



# **St John's CE Primary Academy**

## **School Debt Policy**

**July 2025**

**Date of current policy:** July 2025

**Date of Next Review:** July 2027

## **St John's CE Primary School Debt Policy**

### **Rationale**

The academy governing body has a responsibility to have a debt recovery policy which ensures that appropriate procedures are in place to enable the academy to receive all income to which it is entitled.

### **Aims and Objectives**

- To ensure that the governing body complies with the St Chad's Academies Trust Financial Regulations.
- To protect the General Annual Grant and other funding sources.
- 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**

St John's CE Primary Academy has procedures in place which are used to collect income. However, in the event that payment is not forthcoming the appropriate debt collection methods will be used, which may involve telephone calls, texts, emails, letters, phone calls and face to face conversations.

### **Dinner Money**

Payment for school meals should be made in advance using the Parent Pay on-line system. The daily meals register will record all meals taken on Parent Pay against each individual child's account and reduce the balance accordingly.

The Local Academy Committee (LAC) have decided on the following policy regarding unpaid meals:

- A meal will be served on the first day irrespective of whether the parent has paid. Any accounts in debt will result in a gentle reminder letter, text message or email from Parent Pay on the same day to request payment from the parent who has registered on Parent Pay.
- If payment has still not been received by the third day, a final demand letter, text message or email will be sent from Parent Pay to request payment. A telephone call from a member of SLT may also be made.
- If payment has still not been received after the fifth day, no further meals will be served from the sixth day onwards until the debt has been cleared and sufficient funds have been added to Parent Pay for future meals. A telephone call from a member of SLT may also be made.

### **Wrap Around**

- All payments should be made by Parent Pay at the time of booking sessions, or by childcare voucher, by arrangement with the school office.
- Emergency / last minute sessions may require payment after the session. Nonpayment of any sessions taken will result in no further sessions being available for booking until the debt has been cleared.

## Nursery

- Additional sessions over and above funded are available to be booked via the school office and paid for by monthly invoice on Parent Pay, at the beginning of each month. Nonpayment of sessions could result in them being discontinued as places are limited.

## Music tuition

Music lessons are provided by the school at a charge to the parent/carer of a child. Parents/carers are informed of the cost in advance and have a commitment to pay for a term regardless of whether the child continues with the lessons.

A text message is sent to the parent/carer on a termly basis asking for payment to be made using the on-line Parent Pay system. If payment has not been received by the third week of term a further reminder is sent. In the event that no payment is received the debt recovery process will be invoked and further tuition will be suspended until the matter is resolved.

## Board and lodging on residential visits

The board and lodging element of a residential visit will be charged to parents/carers and they 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 or the child will not be allowed to attend. All payments should be made using the on-line Parent Pay system.

## Remissions

In some cases, LAC Members 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. Failure to pay on time will result in the debt being referred for recovery. The letting agreement will be void and the client will be refused future hires.

## Writing off debts

When all practical and cost-effective methods of debt recovery have been exhausted by the academy, a debt may be written off in line with the St Chads Academies Trust Financial Regulations, point 23:

*BM to submit report to LAC and CFO.*

*BM to pursue recovery of debts/overpayments (including erroneous payments). LAC and CFO should only consider writing-off losses after careful appraisal of the facts and financial effect has been thoroughly investigated and should be satisfied that there is no feasible alternative and that all reasonable action has been taken to recoup the debt, considering insurance and legal limits. See section 5.21 of the ESFA ATH 2024 for full details.*

*LAC to appraise the proposal by performing an assessment of the costs and benefits of relevant options using an appropriate method in order to secure value for money; this must be recorded in the minutes. Value £2k or less to be delegated to CEO/CFO; above £2k to be authorised at FR&A/Trust Board. Annual income is defined as grant income as disclosed in the trust's last audited accounts.*

The Business Manager should report to the LAC detailing the value, timeline and actions taken, and consider the costs and benefits. The minutes of this meeting should be reported to the St Chad's Academies Trust CFO who will then take appropriate action dependant on the value.