

CHANCERY EDUCATION TRUST

DEBT RECOVERY POLICY

MARCH 2021

Next Review Date: March 2024

Chancery Education Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

CHANCERY EDUCATION TRUST

DEBT RECOVERY POLICY

Introduction

The Chancery Education Trust has a duty to ensure the Academy School receives all the funds which it is due. This policy has been created to ensure the appropriate procedures are in place to deal with debts and the recovery of assets. It encompasses all debts owed to the Academy School including, but not limited to, payments for goods, services, school trips and school meal payments.

Rationale

This policy has been compiled recognising the difficulties placed on Academy Schools in balancing the social welfare of pupils with the management of the Academy School budget. By introducing a zero-tolerance debt policy, we aim to reduce the risk of parents incurring large debts that they will struggle to pay and minimise the amount of staff time taken to chase outstanding payments. Our consistent, fair and clear approach will help parents and carers understand the procedure and what is expected.

As the Academy School is responsible for managing payments and arrears from the school budget, when debts are incurred, the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money that should be spent on the children's education by law is used to pay for debts incurred by parents. Every parent will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents give this policy their full support.

Key Information

1. A copy of the Debt Recovery Policy is available on the Academy School website.
2. All services provided including school meals, music tuition, breakfast and after school club places should be paid for in advance.

School Meals

The Academy School has a duty to provide free school meals to those who are eligible, but there is no obligation beyond this. If arrears exist, the Academy School can refuse to continue to provide hot meals.

If you believe your child may be eligible for Free School Meals please refer to www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals which details the eligibility criteria and how to apply for free school meals.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT UNTIL THE ACADEMY SCHOOL RECEIVE CONFIRMATION FROM THE LOCAL AUTHORITY OF YOUR CHILDS ENTITLEMENT TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS YOU WILL STILL NEED TO PAY FOR YOUR CHILDS LUNCH.

Parents, please note: it is your responsibility to apply for free school meals and to ensure that the Local Authority is kept up-to-date with your circumstances.

Currently only infant children (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils) are entitled to a Universal Infant Free School Meal. This is NOT the same as a free school meal from the Local Authority. When your child reaches Year 3, parents will have to pay for hot school lunches unless you meet the free school meal criteria as outlined above.

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Payments of Services

The Academy School provides a number of other services; these include before and after school care, music tuition, school trips and the hiring of premises. A separate payment item is listed for every child. All payments for chargeable services should be made in advance using the Academy School's online payment system.

If you have any difficulty accessing the Academy School's online payment system please contact the Academy School Office immediately.

Parents are able to set up a payment plan to bring the arrears up-to-date by contacting the Academy School Office.

Payment Plan – if payments agreed in the Payment Plan (sufficient enough to cover the ongoing costs and pay off past debts) are made on time, the service provision will continue. If regular payments are not made, the plan will be withdrawn.

Debt Recovery

The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is regularly monitored.

Where payment for services is not received in advance and arrears accumulate, the following procedures apply:

INFORMAL REMINDERS – Debtors will be formally reminded that monies are owed and payment is due. The dates of the reminders are recorded.

FORMAL REMINDERS – If no response is received from Informal Reminders, further action will be taken. If the debt is still outstanding for school meals, breakfast and afterschool clubs, your child will be suspended from these services.

In the event of an outstanding dinner money debt, or other services provided by the school (e.g. before and after school care etc) payment received for residential trips or visits maybe used to offset these debts. Once these debts are cleared and in addition, the residential trip will subsequently need to be paid for to enable the child to attend.

We appreciate that from time to time, financial difficulties do arise. If this is the case please let the school know as soon as possible so that we can see if there are any ways in which we might be able to help, or refer you to somewhere that can.

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

School Support

We hope that by implementing this policy, we are able to help you, as parents, manage your payments better and at the same time, ensure that our available budget is used to enhance your children's learning. The chasing of debts is extremely time-consuming for our staff. Time spent checking debts and sending out letters takes our staff away from other duties at school that would benefit all children. We request that all parents and carers work with us by making regular payments, in advance, for all our services.

This policy will be published on the Academy School website and a hard copy of the policy will be available on request.

Monitoring and Implementation Policy

The policy is reviewed every 3 years, although the Trust may vary or amend it periodically to ensure that we fulfil our obligation around the Debt Recovery Policy. All proposed changes to this policy would be made following the approval from the Committee.

	Name	Date
Policy written by	CFO	March 2021
Agreed by Committee	Finance Committee	April 2021
Ratified by Committee	Finance Committee	June 2021
Adopted by Governing Board	CET Board/Finance Committee	May 2021
To be reviewed every 3 years	March 2024	

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Chancery Education Trust – Debt Recovery Policy – March 2021