

Debt Recovery Policy

Purley CE Primary School

Date of policy: January 2016

Review Cycle: 2 years

Reviewed By: Finance & Staffing Committee

Approved By: Finance & Staffing Committee

Last Reviewed: Summer 2017

Next review date: Summer 2019



PURLEY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

DEBT RECOVERY POLICY

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. Purley Primary 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 and carers is a sensitive area; we deal with issues of debt collection with sensitivity and confidentiality at all times.

Aims

- To ensure proper controls are in place
- To provide a clear framework for managing school finances

How the debt is accrued

Trips/Activities

The school differentiates between school trips that are part of the curriculum and which are funded from voluntary contributions and trips/activities that are outside of the curriculum which can be funded by charging. Where charges are not paid in advance of a non-curriculum trip, the school will not fund participation (refer to Charging Policy). Parents/carers are advised of the cost of trips/activities prior to signing up for the trip/ activities.

Breakfast Club and After School Club

Refer to separate policies

School Lunches

Payment for meals should be paid in advance. Payments are recorded and reconciled by the Finance Officer. If payment is not received, parents/ carers will be sent a reminder at the end of the week. The letter will also advise that the child's account will be blocked and no further meals will be able to be taken until payment is received (if over £10).

Debt collection procedures

Step 1

When a parent has accrued a debt of £10, the school will make contact with parent/ carer setting out the amount that is owed and asking for payment within 7 days.

Step 2

If payment is not received within 7 days, a letter will be sent reminding those who have outstanding debts. This letter will inform parents that in the event that no payment is made within 21 days, the school may be forced to refer the matter to West Berkshire Council Legal Services.

Step 3

If in the event that parents do not respond to a letter from the school, or if they do not make payments in line with any agreed schedule, it may be necessary for the school to make a referral to the West Berkshire Legal Services. The school will ask the Council to send a final demand letter. The letter will set out the amount of debt, the previous communication that the school has sent and the final deadline by which payment should

be received. It will also outline the potential for court action and the consequences that non-payment might have.

Step 4

With the assistance of West Berkshire Council legal services we may issue proceedings in the County Court (small claims court) to recover the money. This action could result in a County Court Judgement being placed against a debtor's name and address.

Communication with parents

Parents having financial difficulties are routinely offered the opportunity to speak to the Headteacher or School Business Manager when trip and letters are issued. Where, at any stage, parents respond to the letters sent out in relation to the debt, the school will cooperate with parents in attempts to agree, in writing, a schedule of payments that will enable the debt to be repaid. The school is happy to help with alternative arrangements and encourages the appropriate claiming of Free School Meals Eligibility. The Headteacher will decide whether to agree to the revised terms.

Relationship to other policies

This policy does not alter or affect the position in relation to any voluntary contributions that are requested by the school in relation to trips in support of the curriculum. Pupils will not be excluded from trips if these voluntary contributions are not paid, however, if insufficient contributions are received trips may be cancelled.

This policy does not place any other requirement on the parent or change any responsibility of the school to provide a broad and balanced education for the children.

Purley Church of England (VC) Primary School

Purley Village, Purley on Thames, Reading, Berkshire, RG8 8AF
Telephone: 0118 984 2384 Fax: 0118 984 1315 email:finance@purley.w-berks.sch.uk
Headteacher: Mrs K Fakes

[Date]

Dear parents/carers of

Debt due to Purley Primary School in the sum of £[]

According to our records, and in line with our Debt Recovery Policy, you owe the school a sum of over £10.00. The total amount owing is £[] for [].

You received a payment request on [] and we would be grateful if you could pay this sum in full within seven days of the date of this letter.

If you are unable to pay this sum in one go then please contact me within the next 7 days to discuss options for payment of the debt in affordable instalments. A payment plan will be submitted in the form of an application in writing explaining the reasons for your inability to meet the original contract terms. The Headteacher and Chair of the Finance Committee will decide whether to agree to the revised terms.

If this is an oversight on our part, please accept our apologies and please provide payment details so we can amend our records.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Fakes
Headteacher

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According to our records, and in line with our Debt Recovery Policy, you owe the school a sum of over £10.00. The total amount owing is £[] for [].

You received a letter on [] informing you that the above sum needed to be paid in full within seven days of the date of the letter, and the opportunity to adopt a payment plan. As yet, we have had no further correspondence from you.

Unfortunately, if we do not receive payment within 21 days of the date of this letter, then we will be contacting West Berkshire District Council Legal Services and asking them to take steps to recover the money from you. This may include issuing proceedings in the county court. It is therefore in your best interests to repay this sum as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Fakes
Headteacher