

Debt Recovery Policy



Lead	Patricia Gilmore
Head	Sandie Edward
Chair of Governors	Jeremy Hooper
Policy amended	Jan 2025
To be reviewed	Jan 2027

This policy currently includes but is not limited to contributions for School Lunches, Breakfast Club and the Y6 Residential Visit. Where appropriate, this debt collection model may be used for any other monies the school wishes to collect in the future.

Within this policy, the use of the term "parent" shall relate equally to parents, guardians and/or carers.

In individual cases of hardship, the Head Teacher may, at their discretion, agree a repayment plan with parents in order to recover a debt. In the event that the agreed repayment plan is not adhered to, the conditions laid out in the remainder of this policy will apply.

a. School Lunches

Parents will be advised towards the end of each half term what the cost of meals will be for the next half term. **Payment is required in advance**, in full within 2 weeks of the start of each half term. St Philip's is a cash free school and payment is expected to be made via the school online payment system, the School Gateway.

The following procedure will be followed: -

- 1) If payment has not been received 2 weeks into the half term a reminder will be sent to parents
- 2) If payment or response from parent/carers has not been received 3 weeks into the half term, they will be contacted and asked to meet with the administration team, in order to work towards a payment plan.
- 3) If the payment plan is not adhered to, parent/carers will be called to a meeting with the headteacher to discuss what further action can be taken.
- 4) If the payment plan is not adhered to a school lunch will not be provided and your child will need to bring in a packed lunch each day until the payment plan is resumed.
- 5) If the debt is still outstanding after 1 term, Governors will be informed.
- 6) If the debt is outstanding once a pupil leaves the school the governors may instruct the headteacher to pursue the outstanding debt through the small claims court

b. Breakfast Club

Breakfast club is available to all pupils and sessions can be booked online using the School Gateway app. Sessions should be paid for at the time of booking to secure a place.

The following procedure will be followed in respect of outstanding balances:

- 1) If payment has not been received 2 weeks into the half term a reminder will be sent to parents
- 2) If payment or response from parent/carers has not been received 3 weeks into the half term, they will be contacted and asked to meet with the administration team, in order to work towards a payment plan. A place at Breakfast club cannot be guaranteed if an account is in arrears.
- 3) If the payment plan is not adhered to, a place at Breakfast club will be suspended and parent/carers will be called to a meeting with the headteacher to discuss what further action can be taken.
- 4) If the debt is still outstanding after 1 term, Governors will be informed.
- 5) If the debt is outstanding once a pupil leaves the school the governors may instruct the headteacher to pursue the outstanding debt through the small claims court

We require 24 hrs notice to cancel a booked session. In the event of non-attendance for secured places with less than 24hrs notice of cancellation, the usual session charge will apply.

c. Year 6 Residential Visit

A deposit is required to secure your child's place on the residential visit. Once a place has been secured, the deposit is non-refundable per the operating terms of the company. Regular payment plans are available to spread the cost of the trip across 9 months. The final balance must be paid by the Easter school closure prior to the visit taking place in June.

For payments not received, where alternative arrangements have not been made, the following procedure will be followed:

- 1) Notice will be sent to parents to remind them that payment must be made in order for their child to be able to participate.
- 2) The administration staff will discuss with the parents concerned a payment strategy.
- 3) The balance must be paid in full for any participating pupil where a secure booking has been made by the parent.
- 4) If the debt is still outstanding at the point of Easter closure, Governors will be informed.
- 5) If the debt is outstanding once a pupil leaves the school the governors may instruct the Headteacher to pursue the outstanding debt through the small claims court

Debt Write Off

If the Head Teacher is of the opinion that a debt is impossible to recover, the write off limits set out in the Sefton Schools Financial Procedures will apply:

- a. Approval by the headteacher for any debts of less than £100.
- b. Approval by the Finance Committee for any debts between £100 and £500.
- c. Approval by the Governing Body for any debts over £500.

Appendices:

- A. Reminder Letter School Meals
- B. 2nd Reminder Letter School Meals
- C. Letter from Headteacher

Appendix A

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: School Meal Payments/Breakfast Club for

Your childhas been having school meals this term, but the school has not received payment for these meals.

School meals should be paid for half termly, in advance, online via the school gateway app. Please may we request that you make payment by Friday or contact the Headteacher to discuss a debt repayment plan.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Horsley
School Admin Officer

Appendix B

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: School Meal/Breakfast Club payment for Year

Further to our letter dates , we still have not received any payment for’s school meals this term. To date your account stands at £ .

Please can I ask you to contact the school office to confirm a payment date to bring your account up to date? We can arrange a payment plan to help cover the cost of the arrears, if required.

Unfortunately, the School cannot continue to provide a school meal if payment isn’t received. Please send your child with a packed lunch until the arrears are settled or a payment plan has been agreed.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Horsley
School Admin Officer

Appendix C

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: School Meal/Breakfast Club Payments for Year

Further to our letters dates , we still have not received any payment for’s school meals this term. To date your account stands at £ . I am writing today to ask you to come to see me so we can discuss a way to clear the outstanding amount and to see if there is any support we can provide; please phone the office to set a date for this meeting.

The school must pay for the provision of school meals and in us covering your debt we lose money from our school budget that should be supporting children’s learning. It is important that you make arrangements to settle your account or we may have to hand this over to our Governing Body for further action.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Edward
HEADTEACHER

Appendix D

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Late Pick up Payment for Year

Your childhas been repeatedly picked up late at the end of the school day.

In line with our Charges and Remissions Policy late pick ups are charged at £10 per hour.

As late pick up has occurred more than once please may we request that you make payment of £10 via the school office or on school comms by Friday or contact the Headteacher to discuss a debt repayment plan.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Horsley
School Admin Officer

Mrs S Edward
HEADTEACHER