



The Beacon CE Primary School

Debt Recovery Procedures

December 2023

Introduction

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.

The school will take all reasonable measures to collect debts as part of its management of public funds and will make all parents aware of this policy by publishing the policy and procedures for collecting debts on the school website.

1. Breakfast and After-School Clubs

Bookings should be made and paid for using the app, MyEd, at least one week in advance. Any bookings made after will be charged the emergency rate.

It is recommended that a credit balance is always maintained on the account. To book a place, payment will either be taken at the time of booking or out of the credit balance held on the account. For the office to book an emergency place there must be sufficient funds on the account to cover the cost. Payment is required for all days booked even if the child does not attend, the exception being when school is closed. Should the place no longer be required, the parent/carer is to advise the School Office at least one week in advance, otherwise the parent/carer is still liable for charges.

Should the parent/carer fall into arrears and fail to make an immediate payment, the child will no longer be able to attend either Breakfast or After-School Club until the balance has been cleared.

2. Non-Funded Nursery Sessions

As per the agreement signed by the parent/carer, payment should be made a minimum of one week in advance and a credit balance is always maintained. Payment is required for all days booked even if the child does not attend, the exception being when school is closed. Should the child no longer require a place the parent/carer is to provide the Nursery with at least four weeks' notice. During this period charges will still be applicable.

Should the parent/carer fall into arrears and fail to make an immediate payment, the Nursery place will be suspended until the arrears are paid. However, charges may still apply. If the balance is not cleared within one week, then this place may be withdrawn.

3. School Meals

All pupils who are not Free School Meal eligible are required to pay for a meal from Year 3 onwards.

We recommend that payment for school meals is made a minimum of one week in advance and a credit balance is always maintained. Payment for school meals must be paid, at the latest, by the Friday of the previous week.

Should the parent/carer fall into arrears of **more than one week** and fail to make a payment within one week of receiving a reminder, further reminder letters will be sent which will advise the parent/carer that their debt will possibly be transferred to a debt recovery agency.

4. Educational Visits

Letters will be sent home well in advance of an Educational Visit taking place. Voluntary contributions may be sought for activities during the school day which entail additional costs, without voluntary contributions, a trip may be cancelled. Further details can be found in the 'Charging & Remissions Policy'. Any details regarding contributions will be sent via letter and all payments for trips will be collected in advance of the trip taking place, the time frame will be dependent on when payment by the school has to be made to the provider.

5. Residentials

Letters will be sent home well in advance of Residentials taking place. Letters will clearly detail the contribution and/or costs required to pay and the schools options for parents eligible for reduced costs as per the 'Charging & Remissions Policy'. All payments for trips will be collected in advance of the trip taking place, the time frame will be dependent on when payment by the school must be made to the provider.

If a parent/carer has any outstanding debt with the school, then the decision may be made that the child cannot attend the Residential. However, this will be dealt with on an individual basis.

6. Reporting of Outstanding Debt Levels

The Head teacher/School Business Manager will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is regularly monitored. 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 Governing Body. The Governing Body will review the level of outstanding debts every term to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debts is effective. Details of all reminders will be maintained in school. Where a letter is issued, a copy must be retained on file.

7. Debt Recovery Procedures

Breakfast Club/After School Club/Nursery

Where payment from the parent/carer has not been received for Breakfast Club/After School Club/Nursery, the following process should be applied:

Note: This relates to Breakfast Club/Afterschool Club bookings that have not been booked via the app and therefore there is an outstanding balance on the account.

Text/Email 'overdue payment' reminder

If by Friday mornings or last day of the school week, no payment has been made for the following week, a text/email will be sent advising of the amount of payment required.

First 'overdue payment' reminder letter

If by Monday mornings no payment has been made the 1st formal reminder letter will be sent home advising if full payment is not received immediately their child's breakfast club/after-school club/nursery place may be suspended.

Second 'overdue payment' reminder letter

If full payment is not received by two days after the first letter has been sent, the 2nd formal reminder letter will be sent home advising their child's breakfast club/after-school club/nursery place HAS been suspended for the following week.

If payment is not received by <date given in letter>, or a payment plan not agreed then the child's place will be cancelled.

A follow up phone call will be made the next day to the parent/carer as they will need to make alternative arrangements for their child.

Third (FINAL) 'overdue payment' reminder letter

If by the following Monday no payment or response is made, the 3rd formal reminder letter will be sent home advising this is a 'Final Reminder', payment must be received by the Friday of that week otherwise the child's place WILL be cancelled and will result in the school taking possibly legal action.

School Meals

Where payment from the parent/carer has not been received for School Meals, the following process will apply:

1st Text/Email 'overdue payment' reminder

If by the Monday morning or first day of the school week, no payment has been made for the current week, a text/email will be sent advising of the amount of payment required.

2nd Text/Email 'overdue payment' reminder

If by Friday or the last day of the school week, no payment has been made for the current week, a text/email will be sent advising of the amount of payment required.

First 'overdue payment' reminder letter

If by the following week, no payment has been made and therefore the account is in arrears, the 1st formal reminder letter will be sent home advising if full payment is not received immediately it may result in the school taking possible legal action.

Second/Continuous 'overdue payment' reminder letter

If payment has still not been made, the 2nd formal reminder letter will be sent home advising if full payment is not received immediately it may result in the school taking possible legal action. This letter will be continually updated to reflect the amount of outstanding debt and sent home weekly until the debt has been cleared/recovered.

Educational Visits/Residentials

Where payment from the parent/carer has not been received for Educational Visits/Residentials, the following process will apply:

1st Text/Email 'payment' reminder

Text/email to be sent one week before the payment deadline issued on the letters, to remind parents/carers of the date payment needs to be made by.

2nd Text/Email 'payment' reminder

Text/email to be sent one day before the payment deadline issued on the letters, to remind parents/carers of the date payment needs to be made by and advise that the trip may not go ahead if not enough contributions are made.

Continuous Text/Email 'payment' reminder

Texts/emails are to be sent at regular intervals following the payment deadline, to remind parents/carers that payment needs to be made by and advise that the trip may not go ahead if not enough contributions are made.

8. Costs of debt recovery

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. The debtor will be formally advised in writing that they will be required to pay the additional costs incurred by the school in recovering the debt. This decision and its basis will be recorded and reported to the Governing Body.