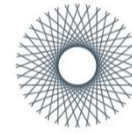


Debt management statement



AGORA
LEARNING
PARTNERSHIP

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Agora Learning Partnership and its constituent academies are committed to ensuring the collection of all outstanding debts as part of its management of public funds. The Academy Governing Bodies (AGBs) are responsible for ensuring that procedures are in place for the recovery of any outstanding debt. Further guidance for Governors on debt management is available in the Trust's policy.
- 1.2 This statement covers the payment of school meals and "optional extras" including music fees.
- 1.3 Outstanding lettings invoices are covered by the Academy Lettings Policy. However, it is the Trust's policy that all lettings must be paid for in advance and therefore no debts should arise.
- 1.4 Payment for all school-related goods and services should be made in advance. Online payment systems allow the prepayment of all school goods and services.
- 1.5 Where money is not available on online payment systems when the goods or services are taken, the academy has the right to refuse the uptake of this service. However, should the academy make an exception (for example, for school dinners), parents will enter a negative balance and their account will be frozen until the debt is cleared and a balance reinstated i.e. no more school lunches may be taken. Therefore, parents must make alternative arrangements for the services that the school provide.
- 1.6 When a parent/guardian is in debt to the school for any amount, the procedures in Section 2 will be implemented.
- 1.7 Debts of children who are no longer at the school will follow the same procedures outlined in Section 2. The school reserves the right to contact the child's new school and inform them of the outstanding balance.

2 DEBT COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Initial reminders may be informal and made either in person (when a parent comes to collect/drop off the child) or by telephone.

2.1 *Stage 1: Debt Notification Letter*

Schools should encourage parents/carers to ensure there are sufficient funds on the school payment system to ensure that all school meals are paid in advance. A formal reminder letter should be issued after two weeks from any informal reminder / the date of supply for balances which remain unpaid. A letter or email will be sent, notifying the parents/guardians that they are in debt to the school and all school services have been

frozen. The letter will also state the amount due and that payment must be made within seven calendar days.

2.2 Stage 2: Debt Reminder Letter

Should the balance not be paid in this time frame, a further reminder letter will be sent. The debt must then be cleared within three calendar days.

2.3 Stage 3: Debt Reminder Phone Call

Should the balance still remain unpaid after ten calendar days, the Office Manager/Finance Officer will contact the parent or carer by telephone to discuss the payment of the debt and arrange a meeting with the Headteacher.

2.4 Stage 4: Debt Meeting – Headteacher

During the meeting, the Headteacher will inform the debtor that the matter will be passed over to the Academy Governing Board for debt recovery if it is not settled within seven calendar days. This may result in legal action. Should the debtor refuse to attend the meeting, the matter will automatically proceed to Stage 5.

2.5 Stage 5: Governors Notice of Intention

If no response or payment is received following the meeting with the Headteacher, the AGB (or AGB Finance Committee) will issue a notice of intention, advising the debtor that they reserve the right to pass the matter to legal advisors for further action.

2.6 Stage 6: Legal Action

If a debtor does not respond to any of the steps above within the stated timeframes, the AGB Finance Committee will consider each debt with a view to passing it to legal advisors for further action. If appropriate the debt will be dealt with in a small claims court or by a debt collection agency.

3 REPEATING DEBTORS

- 3.1 Where a parent or guardian repeatedly builds up payment arrears, the Headteacher has the right to refuse the use of school services and goods for a fixed term.