



KINGSHILL CHURCH SCHOOL

Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust

Debt Recovery Policy

Any money owed to school has an impact on the budget and may affect the resources we can provide to all children. We hope that parents understand this and will make every effort to avoid owing the school money.

Suitable records will be maintained to detail individual debts and the total value of debt to the school in order that it can be determined at any time and reported to the Finance Committee and/or Governing Body. The Finance Committee and/or Governing Body will review the level of outstanding debts every term to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debts should be carried out.

Debt Recovery Procedures

Where payment from the parent/guardian has not been received in advance, or 'at the point of sale', the following process will be applied:

Initial 'overdue payment' reminder

An initial reminder may be informal and can be made either in person (when a parent/guardian comes to collect/drop off the child), or by telephone. The date of the initial reminder will be recorded.

First 'overdue payment' reminder letter

A formal reminder letter is issued 2 weeks after the informal reminder.

In the case of school meals, if the debt is not settled on the following school day then we will be unable to provide your child with a school dinner and you must provide a packed lunch or take your child home for dinner. If a child comes to school without clearing the debt and requires a hot meal then the School Office will telephone the parents to make alternative arrangements for lunchtime. If the parent does not do this then the school will provide a simple packed lunch and may refer the family to Social Services under our child protection procedures.

Second 'overdue payment' reminder letter

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

The date of the second reminder letter will be recorded.

Failure to respond to reminders / settle a debt

If there is no response to the second 'overdue payment' reminder letter the debtor will be invited to meet the Business Manager to discuss how the debt will be settled. Failure to respond to this letter and/or failure to attend this meeting will result in the Headteacher and Governing Body requesting a meeting with the debtor. The school will make every effort to work with parents to prevent debts mounting. At the discretion of The Finance Committee and/or Governing Body an official invoice may be issued for the full amount.

The debtor may be advised that they will be required to pay in advance for all future supplies and services or the supply will no longer be available to them.

This decision and its basis will be recorded and reported to the Finance Committee and/or Governing Body.

If a mutual agreement cannot be reached or if any agreed repayment is missed then the debt may be transferred directly to an external debt collector.

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 payment' reminder. Failure to meet any repayment terms may result in the debt being passed to an external debt collection agency.

If people are unable to pay

The School may reduce or cancel a debt in certain circumstances. A sensitive approach to debt recovery will be carried out, taking the following factors into account.

- Hardship – where paying the debt would cause financial hardship.
- Ill health – where recovery action might cause further ill health.
- Time – where the debt is so large compared to the person's income that it would take an unreasonable length of time to pay it all off.
- Cost – where the value of the debt is less than the cost of recovering it.
- Multiple debts – where someone owes more than one debt to the School. In this situation, an attempt to agree one repayment plan to include all debts will be established.

Debtors are expected to settle the amount owed by a single payment as soon as possible after receiving the first 'overdue payment' reminder. If a debtor requests for 'repayment terms' these may be negotiated at the discretion of the Finance Committee and/or Governing Body.

A record of all such agreements entered into, will be retained.

In all cases, a letter will be issued to the debtor confirming the agreed terms for repayment. The settlement period should be the shortest that is judged reasonable.

The Finance Committee and/or Governing Body will decide whether any debtor who has been granted extended settlement terms will not be offered any further 'credit' and will, in future, be required to pay in advance. This decision and its basis will be recorded and reported to the Finance Committee and/or Governing Body.