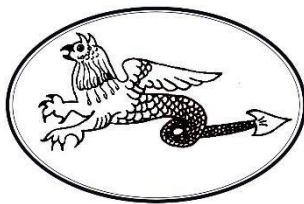


# **WHERWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL**



**‘Let’s love to learn and thrive together.’**

## **Debt Recovery Policy**

| <b>Date Agreed</b> | <b>Agreed By</b>                  | <b>Next review date</b> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| May 2026           | Finance and Environment Committee | May 2027                |

### **Rationale**

Wherwell Primary 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.

Wherwell Primary School’s debt recovery policy will observe the relevant financial regulations and guidance from HCC Education Finance and any other legal requirements.

### **Dinner money debts**

- Dinners are booked and paid for in advance, except where the Admin Officer overrides this, for example if a parent has forgotten to book on-line or a child forgets their packed lunch.
- The Admin Officer will contact the parents of any pupils with unpaid dinner money at the end of each week via the school’s text messaging system.
- If a parent has more than five days of dinner money owing, the Admin Officer or Finance Officer will contact them to request that they settle the bill before the child is able to book another school meal. The parent will be advised that a packed lunch should be provided until the outstanding amount is cleared in full.
- In the event of a persistent failure to provide a packed lunch the parent will be reminded that failure to provide a meal for their child during the school day may result in a referral to social services.

### **Day Trip contributions**

The school is not permitted to make a compulsory charge for trips which take place within the school day, however, each letter requesting a ‘voluntary contribution’ towards the cost of a trip will include a reminder that the trip can only go ahead if sufficient voluntary contributions are received. In the event of a significant shortfall the Headteacher will be informed and may, if practicable, cancel the trip.

### **Residential visits**

- No child will be permitted to attend a residential visit unless complete payment has been received one full week prior to departure
- The initial letter requesting payment will be sent out as early as possible (at least 4 months before the date of the visit) and will offer all parents the opportunity to pay in instalments. It will also invite parents with financial problems to discuss this, in confidence, with the Headteacher.

- In the event of an approach by a parent for financial assistance the Admin Officer or Finance Officer will explore alternative sources of funding.

### **Music lessons**

Wherwell School's commitment to Hampshire Music Service is an annual commitment. Therefore children wishing to take music lessons must sign-up for a full year. If a child decides to stop learning an instrument during that year, the family remains liable for the full cost.

Charges for instrumental lessons will be invoiced at the beginning of each academic year with 3 termly instalments available. Parents will be able to part pay instalments to allow for monthly paying down of debt. Reminders will be sent when the payment becomes due at the start of each term, and thereafter weekly. Should any debts still remain outstanding at the end of a term, music lessons will cease until the debt has been cleared. Should any debts remain outstanding at the end of the academic year, and all reasonable steps have been taken to recover the debt, the children concerned will not be permitted to learn an instrument for the remainder of their time at Wherwell School.

### **Early Birds and Woodpeckers After-School Club**

Woodpeckers and Early Birds is bookable in advance. Payment is taken at the time of booking, except where parents pay by childcare voucher scheme. In this instance, bookings are made by the Admin Officer and the Admin Officer will allocate the childcare vouchers against the bookings. The Finance Officer will ensure that no parent accrues more than £100 of debt. Where this happens, the child will be unable to attend wrap-around care until voucher payments to cover outstanding debt have been made.

### **Year 6**

Debts incurred by children in Year 6 are a particular concern and will be closely monitored. Traditionally the children in Year 6 attend a 2 or 3 day water sports course towards the end of the summer term. Should this be the case then the letter inviting children to attend will be distributed as far in advance as possible, clearly stating that no child may attend the course if any debts to the school, from whatever source, remain outstanding.

### **Reporting**

An anonymised report of bad debts will be prepared monthly by the Finance Officer and sent to the Headteacher and Chairs of the Finance and Environment Committee, as follows:

- Dinner money of more than £50.00 per child outstanding on the last day of the previous month;
- Instalments for instrumental lessons from the previous term still outstanding;
- Any children barred from using Woodpeckers because of outstanding debts;
- Any debt in excess of £20 for a child in Year 6;
- The total amount of dinner money outstanding on the last day of the previous month.

A copy of the most recent report will be presented to each meeting of the Finance and Environment Committee.

### **Writing-off bad debts**

All debts in excess of £50 for children who have left the school will be referred to HCC legal department after all other means have been taken to recover the debt.

Debts under £50 for children who are no longer at the school can be written-off after all reasonable measures have been taken to recover them.

All debts written-off will be reported to the Finance and Environment Committee at their second meeting in each academic year.