



## **Debt Recovery Procedure**

**Date agreed:** 09th December 2020

**Review Date:** Aut 2021

**We are a UNICEF Rights Respecting School**

## **General requirements**

The school will take all reasonable measures to 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.

## **School staff are expected to follow the following procedures to secure the collection of all debts.**

### **Initial reminders**

Initial reminders may be informal and made either in person (when a parent comes to collect/drop off the child) or by telephone or by issuing a print out of the current statement to the debtor. Normally, the school office administrator will undertake this having built up a good relationship with the parents. This should be monitored on a regular basis and a reminder should be made to parents owing more than two weeks money at any one time.

### **First reminder letter**

If no response has been made by the debtor, then a follow up reminder letter should be sent to the home address reminding them of the amount outstanding and their responsibility to pay in a timely manner. The letter should also advise parents that a packed lunch should be provided for their children to avoid the debt increasing.

### **Second reminder letter**

A second reminder letter will be issued in 2 weeks after the First Reminder Letter.

### **Failure to respond to reminders / settle a debt**

If no response is received from the reminders issued, the Bursar/Headteacher will be informed and contact will be made with the debtor advising them that they will need to discuss the matter in person.

### **Negotiation of repayment terms**

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

Depending on the size of the debt (i.e. in the case of a parent who may be in the process of a claim for Housing Benefit), if a debtor asks for 'repayment terms' these may be negotiated at the discretion of the Head teacher and a record of all such agreements will be kept. A letter will be issued to the debtor confirming the agreed terms (unless this is not judged necessary). The settlement period should be the shortest that is judged reasonable.

The Head teacher will decide whether any debtor who has been granted extended settlement terms will not be offered any further 'credit' and will be required to pay in advance in future.

### **Costs of debt recovery**

If repayment terms are not adhered to, the School will contact the Local Authority and with the use of the Service Level Agreement with the Legal Department, endeavor to recover the debt with their assistance.

Where the school incurs material additional costs in recovering a debt then the Governing Body will decide whether to seek to recover such costs from the debtor. This decision and its basis will be recorded.

The debtor will be formally advised that they will be required to pay the additional costs incurred by the school in recovering the debt.

### **Reporting of outstanding debt levels**

The Head teacher will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is known and can be determined at any time.

The Headteacher and School Business Manager will review the level of outstanding debts every month to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debts is effective.