

St. Mary's CE (A) Primary School



Debt Recovery Policy

Policy adopted by Full Governing Body: Autumn Term 2012

Review of the policy will take place every three years or sooner if necessary.

Policy reviewed and approved by Personnel & Finance Committee - Autumn Term 2014 due to implementation of ParentPay Cashless Payment System.

Policy approved by the Full Governing Body on 2nd December 2014

Next review due: Autumn Term 2017

This policy has been written using the Staffordshire County Council 'Model' Debt Recovery Policy. The 'model' policy has been adapted to fulfil the needs of St. Mary's CE (A) Primary School.

Introduction:

The school's Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to enable the school to receive all income to which it is entitled. St Mary's School will therefore take all reasonable measures to collect any monies owing to it as part of the management of public funds. Collecting payment from parents or carers is a sensitive area; we deal with issues of debt collection with sensitivity and confidentiality at all times.

Aims and Objectives

At St Mary's School we comply with all Staffordshire requirements for Financial Regulations for Schools (May 2012) with regard for the following aims:

- To make sure there are sound and proper financial procedures in school for dealing with the school's finances;
- To ensure that proper controls are in place;
- To provide a clear framework for managing school finances;
- To protect the school governors, head teacher and school employees.

Procedures:

As school uses the SAP Finance System and ParentPay Cashless Payment System for invoices and payment, the school, in conjunction with the County Council Income Team will carry out standard debt recovery procedures on behalf of the school.

The following procedure will be employed for all outstanding debts (of 14 days or longer):

- A gentle reminder (telephone, text, e-mail or in person);
- A formal letter (by pupil mail, e-mail or post)
- A second formal letter (Recorded post)
- A third letter informing the debtor that the debt has been passed to the County Council Income Team.

When all practical and cost effective procedures have been exhausted by the County Council Income Team, the Director of Finance and Resources will notify the school of the amount of the debt that is considered to be irrecoverable and should be written off. Writing off a debt will lead to a charge being made on the school budget as the income was credited to the school budget when the invoice was raised. The Governing Body must:

- approve the writing off of any debt in relation to the school budget;
- take into account their review of the age and size of the debt together with the advice from The Director of Finance and Resources.

Dinner Money:

Payment for school meals and snacks should be paid in advance as per the pricing structure detailed on ParentPay. At St Mary's School, parents are encouraged to pay half termly or termly in advance. Payments are recorded and reconciled by the Office Services Manager. If payment is not received, parents/carers will be sent a reminder at the end of each week, via the ParentPay email system. After stage three of the procedure has been implemented (listed above) then a further letter will be sent advising parents that their child will no longer be entitled to a school meal or snack and that parents should send their child with a packed lunch. Every effort will be made by the school to make personal contact to ascertain whether financial difficulties are present and then advise accordingly. All reminders (copies of emails, letters, record of verbal reminders) will be kept on file.

School Uniform:

School uniform sales are a non-profit making service. All monies from sales of school uniform are paid into the school budget, therefore the aforementioned debt recovery procedure will be used. Payment for school uniform should be paid when orders are placed.

Photographs:

School photographs are a source of funding for the school. Parents pay the photography company directly for photograph orders. The school earns commission on all photograph sales. This commission is paid into the school fund and contributes towards the cost of some pupil based activities.

Outdoor Education:

All children in KS2 have the option to attend an outdoor education centre annually. Parents 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. Payment, either in full or in instalments, is made via ParentPay.

Lettings:

Contracts for lettings of the school premises will be drawn up as necessary between the school and the applicant. Charges will reflect the school's costs for energy, water, lighting and opening up and closing of the school. Please see the school's Lettings Policy for further information.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review:

Day to day implementation of the procedures is carried out by the Office Services Manager and Headteacher. The Office Services Manager will present a report to the Governors of any outstanding debts and explain the procedures followed to date.

Signed: _____
Jane Hughes – Headteacher

Dated: _____

Signed: _____
Sally-Ann Shotton – Chair of Governors

Dated: _____

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.