Bournebrook
Church of England Primary School

DEBT RECOVERY POLICY

Adopted by the Governing Body:	
Date:	Summer 2026
Date of next review:	Summer 2028

The review of this policy will be as and when required in response to national requirements and in light of continuous school-based monitoring and evaluation data.

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Review date	Summer 2028

Legal framework

1.1 This policy will adhere to the relevant legislation and statutory guidance surrounding school payments and debt recovery, including the following:

- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. As a general rule, to avoid incurring debts, payments for materials and services provided by the school should be collected in advance or at the point of sale.

2.2. Any person(s) involved in the monitoring, recording and pursuing of debts owed to the school must formally record any information gathered and actions taken – data which is to be kept by the school for a period of seven years.

2.3. The school's governing body:
- Will regularly review details of its debts and what recovery action is needed.
- Must be consulted if legal services are required for debt recovery.
- Will adhere to the privacy rights of pupils and their guardians in all cases.
- May decide to leave a case of debt recovery to the decision of Headteacher.

2.4. The Headteacher will ensure:
- Debt reminders are recorded and those records maintained for a period of seven years – dates and times of letters, phone calls, emails, conversations or any other correspondence.
- Instances of debt are judged on an individual basis, with consideration of the nature of the debt and the circumstances of the family involved.
- The privacy of the pupil and their family will be protected by all staff.
- The level of outstanding debt owed to the school can be determined at short notice.

3. Acceptable 'credit period'

3.1. In the case of a debt, the Headteacher will agree upon a 'credit period' within which the debtor can pay the outstanding sum before debt recovery procedures are exercised. This period of time may vary, at the discretion of the Headteacher, dependent on the nature and size of the debt. The school will work with the debtor to agree a payment plan if necessary.

4. Declaring outstanding debt levels

4.1. The Headteacher and School Business Manager will review the level of outstanding debts every month to determine whether current debt levels are acceptable and whether current methods and procedures to recover debts are effective.

4.2. Any individual cases of debt that are deemed to require intervention will then be pursued by the procedure starting from section five of this policy.

5. Debt recovery procedures

5.1. Where there is an outstanding payment yet to be received and the acceptable credit period has been surpassed, an official invoice should be created outlining the value and reason for the debt, as well as the debtor's identity.

5.2. Upon creating the invoice and stipulating a date on which it must be paid by, there is acknowledgement from the school that the debt has been set up.

6. Verbal and written overdue payment reminders

6.1. Initial verbal reminder – informal in-person/telephone/email correspondence notifying person of debt (date and time should be officially recorded).

6.2. First formal written reminder – an official, dated letter addressed to the debtor should be written up two weeks after the first informal reminder and should acknowledge that it took place.

6.3. Second formal written reminder – this should come two weeks after the second reminder, citing the details of both previous reminders and stating that concerted efforts have been made to make the person aware that an outstanding debt is overdue.

6.4. Third formal written reminder – this should come two weeks after the third reminder, citing the details from the previous reminders and inviting the debtor to attend a meeting with the Headteacher and School Business Manager. At this meeting, parties will agree a payment plan and time frame for repayment.

7. Failure to respond

7.1. If these reminders are not responded to, another letter will be sent to the debtor advising them that the case has been sent to the school's legal advisors and the School Governing Board.

8. Negotiation of debt repayment

8.1. It is expected that the debt should be repaid as soon as possible, particularly after repeated reminders; however, this can be negotiated at the discretion of the Headteacher.

8.2. If there is a case where the debtor is deemed to be refusing to pay without sufficient reason, the school may consider involving Local Authority legal services to resolve the issue and recuperate owed funds.

9. Debt recovery costs

9.1. It may be advisable to waive or partially waive debts where it is deemed that it does not make financial sense to continue allocating time and resources to pursuing.

9.2. The governing board will review any case in which debt may be waived, and come to a final decision based on the value of costs versus value of the debt, taking into account the advice of the Headteacher.