

*Roots to grow; wings to fly.*



*Everyone achieves their potential.*

# TATTENHALL PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

*We respect, we enjoy, we believe.*

## Charging, Remissions, Payments and Debt Recovery Policy

<b>Person responsible for policy:</b>	Mrs Nicola Bolton
<b>Approved</b>	25.2.24
<b>Signed</b>	Mr P Brown
<b>To be reviewed</b>	February 2025

At Tattenhall Park Primary School 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 is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

### **Charges**

#### **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 pupils.

##### d) Activities within school hours

Non-residential activities which take place within school hours including; swimming travel costs, whole class/school workshops or events.

#### **Activities which will incur no charge:**

- 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).

Tattenhall Park Primary School must have a policy in place to ensure the repayment and recuperation of any outstanding debts incurred by the school on behalf of a pupil, including fees for school meals, Nursery provision, and after school-clubs. 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.

Each case is to be treated individually and the circumstances that have led to the outstanding debt will be taken into account to determine the best course of action and whether it is fair and reasonable to pursue the debt in its entirety if at all. Tattenhall Park Primary School is committed to adhering to legal requirements regarding charging for school food, activities and materials, and meeting all statutory guidance provided by the DfE.

### **School Dinners**

School dinners are at a cost of £3 each and are to be paid for in advance using the Parentpay Cypad system. Each parent/carer is provided with a password to access their account online. Parents must order before 8am each day if they wish their child to have a school meal. Parents/carers will be notified if their child needs a school meal as they have not brought a packed lunch. If there is a debt on the account, parents will be unable to book a meal until this is cleared.

Children in receipt of free school meals or universal infant free school meals do not need to pay for meals.

### **After School Club & Breakfast Club (TASC)**

At Tattenhall Park Primary School we have an after school club (snack provided) from 3.15pm-6.00pm Monday to Friday at a cost of £10.00 each session with a late collection charge of £10.00, Breakfast Club (including breakfast) from 7.45am-8.45am at a cost of £5.00 and Drop Off Session from 8.30am at a cost of £2.50. Payments are to be paid on booking sessions using the iPal website, each parent/carer must register with iPal before being able to make TASC (Tattenhall Around School Care) bookings.

Parents/carers will be notified by email message via iPal if payments are outstanding. If a parent/carer has debt on their iPal account, they are prevented from booking further TASC sessions until this debt is cleared. Where a parent/carer pays for sessions using childcare vouchers, these must be released from the voucher provider, received in school and then verified against the parent/carers iPal account.

It can take several days for the voucher payment to reach school, so parents/carers must release the voucher to cover sessions booked at the time of booking. This will ensure parents/carers can make further bookings or amend sessions already booked as soon as possible. Until childcare vouchers have been verified on parents/carers iPal account, no further bookings or amendments to sessions can be made.

### **Nursery Provision**

Tattenhall Park Primary School, have an onsite nursery provision for children aged 3-4-year-old. All 3-year-old children are entitled to 15 hours free funded nursery education per week in one setting from the term following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. 30hr funded nursery care must be applied for by the parent/carer directly from the government funding scheme. If parents/carers are eligible for 15 or 30hrs nursery funding, a claim must be registered with the school by the following dates:

**Autumn Claim** (September to the end of December) - to be received by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> week in September.

**Spring Claim** (January to the end of March) - to be received by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> week in January

**Summer Claim** (April to the end of July) - to be received by the 1<sup>st</sup> week back following Spring Break.

We have introduced a termly pre -payment system. Parents are billed at start of each term, they have till the end of that term to pay. If a child does not attend because they are off sick, parents are still charged for this session to cover the staffing costs. If child does extra hours (following agreement with school that there is space to accommodate this request) this is then added on weekly to the balance. We will offer parents a payment plan to support payment of outstanding balances. This needs to be arranged with Mrs Oldfield, School Business Manager.

Payments are to be paid promptly using the Parentpay website, each parent/carer is provided with a password to access their account online. Parents/carers will be notified by text message if payment is outstanding from the previous month. If a parent/carer has 2 months of outstanding debt they will be informed by letter that their

additional care and/ provision will be cancelled until the debt has been fully paid.

If additional wrap around care is required, nursery children are permitted to book TASC sessions via our iPal website /app and must register prior to booking sessions. Where a parent/carer is not using all of the 15 or 30 funded hours in nursery, they can opt to use some of this funding to cover After School care.

### **Trips**

Payments are to be paid using the Parentpay website, each parent/carer is provided with a password to access their account online. Residential trips will have payment plans with specific dates for payments to be made. Parents/carers will be notified by text message if payment is outstanding.

### **Remissions**

Where the parents of a student 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 Teacher and the Governing Body 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 Governing Body.

## 1. 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 (2014) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2015) 'Schemes for financing schools'
- DfE (2017) 'Governance handbook'

## 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 **finance monitoring governors**:

- 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, in conjunction with the Chair of Governors to leave a case of debt recovery to the decision of Head Teacher.

2.4. The **Head Teacher** 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 **Head Teacher** 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 Head Teacher, 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 Head Teacher and SBM 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.

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 to the school's legal advisors and the School Governing Board. It is then for these parties to agree on a time-frame for a repayment or, if necessary, a payment plan for separate instalments.

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 Head Teacher, particularly if the circumstances in section nine of this policy apply.
- 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. **Exceptional circumstances and remissions**

9.1. The school will ensure that guardians of pupils are aware of the help the school can extend to those in financial difficulty. Guardians who **may** be eligible for remissions are those in receipt of any of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) did not exceed £16,190 in the previous financial year
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- An income related employment and support allowance

9.2. In a case where there is, or it is suspected that there is, an overdue debt from a family who may qualify for remissions, details of the different types of bursary available should be sent to the debtor in question.

9.3. The governing board is not guaranteed to, but may decide to, waive or reduce the outstanding debt in these circumstances, considering the advice of the Head Teacher.

## 10. **Debt recovery costs**

10.1. In addition to the remission allowances outlined in section nine, 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.

10.2. 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, considering the advice of the Head Teacher.