

# Redhill Primary School: Debt Policy



## 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

Redhill 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 or the matter referred onto the courts.

## **Dinner Money**

Payment for schools meals should be paid in advance via ParentPay.

The school office will reconcile weekly as a minimum, ideally daily, the payments received to the meals ordered and any discrepancy will in the first instance result in a phone call to the parent/carer to request payment. Any parent/carer that has not made payment by the end of the week will be sent a letter requesting immediate payment.

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.

Governors have decided on the following policy regarding unpaid meals:

- A meal will be served until the arrears reach £11.50 (5 meals) after which point no further meals will be served unless agreed by the Headteacher, each case will be judged on its own merits.
- It is expected that staff should pay weekly for any meals taken.

## **Pre School**

Pre school places are invoiced each half term and payment can be made via ParentPay. Weekly reminders are issued to parents/carers.

A verbal request is made to parents/carers when they reach 15 hours in arrears (£42.50).

If payment is not forthcoming the child will only be allowed to attend his/her funded sessions (if entitled) so that the debt does not increase.

Unless a payment plan can be negotiated to pay off the arrears in instalments, notice will be given to withdraw the child's place.

## **Extended school activities**

Payment for extended school activities are made in accordance with the appropriate organisation.

## **Music tuition**

Music lessons are provided by the school at a charge to the parent/carer of a child via ParentPay. 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. If payment has not been received a further reminder is sent. In the event that no payment is received the debt will be referred onto the County Council for recovery.

## **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 via ParentPay.

Payment must be made in full before the departure date or the child will not be allowed to attend unless otherwise agreed with the Headteacher.

## **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. An invoice will be sent through the Staffordshire County Council system.

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:

## **Exam fees**

Examination fees are not applicable for primary schools.

## **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.

Approved January 2019

Due for review January 2020