

The TLC Nursery Federation



Debt recovery, charging and remissions
policy.

Approved by:

Chair of Governors: *Mallesh Yanambakkam*

Date: 13.10.2020

Headteacher: *Eelister*

Date: 13.10.2020

Zoe Keating

Review date: 12.10.2021

Introduction.

At the TLC federation, the majority of children are in receipt of their free 15 hour entitlement. The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that a wide range of additional activities can make towards each children's personal and social development in this time, e.g. cooking, short walking trips to the park or shops, special visitors, hatching eggs, butterflies, the farm. The Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the children.

The school also offers additional sessions that can be paid for by parents. This could be in the form of our Lunch Club, additional nursery sessions or nursery sessions for two year olds who are not eligible for a free 15 hour placement.

The school aims to charge weekly in every situation to prevent parental debt to the school. Should debts accumulate, we will take all reasonable measures to vigorously collect debts as part of our 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 published by Slough Borough Council, Section 5 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and Schedule 14 to the Act, School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2014 and any other legal requirements.

Charging.

Any charges made by the school must meet the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1996. The governors endorse the guiding principles contained in the Act, in particular that no child should have his/her access to the curriculum limited by charges. The Governing Body may, from time to time, amend the categories for which a charge may be made and our debt collection model will be applied to these circumstances. The Governing Body reserve the right to revise this Policy as necessary.

Charges.

No charge can be made for education and care during a child's 15 hour entitlement. However, a voluntary contribution will be asked for activities within school. The governing body or head teacher will make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the governing body or head teacher will make this clear to parents at the outset. It is important to note that no child will be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. All children will still be given an equal chance to engage in visits and activities in the nursery.

The Governing Body reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances.

- Voluntary Contributions – the Governing Body may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of any activity that takes place during school hours. At the federation we suggest a weekly contribution, which is aimed at meeting costs and not exceeding costs i.e. the school does not aim to profit from any voluntary contributions. In the event of insufficient voluntary contributions being made some activities may have to be cancelled.
- Lunch Club the school offers lunch club sessions. These sessions are over and above the 15 hour free entitlement and therefore carry a cost, which is paid for weekly or half termly with permission from the headteacher.
- Additional Nursery Sessions –The school offers some additional paid for nursery sessions. These sessions are over and above the 15 hour free entitlement and therefore carry a cost.

- Loss, damage and breakages - in cases of loss, damage or breakages of school books or activity packs on loan to parents the school makes a charge to cover the cost of replacements.
- Uniform – The school sells uniform from the office and aims to do this and make no profit on this. Uniform items are paid for at the point of sale.

Charging Procedures.

Payment for charged sessions in the nursery.

1. A contract is given to parents and bank details shared (if parents choose this method). The place cannot be secured without a signed contract.
2. The contract details the dates that payments are due for the academic year and the amounts to be paid. The payments are all made either in advance, weekly or before the end of the term depending on the contract agreed.
3. **Initial 'overdue payment' reminder and first written 'overdue payment' reminder.** If a payment has not been received by the allocated date, nursery staff will contact the parents within 2 working days. An email will then be sent to parents to re-iterate this information, and a copy will be kept in the school files.
4. **Second written 'overdue payment' reminder (APPENDIX 2).** Within a week of an outstanding balance not being received an email will be sent to parents reminding them of the balance owed and setting a new deadline for payment of 2 weeks after the original deadline for payment. A copy of this email will be kept in the school's files. At this point parents will be offered the opportunity to talk to the bursar or the head teacher about the remissions procedures. Parents will be informed at this stage that their child's space in the additional paid sessions will be offered to another family if the balance is not received.
5. **Failure to settle the debt.** Should the balance remain outstanding by the extended deadline the child will not be able to attend the charged sessions at the nursery, and the deposit will not be refunded. A letter will be sent to parents from the head teacher informing them of this, and a copy of the letter will be kept in the school's files and the finance, premises and pay governor will be informed.

Payment for Lunch Club.

6. During the first half term of the academic year, once a start date is confirmed in lunch club, an emailed invoice will be sent to parents. The balance for the first half term will be due within 2 weeks of the invoice being sent out.
7. Subsequent half termly payments for lunch club will be made in attending the sessions and parents will book for a session or number of sessions each week for a whole half term.
8. Invoices will be sent to parents each half term, with a date that the balance is due by.
9. **Initial 'overdue payment' reminder and first written 'overdue payment' reminder.** If a payment has not been received by the allocated date, nursery staff will contact the parents within 2 working days. An email will then be sent to parents to re-iterate this information, and a copy will be kept in the school files.
10. **Second written 'overdue payment' reminder (APPENDIX 2).** Within a week of an outstanding balance not being received an email will be sent to parents reminding them of the balance owed and setting a new deadline for payment of 2 weeks after the original deadline for payment. A copy of this email will be kept in the school's files. At this point parents will be offered the opportunity to talk to the bursar or the head teacher about the remissions procedures. Parents will be informed at this stage that their child's space in the lunch club will be offered to another family if the balance is not received.
11. **Failure to settle the debt.** Should the balance remain outstanding by the extended deadline the child will not be able to attend the lunch club at the nursery during the next half term. A letter will be sent to parents from the head teacher informing them of this, and a

copy of the letter will be kept in the school's files and the Finance, premises and pay governor will be informed.

