



Believe Achieve Succeed

## St Peter's C of E (Aided) Primary School

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### Our Vision Statement

*"At St Peter's we have high expectations where everyone achieves and succeeds within a safe, inclusive Christian community. We promote independence, respect and empathy. Through an exciting curriculum, children are inspired to become lifelong learners and active world citizens."*

### DEBT MANAGEMENT & RECOVERY POLICY

Person Responsible:	Resources Committee
Review Period:	Every 3 years or in light of new regulations
Date Adopted:	Spring Term 2016
Next review:	Spring Term 2019

### INTRODUCTION

Any money owed to the school has an impact upon the school's finances and may affect the resources the school is able to purchase for the pupils of the school. We hope that parents understand this and make every effort possible to avoid owing money to the school. The school will actively pursue the collection of monies owed to it.

Along with the finance department, the Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that procedures are in place for the recovery of any outstanding debt.

This Debt Management Policy sets out the procedures for debt management and recovery, particularly in relation to school meals and our Before/After School Club (BASE).

No uniform will be provided until payment is received in full.

### SCHOOL MEALS

- Payment for school meals should be made at the start of each term. In agreement with the school office, payments can be weekly in advance (usually on a Monday).
- Payment via our on-line SCOPAY system is encouraged, although cash and cheques will be accepted.
- Any arrears of dinner money that arise will be pursued by the school on a weekly basis, via our email system, by phone call or a letter will be posted if the parent has not provided an email address for communication with the school.
- Arrangements can be made to clear any dinner money debt by instalments. Parents are always encouraged to speak to staff regarding outstanding debts.
- **If payments remain outstanding for more than one week** - If payment is not received, a **'first reminder'** email/phone call/letter will be issued at the end of the first week of non-payment requesting payment on the following Monday (see APPENDIX A). Parents are expected to settle the amount owed by a single payment after receiving this letter.
- **If payments remain outstanding for more than two weeks** - a member of school staff will again attempt to contact the parent to discuss the debt. If payment is not forthcoming a **'notification of withdrawal of school meals'** letter/email (see APPENDIX B) will be issued, requesting payment by the following Monday. Further school meals will be suspended until all outstanding debts are cleared. Parents will be expected to provide a packed lunch and this will be made clear in all communication.
- **If payments remain outstanding for more than three weeks** - a **'final warning'** letter indicating possible county court action may be taken (see APPENDIX C) will be posted to the parents. Staff will also continue to discuss the issue by phone/email. The matter will be referred to the **School Governors**.

- If payment is not forthcoming, staff will refer the details to Surrey County Council legal department for guidance on issuing a County Court summons.

If there are extenuating circumstances as to why the debt cannot be promptly settled we would expect parents to make an appointment to speak to a member of the school's staff. Mrs Dunning (Head Teacher), Mrs Hopkins (Business Manager) or Mrs Parry-Shield (Finance Officer) are able to discuss the matter with parents and decide on a repayment plan.

### **RESIDENTIAL VISITS, DAY TRIPS / VISITS**

Please refer to our Charging and Remissions policy for further details.

### **BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CLUB (BASE)**

- Parents are invoiced in arrears for BASE sessions. Payment is expected within 14 days.
- Payment via our on-line SCOPAY system is encouraged, although cash and cheques will be accepted.
- Any outstanding arrears will be pursued by the school on a weekly basis, via our email system, by phone call or a letter will be posted if the parent has not provided an email address for communication with the school.
- Arrangements can be made to clear any outstanding debt by instalments. Parents are always encouraged to speak to staff regarding outstanding debts.
- **If payments remain outstanding for more than 14 days** - If payment is not received, a ***'first reminder'*** email/phone call/letter will be issued at the end of the first week of non-payment requesting payment on the following Monday (see APPENDIX D). Parents are expected to settle the amount owed by a single payment after receiving this letter.
- **If payments remain outstanding for more than 21 days** - a member of school staff will again attempt to contact the parent to discuss the debt. If payment is not forthcoming a ***'notification of withdrawal of BASE sessions'*** letter/email (see APPENDIX E) will be issued, requesting payment by the following Monday. Further BASE sessions will be withdrawn until all outstanding debts are cleared. Parents will be expected to find alternative childcare and this will be made clear in all communication.
- **If payments remain outstanding for more than 28 days** - a ***'final warning'*** letter indicating possible county court action may be taken (see APPENDIX F) will be posted to the parents. Staff will also continue to discuss the issue by phone/email. The matter will be referred to the ***School Governors***.
- If payment is not forthcoming, staff will refer the details to Surrey County Council legal department for guidance on issuing a County Court summons.

If there are extenuating circumstances as to why the debt cannot be promptly settled we would expect parents to make an appointment to speak to a member of the school's staff. Mrs Wilson (BASE Manager), Mrs Dunning (Head Teacher), Mrs Hopkins (Business Manager) or Mrs Parry-Shield (Finance Officer) are able to discuss the matter with parents and decide on a repayment plan and whether further BASE sessions will be available.

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APPENDIX A

**FIRST REMINDER LETTER for chasing unpaid accounts – SCHOOL MEALS**

Dear Parents

Child/children: \_\_\_\_\_

Outstanding Dinner Money: £ \_\_\_\_\_

The above amount is now overdue for payment, and I should be grateful if you would arrange settlement no later than Monday \_\_\_\_\_ (date) so that the necessity for me to take further, more formal action, may be avoided.

