

Warren Wood Primary School

Debt Policy



Warren Wood Primary School operates a NO DEBT policy relating to services provided or goods purchased.

The Governing Board Warren Wood Primary School believes that a consistent approach that does not allow families to build up large debts is appropriate and in line with good financial management as:

- If debts are incurred, they are paid for from the school budget. Therefore money which should be spent on the children's education is diverted inappropriately
- It is not defensible to allow vulnerable families to incur debts that they cannot repay
- The school has a duty to account for the appropriate use of public funds
- It is very time consuming for office staff to pursue bad debt

In all cases, the school reserves the right to refuse access to all services including (but not exclusively) Nursery day care provision, the Breakfast Club and the After School Club.

We will ensure that parents are aware of this policy by:

- Publishing it on the school's website
- Writing to parents when a debt is accruing (appendix 1)
- Reminders in newsletters
- A copy of the policy/procedure in our induction pack when staff/children join the school

Parents that are experiencing difficulty in paying for chargeable services offered by the school should inform the school office immediately. In most circumstances a payment plan can be agreed to help parents clear their debt as soon as possible.

Procedures

A growing debt is identified

- Parents sent a letter stating the arrears on their child's ParentPay account and the time scale by which payment must be received.
- Payment to be made via ParentPay within one week of the letter being sent.

No receipt of payment (1)

- The parents/carers are contacted by phone confirming how much is owed and reminding them of the policy
- If necessary a payment plan is agreed

No receipt of payment (2)

Parents are informed that:

- they can no longer access these services until the debt is cleared in full
- the school may begin legal proceedings to recover the debt

Office Procedural Guide for Bad Debts

Level 1 Indicator: An account goes into debt

Action for Level 1: First letter from Headteacher

Level 2 Indicator: Services are requested again without the debt being cleared

Action for Level 2: Personal contact (1)

Phone call to the parent/carer to:

- Remind them of the level of debt
- Offer a payment plan if appropriate
- Agree a clear timescale for the debt to be cleared via ParentPay

Level 3 Indicator: No action taken to clear or reduce the debt

Action for Level 3: Personal contact (2)

Phone call to the parent/carer to:

- Remind them of the agreement made
- Advise them that access to **all** services will now be withdrawn
- Remind them that legal action may result should no payment be made

Level 4 Indicator: No action taken to reduce or clear the debt as agreed

Action for Level 4: Matter to be referred to Legal Services for Debt Collection