



The Societas Trust: Gladstone Primary Academy

Debt Recovery Policy 2017

Introduction:

The academy's Governing Body has a responsibility to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to enable the academy to receive all income to which it is entitled. Gladstone Primary Academy will therefore take all reasonable measures to collect any monies owing to it as part of the management of public funds. Collecting money from parents or carers is a sensitive area; we deal with issues of debt collection with sensitivity and confidentiality at all times.

Aims and Objectives:

At Gladstone Primary Academy we comply with all Staffordshire requirements for Financial Regulations for Academies (May 2012) with regard for the following aims:

- To make sure there are sound and proper financial procedures in the academy for dealing with the academy's finances;
- To ensure that proper controls are in place;
- To provide a clear framework for managing academy finances;
- To protect the academy governors, head teacher and academy employees.

Procedures:

The academy uses the FMS Finance System for invoices and payment.

- Debts under £150 may be written off by the Academy Head teacher/Principal;
- Debts over £150 may be written off only with the approval of the relevant committee of the local Governing body;
- Debts above the level as detailed in the funding agreement must be submitted to DfE for approval to be written off.
- If payment has not been received 30 days after invoice, a reminder will be sent asking for payment within 7 days;
- If payment is not forthcoming, a further reminder will be sent, requesting immediate payment or contact to arrange repayment by instalment;
- If payment is still not forthcoming, for debts over £1,000 a threat will be issued to put the matter into the hands of a nominated Solicitor if payment not received within the next 7 days.
- If not received after 7 days, the nominated Solicitor will be asked to pursue the debt and the debtor will be notified accordingly;
- Debts of £100 and less will be pursued without reference to the nominated Solicitor and will be reported on at relevant committee of the Local Governing Board meetings where LGB members will decide on action to be taken.

The current aged debtor report together with details of any debts written off (under £50) and solicitors letters sent will be provided for each relevant committee of the Local Governing Board meeting.

Dinner Money:

Payment for the academy meals and snacks should be paid in advance, and parents or carers are notified well in advance of the cost. Societas Trust Academies have a number of payment methods, according to each academy's preference. For further

information on payment methods accepted, please speak to the school office. Parents/carers will be reminded either in person or in writing (by telephone, pupil mail or email) if payment is not received and are advised that their child will no longer have a Academy meal and that parents should send their child with a packed lunch. Every effort will be made by the academy to make personal contact to ascertain whether financial difficulties are present and then advice accordingly. All reminders (copies of letters, record of verbal reminders) will be kept on file.

Outdoor Education:

All children in Year 6 (and occasionally children in Y5 and Y4) have the option to attend an outdoor education centre annually. Parents are notified of the cost in advance and are given the opportunity to pay in instalments should they wish. Payment must be made in full before the departure date. Payments are requested by the method chosen by each individual academy. Should parents choose to pay by cash or cheque, payments will be processed using the FMS finance system and a receipt issued; cheques should be made payable to Gladstone Primary Academy.

Lettings:

Contracts for lettings of the academy premises will be drawn up as necessary between the academy and the applicant. Charges will reflect the academy's costs for energy, water, lighting and opening up and closing of the academy by the janitor. Please see the Academy's Lettings Policy.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review:

Day to day implementation of the procedures is carried out by the Office Services Manager and Head teacher. The Business and Facilities Manager will present a report to the Governors of any outstanding debts and explain the procedures followed to date.

Review of the Policy will take place every three years or sooner if necessary.

Reviewed: Autumn 2017

Next Review: Spring Term 2020

The academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment