



Fell Dyke Community Primary School

DEBT PREVENTION AND RECOVERY POLICY

Date of issue	January 2017
Review date	January 2020

Fell Dyke Community Primary School

DEBT RECOVERY POLICY

Aims

In the event of persistent non-payment of debts Feel Dyke Community Primary School (FDCPS) will actively pursue the collection of monies owed to it. If debts have been incurred by parents or carers of pupils, the parents/carers are jointly and severally liable for any charges. However the school will consider all parents/carers situations and circumstances on an individual basis and will always look at the needs of the child and aim to act fairly and equally.

The Governing Body will:

- Consider the arrangements for debt recovery
- In the case of pupils, recommend the maximum level of debt which any family would be able to incur
- Approve the school undertaking legal action
- Include in the minutes of the Governing Body their approval to pursue any outstanding debt
- Ensure that anonymity of any families involved is preserved at all times

The Governing Body delegates these responsibilities to the Finance and Personnel Committee.

The Governing Body delegates the day to day decision making to the Head teacher.

FDCPS will:

- In the case of our families not pass onto the debtor any costs incurred in pursuing the outstanding debt
- Give the debtor appropriate notification and time to pay the outstanding charge
- Send the debtor as a minimum a final statement which states that this is the final notice and that further action will be taken.

The School Business Manager and Administrative Assistant will ensure that:

- All invoices outstanding are accurately recorded and maintained
- There is documentary evidence of all the steps undertaken by the school to recover the debt. This includes recording the dates that the invoices and statements were distributed and/or phone calls and letters that have been sent to debtors
- For all outstanding debts a final statement is issued to all persons liable for the debt.

The Governing Body delegates authority:

- To the Head teacher to waive or reduce the debt, where it is believed that the debtor is experiencing financial hardship
- To the Finance and Personnel Committee to agree writing off a debt on the recommendation of the Head teacher

The Head teacher may recommend to write off a debt when all reasonable avenues to recover the debt have been exhausted and where it is not cost effective to pursue the debt through legal action.

Any action relating to an outstanding debt or the waiving/reducing of a debt should be dealt with confidentially between the debtor and the Head teacher.

Activities which are funded through **Voluntary Contributions** fall outside of the debt recovery policy.

Appendix 1 describes procedures for **School Meals** payments and debt recovery.

Appendix 1 - School Meal Payment and Debt Recovery Procedures

Except for those children who are entitled to free school meals (FSM) **and** for whom the school has received notification of FSM entitlement, children will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for in advance.

Daily Procedures

On Monday morning, the Administrative Assistant sends a text message to all parents/carers (except for those parents who pay termly/half termly) to remind them that meals need to be paid for in advance either weekly or half termly. After completing her checks on attendance, the Administrative Assistant updates SIMS to record which children are present.

The Administrative Assistant inputs school meals payments received onto SIMS.

The Administrative Assistant runs a **daily debt report** to identify those children for whom sufficient payments have not been received.

Level 1

If the debt is not cleared by Monday lunchtime, the Administrative Assistant sends a second text message to the relevant parents/carers requesting payment by the end of the school day and if not their child will not receive a lunch the following day.

If payment is not received by the beginning of the school day on Tuesday, the Administrative Assistant checks with the class teacher to establish if a packed lunch has been provided. If a packed lunch has not been provided, the Administrative Assistant telephones the parents/carers to ask them to either come into the school before lunchtime with a packed lunch or arrange to take their child home for lunch. The Administrative Assistant also asks the parent/carer to clear the debt. If the parent/carer does not respond, the child is provided with a snack and is supervised by the Teaching Assistant over the lunchtime period.

The Administrative Assistant prepares and sends an update report to the Head teacher which identifies which parents/carers have not paid and action taken.

Level 2

A child comes to school, again, without the debt paid or a packed lunch

If the debt is not cleared by the end of the school day on Tuesday and/or the child is sent to school without a packed lunch, the Administrative Assistant sends a letter to the parent/carer requesting payment and to invite them to meet the Head teacher (See appendix 1). If possible the meeting should take place within the same week that the debt arose.

At the meeting the Head teacher will discuss when and how the debt will be cleared. The Head teacher will also make clear that failure to clear the debt will result in a further meeting with a school governor and if necessary legal proceedings against the parent/carer to recover the debt. Following the meeting, a letter is sent out to the parent/carer to confirm the outcome.

Level 3

If the debt is not cleared within 10 working days the parent/carer receives a letter inviting them to a meeting with a school governor (See appendix 2).

The school governor will discuss with the parent when and how the debt will be cleared. The governor will also reiterate that failure to clear the debt could result in legal proceedings against the parent/carer to recover the debt. Following the meeting, a letter is sent out to the parent/carer to confirm the outcome.

APPENDIX 1

Dear Parents/Carers

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for (child's name) as at our records show that as at (date) you owed £xx.xx)

All meals must be paid for in advance in accordance with our debt policy (copy enclosed). If you don't wish for your child to have a school meal, please notify the school by completing a change of school meals arrangement form and either provide him/her with a packed lunch or arrange to take your child home for lunch.

Please arrange for the money you owe to be paid immediately into the school office. The cost of a school meal is £2.00 a day or £10.00 per week. If you do not, a meeting has been arranged for you to meet the Head teacher on (time and date). I should point out that failure to clear the debt could result in legal proceedings being taken out against you.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely

School Business Manager

APPENDIX 2

Dear Parents/Carers

Our records show that you have not yet paid dinner money for (child's name) as at our records show that as at (date) you owed £xx.xx)

You are therefore invited to a meeting with (name of school governor) on (time and date).

I should point out that failure to clear the debt could result in legal proceedings being taken out against you.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely

School Business Manager

