Charging, Remissions, Refunds and Debts Policy

November 2026

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Introduction

The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including trips, clubs and residential experiences, can make towards pupils' education at Castle Hill Primary School.
The Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

Charges

The Governing Body reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances for activities organised by the school:

- **School Trips within School Hours**

The full cost of approved school day trips within school hours to cover the costs of admissions, transport or specific activities as appropriate.

- **School Journeys in School Hours**

The full cost of approved residential activities deemed to take place in school hours.

- **Activities outside School Hours**

The full cost to each pupil of all approved activities deemed to be optional extras taking place outside school hours.

- **Individual Instrumental Tuition**

The cost to the pupil for providing any instrumental tuition.

- **Charging in Kind**

The cost of materials, ingredients, equipment (or the provision of them by parents). The Governing Body reserves the right to charge for ingredients and materials or require them to be provided if the parents have indicated in advance that they wish to own the finished product.

- **General**

The Governing Body may from time to time, amend the categories of activity for which a charge may be made. Nothing in this policy statement precludes the Governing Body from inviting parents to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of additional activities, which take place in school time. Parents may be advised that the continuance of an activity may depend upon voluntary contributions, but once it has been decided to run such an activity no qualifying child will be excluded on the grounds of voluntary contributions.

Remissions

The Governing Body may wish to remit in full or in part the cost of other activities for particular groups of parents, for example, in the case of family hardship. When arranging a chargeable activity such parents will be invited in confidence for the remission of charges in full or in part. The Head teacher will make authorisation for such remissions.

Refunds

Where possible the Headteacher, on behalf of the Governing Body, shall seek to make refunds on monies paid to the school in respect of:

- school day trips,
- visits lasting more than two days, and
- sums over £25.

Refunds will be paid if a child cannot take part in an activity for a medical, emergency, personal or family reason. Any deposits paid cannot be refunded due to costs incurred when making bookings.

Debts

The school takes 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.
A formal record of any debts written off will be maintained and this will be retained for 7 years.
The school will not initiate any legal action to recover debts, but will refer any debts which it has not been able to collect (unless a decision to write-off the debt is demonstrably a reasonable course of action) to the Council's Legal Services Section to consider taking legal or other action to recover the debt.
The school will NOT write-off any debt belonging to the Local Authority or another party. If in doubt as to the appropriate action to collect any such debts the school will seek advice promptly from officers of the Local Authority.

Acceptable ‘Credit Period’

The Governing Body must determine the length of time they deem to 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;
- School Meals;
- Trips and activities.

Debt recovery procedures should be applied in accordance with the procedure outlined below.

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.
The Headteacher will review the level of outstanding debts every quarter 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 school meal debts prove more of a problem than those for lettings of premises then the frequency and degree of monitoring should reflect this*).

Debt Recovery Procedures

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) An invoice should be issued by the local authority for the full amount in order to officially set up the debt;
Where invoices are raised they should state the date by which payment is due *date/month/year*.
(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, for example contributions for a school trip should be received by *date/month/year*.
No goods will be sold unless payment or payment terms are received at the time of purchase.

Verbal and Written Reminders

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 letters, formal written evidence may have to be produced.

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.
In general, the School Administrators will notify the parent/guardian after having built up a good relationship with the parents.
The date of the initial reminder should be recorded.

First ‘Overdue Payment’ Reminder Letter
A formal reminder letter should be issued 1 week 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.

Second ‘Overdue Payment’ Reminder Letter
A second reminder letter will be issued 1 week after the First Reminder Letter.
The date of the initial reminder should be recorded.

Failure to respond to reminders / settle a debt
If after 2 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 Council’s Legal Services Section. At the discretion of the Head teacher 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.

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 for ‘repayment terms’ these may be negotiated at the discretion of the Head teacher.
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.

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.

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 Head Teacher up to a maximum of £150.
A record of the write-off, the reason for it, and the approval for it, will be retained for 7 years.