



SACRED HEART
CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL & NURSERY

Debt Recovery Policy

This is our school.

Together we worship; Together we learn; Together we belong.

With the love of God, our dreams and ambitions come true

October 2023

Policy Date: October 2023

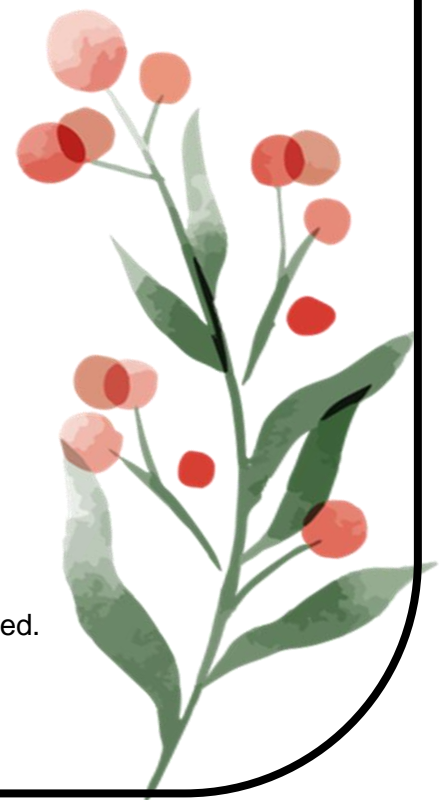
Policy Status:

Approval by Governing

Body December 2023

Review Cycle: 18months or as required

Next Review Date: January 2025 or as required.



At Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School & Nursery we are proud to provide a safe, stimulating and inclusive learning environment where every member of our community is valued and respected.

**Mission Statement:
'Together we worship,
Together we learn,
Together we belong.
With the love of God...
our dreams and ambitions come true.'**

Our broad, balanced, creative curriculum and enrichment activities provide opportunities for everyone to achieve and succeed. Together we take pride in making a positive contribution to our school and the wider community.

This policy should be referred to in conjunction with the curriculum, assessment and teaching and learning policies.

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

"Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment".



Debt Recovery Policy - September 2023

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that procedures are in place for the recovery of outstanding debt. This policy sets out the procedures for debt recovery and for the write-off of any debt which is deemed to be irrecoverable.

The policy reflects the statutory guidance provided within the Liverpool City Council Financial Regulations & Procedures for Schools - November 2021 (appendix 10) but amended accordingly to suit the needs of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School & Nursery.

1. General debt

Payment should be obtained as and when goods/services/facilities are provided wherever possible, where the value of goods and services are relatively small i.e. less than **£100**.

Where payment is not received at the time when the goods/services/facilities are delivered an invoice must be raised as soon as possible, but normally within 7 days of the goods/services/ facilities being provided.

Invoices should state that the bill is due and payable at the invoice date.

If no payment is received within 21 days from date of issue of the invoice a final reminder should be issued to the debtor. The final reminder should clearly state that legal action will be taken if the debt is not settled in full within a further 14 days of the date of the reminder.

Where only part of the debt has been settled a final reminder for the balance outstanding should be issued 21 days from the issue of the invoice. The final reminder should clearly state that legal action will be taken if the debt is not settled in full within a further 14 days of the date of the reminder.

Where a debtor requests permission to settle the debt by instalments and extend the normal terms and conditions of supply they must submit an application in writing explaining the reasons for their inability to meet the original contract terms. The Headteacher and Chair of Governors will agree the revised terms, which must not exceed 49 days from the date of issue of the invoice. If the debt is not settled within the terms set by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors, then a final reminder should be issued to the debtor. The final reminder should clearly state that legal action will be taken if the debt is not settled in full within a further 14 days of the date of the reminder.

At each Full Governing Body (FGB) meeting, the Headteacher is required to inform the Governors of any debt which is still outstanding after the 14 day period following the final reminder, together with any proposed action: This may be a referral to solicitors for legal action, a debt collection agency or to write-off the debt if there is no realistic prospect of debt recovery being successful, or if further action is not cost-effective.

Outstanding debt of up to **£50** may be written-off by the Headteacher, provided that the appropriate follow-up action, outlined above, has been taken and the details of the debtor, amount written-off and the reason for no further action being taken is reported to the FGB for information at their next meeting.

Write-off of outstanding debt in excess of **£50** must be approved by the FGB following submission of details of the debt by the Headteacher together with reasons for no further action being taken.

A write-off must not be communicated to the debtor. It is not an acknowledgement that the debt does not exist, but is an internal transaction in the accounts of the school, which removes the debt from the records

Individuals or organisations that have previously defaulted on payments to the school are not allowed credit facilities.

Where a debtor's payments are regularly or consistently paid outside the terms of supply, the Headteacher must consider withdrawal of credit facilities and request the individual/organisation to pay for goods/services/facilities at the time they are consumed.

2. School meals

Payment for school meals should be made weekly, in advance. This would normally be the Monday of the week for which the meals are being paid for in accordance with our Charging & Remissions Policy: [Charging and Remissions Policy - September 2023](#).

