



Farnborough Road Infant School

Policy on Fees and Debit Recovery 2024-25

"Learning, Caring and Achieving Together"

Some two-year olds and all three- and four-year olds are entitled to 15 hours or 30 hours per week of free nursery education for 38 weeks of the year from the term following their second or third birthday.

However, parents requesting paid sessions in Nursery from the age of two years or additional hours in the three and four-year-old Nursery will be required to pay a fee.

Invoicing

- Fees will be invoiced half-termly by Xero for the days selected by the parent.
- Payment is due **14 days** after the initial email is sent.
- Automated reminders are given every fortnight by Xero
- No balance can roll forward into the next half term, unless an alternative arrangement is agreed with the Headteacher.

Payments

- Payment can be made via Xero or by cheque or cash to the school office. Cheques should be made payable to SMBC.
- Parents can pay alternatively through various childcare vouchers schemes.
- Parents are requested to use their child's name as reference for any payments.
- Payment must be made by the end of each half term for that half term.

Rates 2025-25

Fees are **£20.00** per child per session. (3 hours) and £5.00 per lunchtime period

The level of fees will be set by the school's Governing Body and reviewed annually by the School Improvement Committee.

Debt Recovery

General requirements

The school will take all reasonable measures to vigorously collect debts as part of its management of public funds.

The school's debt recovery policy will observe the relevant financial regulations and guidance set out in the Scheme for Financing Schools and any other legal requirements.

In particular:

- Only the governing body will approve the write-off of debts
- All such write-offs will be recorded in the minutes of the governing body
- A formal record of any debts written off will be maintained and this will be retained for 7 years (the form of this record is specified below).
- The school will seek the advice of the Council's Legal Services Section should they consider taking legal or other action to recover the debt.

The procedures to secure the collection of all debts are outlined below and should be followed by all school staff.

Acceptable 'credit period'

The Governing Body has determined the length of time they deem as an acceptable 'credit settlement period' as half a school term.

Reporting of outstanding debt levels

The Head teacher will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is regularly monitored.

Suitable 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 and reported to the Finance Committee.

The Headteacher will review the level of outstanding debts in the third week of every half term to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debts is effective.

The School Improvement Committee will review the level of outstanding debts every term to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debts is effective and report to the Governing Body.

Debt Recovery Procedures

Where payment from the parent/guardian has not been received by the end of the half term, the following process should be applied.

1. An invoice should be issued on official school stationery for the full amount in order to officially set up the debt. Where invoices are raised they should state the date by which payment is due date/month/year.
2. A record of all sessions will be maintained detailing:
 - The dates of sessions supplied;
 - The value;
 - the identity of the 'debtor'
 - the child/ children to which the debt relates

Verbal and Written Reminders

Details of all reminders, whether via Xero, verbal or in writing, should be maintained. Where a letter is issued, a copy must be retained on file. Should a debt need to be taken beyond two reminder letters, formal written evidence may have to be produced. It is therefore important that at least one, but preferably two, written reminders are sent.

First 'overdue payment' reminder letter

A formal reminder letter should be issued 14 days after the invoice is sent.

If action is to proceed further, it is necessary to prove that all reasonable attempts have been made to recover the debt, and that these attempts have been made in a timely manner, i.e. at the time that the debt first became overdue.

The date of the initial reminder should be recorded.

Second 'overdue payment' reminder letter

A second reminder letter will be issued 1 week after the First Reminder Letter.

The date of the second reminder should be recorded.

Failure to respond to reminders / settle a debt

If after 2 reminders, a response or payment is not received, a letter will be sent to the debtor advising them that the matter will be referred to the school's legal advisers. At the discretion of the Headteacher the debtor may be advised that they will be required to pay in advance for all future sessions or the provision will no longer be available to them.

This decision and its basis will be recorded and reported to the School Improvement Committee.

If fees are paid persistently late for 2 half terms with no explanation, the school will be forced to terminate that child's session.

Parents/Carers are encouraged to speak to the School Office Manager if they have any query about the fees policy, or if, for any reason, they are likely to have difficulty in making a payment on time.

Parents/Carers are strongly advised to arrange a meeting at the earliest possible opportunity, to avoid jeopardising their child's sessions.

Negotiation of repayment terms

Debtors are expected to settle the amount owed by a single payment as soon as possible after receiving the first 'overdue payment' reminder.

However, if people are unable to pay;

A sensitive approach to debt recovery will be carried out.

If a debtor requests 'repayment terms' these may be negotiated at the discretion of the Headteacher.

A record of all such agreements entered into will be retained.
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.
The Headteacher will decide whether any debtor who has been granted extended settlement terms will not be offered any further 'credit' and will, in future, be required to pay in advance.
This decision and its basis will be recorded and reported to the School Improvement Committee.

Costs of debt recovery

Where the school incurs material additional costs in recovering a debt then the Headteacher will decide whether to seek to recover such costs from the debtor.
The debtor will be formally advised in writing that they will be required to pay the additional costs incurred by the school in recovering the debt.
This decision and its basis will be recorded and reported to the School Improvement Committee.

Bad debts

This debt recovery policy should be cross-referenced to the Scheme for Financing Schools.
Write-off of any debt requires the written approval of the Governing Body.
A record of the write-off, the reason for it, and the approval for it, will be retained for 7 years.

Notice

The school plans staffing levels well in advance. In order to operate, we therefore need notice of changes to numbers and thus our income. 6 weeks written notice is required of a child leaving the additional session otherwise fees in lieu of notice will be charged.

Refunds

- No refund is made for sickness or absence from Nursery this includes Bank Holidays and INSET Days. Payment for days may not be moved from one day to another.

Closure

In the event of nursery being forced to cancel sessions, the school will endeavour to give as much notice as is reasonably possible. In this instance fees will be deducted from the following half terms fees or if at the end of the year fees will be refunded.
This policy will be reviewed annually in the Summer Term by the School Improvement Committee.

March 2025

Signed _____ **Date** _____ **Headteacher.**

Signed _____ **Date** _____ **Chair of Governors.**

Issue of Invoice First week of half term

Debt Paid in full within 14 days

Week3: First Overdue Reminder of Debt
Written reminder of Debt including
Deadline for payment

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Week 4: Second Overdue Reminder
Reminder of Debt including deadline for
payment

Debt paid in full

Week 5: Letter outlining the debt will be
referred to legal services if not paid in full

Debt paid in full

Debt paid in full

Debt referred to Governing Body
Future payments to be paid in advance
Nursery sessions may be forfeited.
Debt referred to legal services