

# Debt Policy

## Bisley Blue Coat and Oakridge Parochial School



**Approved by:** Federated Governing Board

**Date:** 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022

**Last reviewed on:** March 2022

**Next review due by:** March 2024

# **POLICY FOR THE RECOVERY OF DEBT**

## **Purpose**

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that procedures are in place for the recovery of any outstanding debt.

This policy sets out procedures for debt recovery and for the write-off of any debt, which is deemed to be irrecoverable.

## **Management**

Parents experiencing financial difficulties in relation to school payments are advised to inform the Head Teacher as soon as possible. The Head Teacher may be able to advise on bursaries for additionally charged provisions that are available to support children whose families are experiencing financial hardship.

Parents are politely asked not to opt for additionally charged provisions if they are unable or unwilling to pay for them. The Governing Body reserve the right to withdraw a child from a provision if payments are not forthcoming.

## **Voluntary Contributions**

Voluntary contributions may be requested from parents for items such as transport to/from activities, educational visits etc. It should be noted that such activities can only proceed with sufficient financial support from parents. The school will endeavour to request that voluntary contributions are paid two weeks before the activity/ provision. Reminders will not be sent to parents for voluntary contributions.

The Head Teacher will carry out a review of contributions made and refused prior to each activity. The Head Teacher will need to review the funds available in the School Fund in order to determine whether to subsidise the activity. Should insufficient funds be contributed or be available in the School Fund, the Head Teacher may choose to cancel the activity.

Each term the Head Teacher will report to governors on the amount of debt accrued and paid through the School Fund. The governing body may reflect on the provision of future activities and on the necessity of fundraising to cover the cost of these activities.

## **School Meals**

School meals must be paid for in advance. The school will refuse to order a school meal from the caterers if payment has not been made. Parents will be contacted and asked to provide a packed lunch for their child. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that there is sufficient credit before ordering meals.

Under exceptional circumstances, the school may approve a meal on the understanding that the payment will be made the following day. Further meals will be refused until the debt is paid. Parents

will be sent a reminder of the debt outstanding. If the debt is not cleared on a timely basis, the school reserves the right to refuse parents the option of the school meal provision.

At the end of the academic year, outstanding debt is separated from the active account on ParentPay. Parents are required to settle the debt amount in addition to adding credit for future meals. The school reserves the right to repay this debt from any credit.

### **Additionally Charged Provisions**

Parents may choose to receive optional supplies or services provided through the school, for example; residential trips, music tuition, extra curricular activities/ after schools clubs and uniform. These optional extras require payment in advance or will be invoiced within 10 days of the receipt of the provision.

Procedures for recovery of outstanding debts are as follows:

1. Invoices are issued with a 15 day payment request.
2. A polite reminder will be sent 30 days after issue of the invoice.
3. A second reminder will sent six weeks after issue of the invoice.
4. A final reminder will be sent eight weeks after issue of the invoice. The reminder will advise parents that if the debt is not paid within 7 days that the matter will be referred to the Head Teacher and Governing Body, and that action may be taken to recover the debt. Such action may involve legal proceedings. Parents will also be advised that, at the school's discretion, their child will not be able to participate in any future additionally charged supply or service.
5. The Head Teacher/ Finance Committee review outstanding debt on a termly basis. A decision will be made to either take further action to recover the debt or to write off the debt. Further action may be a referral to a debt collection agency or to solicitors for legal action. A decision to write-off the debt will be made if there is no realistic prospect of debt recovery being successful or if further action is not cost effective.
6. Parents will be notified of the governors' decision.

The Head Teacher can write off debts to the value of £50.00. Debts over £50.00 must be presented to the Finance Committee for write-off.

As the schools are financially independent, any debt that is written off will be charged against the budget of the school to which the pupil is registered.

*It may become evident to staff that families may be experiencing financial difficulties without expressing this directly to the school, for example, after a course of reminders have had to be applied. Staff will be vigilant and use their judgement to ensure that all families know where they might find additional support or advice should it be needed, such as signposting to resources available or public noticeboards in the school giving details of these resources. A list of resources of this kind can also be sought from the school office.*