



Elton Primary School & Nursery

Bad Debts Policy

In our school, the wellbeing and education of all our children comes first

Finance Committee	Spring, 2025
Review	Spring 2027

Statement of intent

Elton Primary School is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of financial circumstances, and has established policies and procedures to ensure that no child is discriminated against by our offering of school trips, activities and educational extras.

While this is the case, the school must have a policy in place to ensure the repayment and recuperation of any outstanding debts incurred by the school on behalf of a pupil. The school will take all reasonable measures to vigorously collect debts as part of its 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.

Each case is to be treated individually and the circumstances that have led to the outstanding debt will be taken into account to determine the best course of action and whether it is fair and reasonable to pursue the debt in its entirety if at all. The school is committed to adhering to legal requirements regarding charging for school food, activities and materials, and meeting all statutory guidance provided by the DfE.

Normal Payment Notification Periods

Each Friday, parents who owe dinner money will be contacted to inform them of such.

At the start of each calendar month, parents will be sent an invoice for their Nursery fees with the request that they will be paid within that calendar month.

Reminders

When debt does occur, school's first approach will be an informal phone call to remind parents of the current debt. For nursery fees this initial call will usually occur near the end of the calendar month in which payment is due. For dinner fees, the length of time will be determined by how quick the debt is raising which will be related to how frequently a meal is being ordered and for how many children.

Continuing Non-Payment of Debt

If, after reminders, the debt is still not settled, school will contact parents again by both email and phone call. The school will attempt to explore any financial difficulties that may exist and will attempt to negotiate a realistic payment plan for paying off the debt.

Any payment plan that is agreed must ensure that the debt is lessening rather than further increasing to ensure that parents don't find themselves with unmanageable debts. This may involve recommending that children are given homemade packed lunches rather than having paid for school meals; or that nursery children remove any paid for sessions and solely use their funded hours.

If the payment plan is not followed, then school will contact parents again to try to reinstate and agree a new payment plan than can be maintained.

If the debt is still not addressed, then school will notify the Local Authority's Debt Recovery team who will then take over the responsibility of collecting the debt following their own debt recovery procedures.

Exceptional Circumstances

School will examine each case individually, taking into consideration issues such as social care involvement, bereavement and hospitalisation.

The governing board is not guaranteed, but may decide, to waive or reduce the outstanding debt in these circumstances.