



Reviewed on:	8 th February 2023
Next Review:	February 2024
Signed by Chair	<i>Hane Parker</i>

STENBURY FEDERATION

Charging and Remissions Policy

At Stenbury Federation we recognise the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including trips, clubs and residential experiences can make towards pupils' education. We aim to promote and provide such activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

We believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents/carers' financial means. This policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities are offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers, which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

Charges

1 Activities for which charges may be made:

a) Activities outside school hours Non-residential activities (other than those listed in 2) which take place outside school hours, but only if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside school hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours).

b) Residential activities

Board and lodging costs (but only those costs) of residential trips deemed to take place during school time. Residential trips deemed to take place outside school time (other than for those activities listed in 2 below). When any trip is arranged parents/carers will be notified of the policy for allocating places.

c) Music tuition

Music tuition for individuals or groups of up to four pupils

2 Activities which will incur no charge: (Voluntary contributions would be welcome)

- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- Tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum
- Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours
- Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip
- Transport provided in connection with an educational trip (e.g. swimming).

Remissions

Where the parents of a pupil who is entitled to Free School Meals, is experiencing hardship and requests some financial support, partial or full support can be given. Payment plans and longer time scales of repayment can also be set up if appropriate. The Head and the Chair of the Governing Board may offer to remit in full or part the cost of any residential activity which is deemed to take place in school hours or where it forms part of the curriculum. Authorisation for such remission will be made by the Head Teacher in consultation with the Chair of the Governing Board.

Arrangements for Monitoring and Evaluation

The Governing Body will monitor the impact of this policy by receiving on a yearly basis a financial report on those activities that resulted in charges being levied, the subsidies awarded (without giving names) and the source of those subsidies. It will seek to evaluate the impact of the school's extended services on those children most in need of additional support

Debt Recovery Policy

1. General requirements

The school will take all reasonable measures to vigorously collect debts as part of its management of public funds. A debt will be written off, only after all reasonable measures (commensurate with the size and nature of the debt) have been taken to recover it.

The school's debt recovery policy will observe the relevant financial regulations and guidance set out in the Scheme for Financing Schools and any other legal requirements. In particular:

- the Governing Body will approve the write-off of all debts, stocks, stores and surplus assets
- all such write-offs will be recorded in the minutes of the governing body
- a formal record of any debts written off will be maintained and this will be retained for 7 years (the form of this record is specified below).
- the school will seek the advice of the Council's Legal Services Section should they consider taking legal or other action to recover the debt.

In general payment for all goods and services supplied by the School should be collected in advance or 'at the point of sale'.

The procedures to secure the collection of all debts are outlined below and should be followed by all School staff.

2. Acceptable 'credit period'

The Governing Body must determine the length of time they deem as an acceptable 'credit settlement period' before the debt recovery procedures are applied.

The Governing Body may consider that an 'acceptable' credit period may vary between different income generating activities; for example;

- School lettings;
- Trips and activities.

The Governors may have stipulated a maximum settlement period for school lettings in a separate 'Lettings policy'. However, in order to ensure a consistent approach and demonstrate transparency, the 'acceptable' period for each activity should be stipulated in this policy.

Debt recovery procedures should be applied in accordance with item 4 of this policy.

3. Reporting of outstanding debt levels

The Head teacher 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 Headteacher

The Headteacher will review the level of outstanding debts every half term to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debts is effective.

(Monitoring of outstanding debts may be differentiated by type, e.g. if lettings debts prove more of a problem then the frequency and degree of monitoring should reflect this).

4. Debt Recovery Procedures

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

- (a) A statement should be issued via School Money for the full amount in order to officially set up the debt;
The date by which payment is due should be added to the statement.
- (b) In all other cases, such as;
 - Correspondence with parents, etc. the maximum period that the school regards as reasonable before payment is overdue should be clearly stated.
- (c) A record of all goods and services will be maintained via school money detailing:

5. Verbal and Written Reminders

5.1 Details of all reminders, whether verbal or in writing, should be maintained. Where a letter is issued, a copy must be retained on file.

Should a debt need to be taken beyond two reminder, formal evidence may have to be produced. It is therefore important that at least one, but preferably two reminders are sent.

5.2 *Initial 'overdue payment' reminder*

An initial reminder will be sent weekly via School Money text.

5.3 *First 'overdue payment' reminder letter*

A formal reminder statement should be issued 2 weeks after the informal *reminder / the date of supply*.

If action is to proceed further, it is necessary to prove that all reasonable attempts have been made to recover the debt, and that these attempts have been made in a timely manner, i.e. at the time that the debt first became overdue.

The date of the initial reminder should be recorded.

5.4 *Second 'overdue payment' reminder letter*

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

The date of the initial reminder should be recorded.

6. **Failure to respond to reminders / settle a debt**

If after two reminders, a response or payment is not received, a letter will be sent to the debtor advising them that the matter will be referred to the school's legal advisers. At the discretion of the Governing Body / Finance Committee / Headteacher the debtor may be advised that they will be required to pay in advance for all future supplies, or the supply will no longer be available to them.

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

7. 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.

However, 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 our 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 debt – 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 'repayment terms' these may be negotiated at the discretion of the Headteacher.

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 Head teacher 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 Governing Body / Finance Committee

8. Costs of debt recovery

Where the school incurs material additional costs in recovering a debt then the Head teacher 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 / Finance Committee

9. Bad debts

This debt recovery policy should be cross-referenced to the Scheme for Financing Schools.

Write-off of any debt requires the written approval of the Finance Committee / Governing Body.

A record of the write-off, the reason for it, and the approval for it, will be retained for 7 years.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed and approved annually by the *Finance Committee and reported to the Full Governing Body.*