

Sir John Offley CE (VC) Primary School

'With God all things are possible'



School Debt Policy

Approved by Governors: Summer Term 2025

Next Review Due: Summer Term 2026

Introduction

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

Aims and Objectives

- To ensure that the governing body complies with the Staffordshire Scheme for Financing Schools and Financial Regulations;
- To protect the delegated school budget;
- 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

Sir John Offley CE (VC) Primary School has their own 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 County Council's finance system which will lead to the Council's debt recovery procedures as follows:

Once an invoice has been raised on My Finance, SCC payment terms are 28 days from the date of the invoice. The following automated debt recovery action is generated by the system:

- **Outstanding after 28 + 5 days** – first reminder letter generated and issued.
- **Still outstanding 19 days after first reminder** - final notice letter issued, and an email alert is sent from My Finance to the user who raised the invoice.

Beyond this point debt recovery is undertaken by the SCC's Debt Recovery Officers

- **33 days overdue (61 days)** – Once the debt is 33 days overdue, the debt recovery officers based in the Central Income Team will review the debt and will endeavour to contact the debtor by phone, email or letter.

Any invoice raised for less than £25 will not be chased by SCC beyond the standard first reminder and final notice due to it not being economically viable to do so.

The Debt Recovery officer have a number of tools at their disposal such as utilising a Visiting Officer Service and ultimately referring a debt to SCC Legal Services for recovery through the courts and will apply their judgement in determining which are appropriate.

School Meals and Extended School Provisions (Red Robins and Busy Bees)

Payment for school meals and extended school provisions should be booked and paid **in advance** via ParentPay or if parents/carers do not have a debit or credit card, by cash via Paypoint. Paypoint cards can be ordered at the School Office.

In the exceptional circumstances where meals taken during the school day and attendance at Red Robins and Busy Bees are not pre-booked and paid for in advance then the following debt recovery procedure will be followed:

Any arrears will result in an email and SMS to the parent/carer to request immediate payment. If payment is not received, a second reminder will be sent within 2 days. This second reminder will request immediate payment but will also explain to the parent/carer that access to all provisions (school meals and extended school clubs) will be withdrawn if immediate payment is not made.

If the debt remains unpaid a final email and SMS will be sent to the parent/carer explaining that access to all provisions have been withdrawn and will be re-instated once the debt has been paid. Provisions include school lunches (except for those children who are eligible for free school meals), special occasion lunches (Mother's Day lunch, Christmas lunch, etc), wraparound care (Busy Bees) and before/after school care (Red Robins). The debt may also be referred to the County Council for recovery, as per 'The Debt Recovery' section above.

If the arrears remain unpaid following continued attempts by the school to recover the debt (by email/SMS, telephone call or face to face), the issue will be referred to governors who will decide upon appropriate action to be taken.

Residential Visits

The board and lodging element of a residential visit can be charged to parents/carers. Parents/carers will be notified of the cost in advance and will be 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.

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 residential visits. This is included within the Charging and Remissions Policy which can be found on the school website.

Lettings

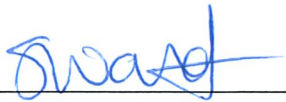
Contracts for lettings of the school premises will be drawn up as necessary between the school and the client in line with the Charges and Remissions Policy.

Failure to pay on time will result in the debt being referred to the County Council 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 County Council, the school will be notified of the amount of debt that is considered to be irrecoverable.

The governing body will take into account the age and size of each debt and any advice from the County Council before making a decision to write off debt.

Signed:  Mrs Sally Inskip-Ward, Headteacher

 Mr Otto Warman, Chair of Governors

Sir John Offley CE (VC) Primary school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people/vulnerable adults and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

