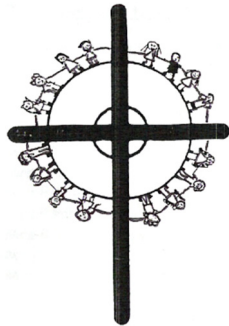


Christ Church C of E (VA) Primary School



Debt Recovery Policy

Adopted May 2017

Review May 2019

1. General Requirements

SinglePoint and Christ Church Primary School will take all reasonable measures to vigorously collect debts as part of its management of public funds. A debt will be written off only after all reasonable measures (commensurate with the size and nature of the debt) have been taken to recover it.

2. Acceptable 'credit period'

Invoices

In general payment for all goods and services supplied by the School should be collected in advance or at least within **30 days upon receipt of an invoice**.

Wrap Around Care (Breakfast & After School Club)

As per the agreement and offer letter signed by the parent/carer, we recommend that payment is made a minimum of one week in advance and a credit balance is maintained at all times. Payment is required for all days booked even if the child does not attend, the exceptions being when school is closed, child is on a residential trip or has been agreed in advance with the Head Teacher. Should the child no longer require a place the parent/carer is to advise the Wrap Around Care Manager at least one week in advance, otherwise the parent/carer is still liable for charges. Should the parent/carer fall into arrears of more than two weeks/or £50, whichever comes first, and fail to make a payment within one week of receiving a reminder letter, the club will withdraw the child's place.

School lunch

We recommend that payment is made a minimum of one week in advance and a credit balance is maintained at all times. Should the parent/carer fall into arrears of more than two weeks or £20.00 and fail to make a payment within one week of receiving a reminder letter, a further letter will be sent advising the parent/carer that their child will no longer be entitled to a school lunch and that they should send their child to school with a packed lunch. Failure for the parent/carer to provide their child with a packed lunch may result in involving the school's child protection officer.

3. Reporting of outstanding debt levels

The Head Teacher/School Business Manager/Wrap Around Care Manager will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is regularly monitored. Suitable records will be maintained to detail individual debts and the total value of debt to the school in order that it can be determined at any time and reported to the Provisions Committee. The Provisions Committee will review the level of outstanding debts every term to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debts is effective. Details of all reminders will be maintained in school. Where a letter is issued, a copy must be retained on file.

4. Debt Recovery Procedures

Where payment from the parent/carer has not been received within the above acceptable credit period the following process should be applied.

Initial 'overdue payment' reminder

An initial reminder may be informal and can be made either in person (when the parent/carer comes to collect/drop off the child), or by telephone. The date of the initial reminder should be recorded.

First ‘overdue payment’ reminder letter

If after one school week, no payment has been made Letter One will be sent home advising if full payment is not received within a week, their child’s breakfast/after school club/school lunch place **WILL** be cancelled.

Second ‘overdue payment’ reminder letter

If full payment is not received by within one week from the first reminder letter, Letter Two will be sent home advising their child’s breakfast/after school club/school lunch place **HAS** been cancelled. Payment or a repayment plan must be made by the end of the week. A follow up phone call will be made to the parent/carer as they will need to make other arrangements.

Third (FINAL) ‘overdue payment’ reminder letter

If by the following week (two weeks from the first reminder letter) no payment or response is made, Letter 3 will be sent home advising this is a Final reminder and payment must be received by the end of the week, otherwise the Council’s Legal Service will be contacted.

5. Negotiation of repayment terms

Debtors are expected to settle the amount owed by a single payment as soon as possible after receiving the initial ‘overdue payment’ reminder.

However, if people are unable to pay;

The School may reduce or cancel a debt in certain circumstances. A sensitive approach to debt recovery will be carried out, taking the following factors into account:

- Hardship – where paying the debt would cause financial hardship.
- Ill health – where our recovery action might cause further ill health.
- Time – where the debt is so large compared to the person’s income that it would take an unreasonable length of time to pay it all off.
- Cost – where the value of the debt is less than the cost of recovering it.
- Multiple debt – where someone owes more than one debt to the School.