If you have paid this amount within the last three working days then please accept my thanks and ignore this letter. If you are unable to pay the outstanding amount, please make an urgent appointment to discuss your situation with Mrs Dunning (head Teacher) or Mrs Hopkins (Business Manager).

Yours faithfully

Finance Office/Business Manager/Head Teacher

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APPENDIX B

**NOTIFICATIONS OF WITHDRAWAL OF SCHOOL MEALS LETTER**

Dear Parents

Child/children: \_\_\_\_\_

Outstanding Dinner Money: £ \_\_\_\_\_

The above amount is now overdue for payment, and I should be grateful if you would arrange settlement no later than Monday \_\_\_\_\_ (date) so we may avoid taking more formal action. You have already received previous reminders and we have no option but to suspend the provision of school meals for your child/children.

**PLEASE PROVIDE A PACKED LUNCH until the outstanding debt is cleared.**

If you have paid this amount within the last three working days then please accept my thanks and ignore this letter. If you are unable to pay the outstanding amount, please make an urgent appointment to discuss your situation with Mrs Dunning (head Teacher) or Mrs Hopkins (Business Manager).

Yours faithfully

Finance Office/Business Manager/Head Teacher

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APPENDIX C

**FINAL WARNING LETTER (prior to County Court proceedings) – SCHOOL MEALS**

Dear Parents

Child/children: \_\_\_\_\_

**Letter Before action – County Court Proceedings**

I regret to note that despite emails, phone calls and text messages, we have received neither settlement for the outstanding school dinner payment, nor any valid reason as to why payment is being withheld.

In these circumstances I must advise you that if settlement is not received by \_\_\_\_\_ (date) then you will leave us no alternative other than to pass the papers to Surrey County Council with an instruction for you to be issued with a County Court Summons in order to secure recovery of the overdue sum.

When taking such action Surrey County Council will claim not only the amount of the debt, but also Court costs, and, in some instances, statutory interest. You will therefore potentially lay yourself open to payment of these additional expenses should you choose to disregard the contents of this letter.

We trust however that in the event such action will not become necessary and that we may now expect your payment in full settlement to the school office.

Yours faithfully

Finance Office/Business Manager/Head Teacher

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APPENDIX D

**FIRST REMINDER LETTER for chasing unpaid accounts – BASE**

Dear Parents

Child/children: \_\_\_\_\_

Outstanding Payment: £\_\_\_\_\_

The above amount is now overdue for payment, and I should be grateful if you would arrange settlement no later than Monday \_\_\_\_\_ (date) so that the necessity for me to take further, more formal action, may be avoided.

If you have paid this amount within the last three working days then please accept my thanks and ignore this letter. If you are unable to pay the outstanding amount, please make an urgent appointment to discuss your situation with Mrs Wilson (BASE Manager), Mrs Dunning (Head Teacher) or Mrs Hopkins (Business Manager).

Yours faithfully

BASE Manager/Business Manager/Head Teacher

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APPENDIX E

**NOTIFICATIONS OF WITHDRAWAL OF BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL CARE - BASE**

Dear Parents

Child/children: \_\_\_\_\_

Outstanding Payment: £\_\_\_\_\_

The above amount is now overdue for payment, and I should be grateful if you would arrange settlement no later than Monday \_\_\_\_\_ (date) so we may avoid taking more formal action. You have already received previous reminders and we have no option but to withdraw the provision of before/after school care (BASE) for your child/children.

**PLEASE ARRANGE ALTERNATIVE CHILDCARE until the outstanding debt is cleared.**

If you have paid this amount within the last three working days then please accept my thanks and ignore this letter. If you are unable to pay the outstanding amount, please make an urgent appointment to discuss your situation with Mrs Wilson (BASE Manager), Mrs Dunning (Head Teacher) or Mrs Hopkins (Business Manager).

Yours faithfully

BASE Manager/Business Manager/Head Teacher

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APPENDIX F

**FINAL WARNING LETTER (prior to County Court proceedings) – BASE**

Dear Parents

Child/children: \_\_\_\_\_

Outstanding Dinner Money: £\_\_\_\_\_

I regret to note that despite my letter of \_\_\_\_\_ (date) I have received neither payment of the about amount, nor any valid reason as to why payment is being withheld.

In these circumstances I must advise you that if settlement is not received by Monday \_\_\_\_\_ (date) then you will leave me no alternative other than to pass the papers to Surrey County Council with an instruction for you to be issued with a County Court Summons in order to secure recovery of the overdue sum.

When taking such action Surrey County Council will claim not only the amount of the debt, but also Court costs, and, in some instances, statutory interest. You will therefore potentially lay yourself open to payment of these additional expenses should you choose to disregard the contents of this letter.

I trust that such action will not become necessary and that I may now expect your payment in full.

If you have paid this amount within the last three working days then please accept my thanks and ignore this letter. If you are unable to pay the outstanding amount, please make an urgent appointment to discuss your situation with Mrs Wilson (BASE Manager), Mrs Dunning (Head Teacher) or Mrs Hopkins (Business Manager).

Yours faithfully

BASE Manager/Business Manager/Head Teacher

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