council) in an envelope marked with the child's name, amount enclosed and days when breakfast club provision is required. Breakfast meals and breakfast club can be paid for daily, weekly, half termly or termly.

**Lettings:**

Contracts for lettings of the school premises will be drawn up as necessary between the school and the applicant. Charges will reflect the school's costs for energy, water, lighting and opening up and closing of the school by the janitor. Please see the school's Lettings Policy.

**Implementation, Monitoring and Review:**

Day to day implementation of the procedures is carried out by the Bursar and Headteacher. The Bursar will present a report to the Governors of any outstanding debts and explain the procedures followed to date.

Review of the Policy will take place every three years or sooner if necessary.

**Next Review Date: December 2019**

**The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.**

Signed ..... Dated .....