In this situation an attempt to agree one repayment plan to include all debts will be established. If a debtor requests for ‘repayment terms’ these may be negotiated at the discretion of the Headteacher/School Business Manager/Wrap Around Care Manager. A record of all such agreements entered into will be retained. In all cases, a letter will be issued to the debtor confirming the agreed terms for repayment. The settlement period should be the shortest that is judged reasonable. The Headteacher/School Business Manager/Wrap Around Care Manager will decide whether any debtor who has been granted extended settlement terms will not be offered any further ‘credit’ and in future will be required to pay in advance.

7. Bad debts

This debt recovery policy should be cross-referenced to the Scheme for Financing Schools. Write-off of any debt above £50 requires the written approval of the Provisions Committee up to a maximum of £1000. Write-off of any debt below £50 requires the Headteacher’s written approval. A record of the write-off, the reason for it and the approval for it will be retained for 7 years.

Debt Recovery Process

Check all accounts on a Thursday every week.

If an account is in arrears, **phone calls** to be made on Thursday and Friday requesting payment by Monday.

If, by Monday, no payment has been made **Letter One** is sent home advising if payment not paid by Friday their Breakfast club/After School club/School lunch place will be cancelled.

Check account on Monday, if no payment has been made, **Letter Two** is sent home advising their Breakfast club/After School club/School lunch place has now been cancelled and payment must be made by Friday; follow this up with a phone call as parent/carer will need to make other arrangements.

Check account on Monday, if no payment has been made **Letter Three** is sent home advising this is their Final Reminder and payment must be received by Friday otherwise the Council's Legal Services will be contacted.

Process to cease at payment stage

If a payment plan to recover a debt is required - please use the sample attached. Ensure the parent signs one copy in agreement and returns to the School Office and it is kept on file.

Date

Dear

Following our conversation regarding the outstanding debt for Breakfast/After School Club/School lunch payments, please find below repayment schedule in order to clear your account.

Balance outstanding £ xxx

Repayment week commencing XXXXXXXXXX

Repayment week commencing XXXXXXXXXX

Repayment week commencing XXXXXXXXXX

Repayment week commencing XXXXXXXXXX

Can you please sign and return one copy of this letter showing agreement to the proposed repayment schedule.

Until the outstanding debt is cleared, your child will not be able to attend Breakfast club/After School club/School lunch.

If you need to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above number.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Williams
Wrap Around Care Manager

Letter One

I am writing to remind you that according to our records, you have arrears on your child's Breakfast/After School Club/School lunch account. In order for your child to continue to attending Breakfast club it is important to keep your account in credit.

Our records show that for your child _____ at (date) your debt is (£0.00)

Please arrange for this to be paid by (DATE).

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, or if you have difficulty making payment, please contact Mr Williams to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

Mr Williams
Wrap Around Care Manager

Letter Two

Our records show that despite numerous reminders, you have still not made payments on Breakfast/After School Club/School lunch account for your child Class:

As a result there Breakfast club/After School club/School lunch place has now been CANCELLED

As of (date) your account is showing a debt of (£0.00)

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately or contact the school to arrange a payment plan, otherwise non-compliance may result in Legal action.

Once the debt is cleared, please ensure your child's Breakfast club account is always in credit.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact Mr Williams to discuss.

Yours sincerely

Mr Williams
Wrap Around Care Manager

Letter Three – **FINAL REMINDER**

It has been brought to my attention that despite numerous reminders there is still an outstanding balance on your Breakfast club/After School Club/School lunch account for (child name)

As of (date) your account is showing a debt of (£0.00)

Please arrange for this money to be paid by (date) at the latest. If you have not paid the specified amount or you have not contacted Mr Williams to arrange a payment plan; the council's Legal services will be contacted.

Once the debt is cleared and should you wish your child to resume Breakfast/After School Club/School lunch can you please contact Mr Williams to discuss regular payments.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mr Williams
Wrap Around Care Manager

RECORDS OF DEBTS WRITTEN OFF Debtor Details of debt Amount (£) Invoice reference and date (where applicable). Reason for write-off (including brief details of measures taken to secure payment - as appropriate). Authorisation of write off – name and signature of the authorising individual and date. Cross reference to entry in the accounts where applicable.