Children will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, except for those that are entitled to free school meals. If parents/carers believe that their child may qualify for free school meals, they will be advised to contact the school office. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that parents/carers are encouraged to register for free school meals if they are entitled, as this also enables the school to access Pupil Premium funding.

Any arrears of dinner money that arise will be pursued by the school on a weekly basis. On the first day of non-payment, a member of office staff will attempt to contact the parent/carer in person or by telephone to discuss the debt and request payment on the following day.

If dinner monies remain outstanding at the beginning of the second week, a reminder letter will be issued to the parent/carer.

If dinner monies remain outstanding at the beginning of the third week, a final warning letter will be issued. This letter will remind the parent/carer of the previous reminder letter and the current amount outstanding. The letter will also inform the parent/carer that if the debt remains unpaid, the school will refuse to provide a school meal for the child and the parent/carer will need to provide the child with a healthy packed lunch or be taken home for lunch. The letter will request contact with the school to discuss any problems in making the outstanding payment.

If dinner monies remain outstanding at the beginning of the fourth week, a notification of withdrawal of school meals letter will be issued to the parent/carer. This letter will give the parent/carer a final opportunity to clear the outstanding debt. The letter will inform the parent/carer that if the debt is not cleared in full, the child will not be provided with a meal with effect from the following Monday. The parent/carer will be advised to make alternative arrangements for the child's lunch.

Arrangements can be made to clear any dinner money debt by instalments, however, the amount should be acceptable to both the school and the parent/carer.

Social services may also be informed that these parents/carers are not carrying out the 'responsibility of care' by failing to provide food for their child at lunchtime. It is not the responsibility of the school to provide lunch for pupils, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to provide a meal, either a school lunch, packed lunch or to take the child home.

This debt management policy in respect of dinner monies includes the refusal to provide a school meal when the parent/carer has not paid, or made contact with, the school and payment has been outstanding for 4 weeks. This policy is intended to keep debts to a minimum and thereby avoid the cost of a referral to solicitors for legal action or debt collection agency, or to write-off the debt if there is no realistic prospect of debt recovery being successful. This course of action would not be cost-effective with the amounts concerned.

At each meeting of the Full Governing Body, the Headteacher is required to inform the Governors of any outstanding dinner money debt.

Outstanding individual school meals debt of up to **£50** may be written-off by the Headteacher, provided that the appropriate follow-up action outlined above has been taken and the details of the debtor, amount written-off and the reason for no further action being taken is reported to the FGB for information at their next meeting.

Write-off of outstanding debt in excess of **£50** must be approved by the FGB following submission of details of the debt by the Headteacher together with reasons for no further action being taken.

A write-off must not be communicated to the parent/carer. It is not an acknowledgement that the debt does not exist, but is an internal transaction in the accounts of the school, which removes the debt from the records.

By implementing this debt policy, our school aims to manage its school dinner money effectively, by reducing administration time and costs involved chasing dinner money and general debts.

Most importantly, to ensure that money which should be spent on the children's education, is not used to pay for debts incurred by parents/carers and debtors.



SACRED HEART CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY

Reminder Letter - School Meals

Date: _____.

To Parent/Carer of: _____.

Our records show that despite a phone call on: _____ you have not paid dinner money for your child.

Our records show a debt of: £ _____.

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately. Please send the money into school, no later than Monday morning, in a clearly marked envelope or visit the school office.

The cost of a school meal is £1.80 per day/£9 per week.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact Miss Mercer at the school office.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher



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Reminder Letter - Final Warning Letter

Date: _____.

To Parent/Carer of: _____.

Our records show that despite a phone call on: _____ you have not paid dinner money for your child.

Our records show that despite a reminder letter on: _____ you have not paid dinner money for your child.

Our records show a debt of: £ _____.

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately. Please send the money into school, no later than Monday morning, in a clearly marked envelope or visit the school office.

The cost of a school meal is £1.80 per day/£9 per week.

If the debt remains unpaid, the school will refuse to provide a school meal for your child and you will need to provide the child with a healthy packed lunch or take them home from school for lunch.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact Miss Mercer at the school office.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher



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Notification of Withdrawal of School Meals Letter

Date: _____.

To Parent/Carer of: _____.

Our records show that despite several 'reminder letters', you have still not paid dinner money for your child.

Our records show a debt of: £ _____.

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately. Please send the money into school, by the end of the week, in a clearly marked envelope or visit the school office.

The cost of a school meal is £1.80 per day/£9 per week.

Since non-payment for school meals affects the quality of service we offer to the children, we need to ensure that all payments are up to date. If the debt is not cleared by the end of this week, it will not be possible to provide your child with a school lunch with effect from Monday, and you will need to provide your child with a healthy packed lunch or take him/her home from school for lunch.

The school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to recover the debt and to inform social services of our concerns that you are not providing a meal for your child at lunchtime.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact Miss Mercer at the school office.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher



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Records of Debts Written Off

Debtor	Details of the debt	Amount	Invoice reference and date (where applicable)	Reason for write-off (including brief details of measures taken to secure payment)	Authorisation of write off and name and signature of the authorising individual

***This record must be kept for a minimum of 7 years from date of the debt**