Difficulties with payment.

Debtors are expected, whenever possible, to settle the amount owed by a single payment as soon as possible after receiving the first 'overdue payment' reminder. As part of our charging process, parents are offered an opportunity to discuss difficulties with making a payment with the head teacher or bursar. It may be possible for the school to break the payments down into more manageable chunks through a payment plan, 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.

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.

Remissions.

Where the parents of a child are unable to meet any one of the charges the school may make, they can apply in confidence to the head teacher for the remission of charges in part or full. The head teacher in consultation with the finance governor will make authorisation of remission.

Writing off debt.

In general, payment for all goods and services supplied by the School should be collected inline with the contract details or 'at the point of sale'. In line with the local authority's 'Scheme for financing schools' the Governing Body is empowered to write off debts providing the debt has been outstanding in excess of six months and the Governing Body is certain the debt is unrecoverable. The Director of Children's Services will write to schools each year asking for details of debts written off and this will be reported to the appropriate committee of the Authority.

Reporting of outstanding debt levels

The Head teacher will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is monitored each half term. 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 as detailed in appendix A. These details will be reported to the finance, premises and pay committee with any action that has been put in place to recover the debt.

APPENDIX 2.

Date:

Dear Parents of: *(insert name)*.

Re: Outstanding fees for the 2 year old provision/ lunch club.

The deadline to pay for the Autumn/Spring/Summer 2 year old/lunch Club fees was due *(insert date)*. Despite contacting you on the *(insert date)*, we are yet to receive this payment. In order for you to retain your child's place in the 2 year old provision/lunch club we will need to receive your payment by *(insert date)* at the very latest. Failure to make payment by this date will subsequently forfeit your 2 year old/lunch club place immediately and your deposit will be retained by the school.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that fees are payable in advance of the term your child is due to attend.

If you have difficulties making a payment by this date or you wish to discuss this further please contact me via Reception on 01753 536293.

I thank you in advance for making your payment.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Lister
Interim Headteacher at Chalvey Nursery School.

Date:

Dear Parents of: *(insert name)*.

Re: Outstanding fees for the 2 year old provision/ lunch club.

The deadline to pay for the Autumn/Spring/Summer 2 year old/lunch Club fees was due *(insert date)*. Despite contacting you on the *(insert date)*, we are yet to receive this payment. In order for you to retain your child's place in the 2 year old provision/lunch club we will need to receive your payment by *(insert date)* at the very latest. Failure to make payment by this date will subsequently forfeit your 2 year old/lunch club place immediately and your deposit will be retained by the school.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that fees are payable in advance of the term your child is due to attend.

If you have difficulties making a payment by this date or you wish to discuss this further please contact me via Reception on 01753 521975.

I thank you in advance for making your payment.

Yours sincerely,
Zoe Keating
Interim Headteacher at Slough Centre Nursery School.

APPENDIX 3.

Date:

Dear Parents of: *(insert name)*.

Re: Withdrawal of nursery place within the 2 year old provision/lunch club.

The deadline to pay for the Autumn/Spring/Summer *(delete as appropriate)* Nursery fees/Lunch Club fees was *(insert date)*. Despite contacting you on *(insert date)* and sending you a further letter on *(insert date)* providing you with an extended deadline to make this payment, we still have not received this payment.

As a result of this, you have now forfeited your child's place in the 2 year old provision/lunch club. This place has now been offered to the next child on the waiting list and your deposit has been retained by the school.

If you wish to discuss this letter further please contact me via the reception desk on 07851065451

Yours sincerely,

Emma Lister
Interim Head Teacher at Chalvey Nursery School

Date:

Dear Parents of: *(insert name)*.

Re: Withdrawal of nursery place within the 2 year old provision/lunch club.

The deadline to pay for the Autumn/Spring/Summer *(delete as appropriate)* Nursery fees/Lunch Club fees was *(insert date)*. Despite contacting you on *(insert date)* and sending you a further letter on *(insert date)* providing you with an extended deadline to make this payment, we still have not received this payment.

As a result of this, you have now forfeited your child's place in the 2 year old provision/lunch club. This place has now been offered to the next child on the waiting list and your deposit has been retained by the school.

If you wish to discuss this letter further please contact me via the reception desk on 07851065451

Yours sincerely,

Zoe Keating
Interim Head Teacher at Slough Centre Nursery School