



St John's CE Primary Academy
School Debt Policy

Introduction

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 then an official invoice will be raised on the academy finance system which will lead to the 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 academy may take further legal action or refer the matter on to the courts.

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.
- 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. The debt recovery process will also be put into place.

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 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. 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 and St Chad's Academies Trust, the LAC will be notified of the amount of debt that is considered to be irrecoverable and will be requested take into account the age and size of each debt and any legal advice before making a decision to write off debt.

This policy was presented to and approved by the LAC on 18 May 2023.

To be reviewed Summer 2025.