Mereside Primary School and Children's Centre



After School Club Fees Policy

**Policy Review: 21st August 2018**

**Next Review Date: August 2019**

**Contents**

[Statement of intent](#statement)

1. [Fees](#fees)
2. [Payment information](#paymentinfo)
3. [Late collection](#latecollection)
4. [Difficulty with payments](#difficultywithpayments)
5. [Debt collection](#debtcollection)
6. [Roles and responsibilities](#rolesandresp)
7. [The process for pursuing debts](#pursuiing)
8. [The waiving of debts](#waiving)

**Statement of Intent**

Mereside Primary School and Children's Centre aims to provide a high quality and affordable after school club experience for children.

We aim to:

1. Ensure everyone feels valued and respected and has an equal chance to do their best.
2. Help children develop a positive attitude, self-respect and respect for others, and learn to take responsibility for their own actions.
3. Understand and meet children’s individual needs, especially those of vulnerable pupils.
4. Ensure all achievements are recognised and celebrated.
5. Create a caring, safe, purposeful and calm environment which promotes children’s wellbeing.
6. Develop positive and supportive relationships between children, parents, school and the wider community.

We will support parents to claim benefit entitlement related to After School Club fees such as Working Tax Credits.

This After School Club Fees Policy has been established to provide transparent fee information, set procedures for the payment of fees and create a framework for dealing with non-payment in a swift and fair manner.

Parents should be made aware of and given access to this policy and the school’s procedures. It will be included on the school’s website and made available to view at the school on request.

1. **Roles and responsibilities regarding debt collection**
   1. The School Business Manager on a termly basis will ensure that:
      * Letters and final reminders requesting money are accurately recorded and those records maintained.
      * Evidence of the steps taken by the school in pursuance of debt is recorded including dates and times of both letters and phone calls.
      * The privacy of the family involved will be respected and only made known to those who need to know.
   2. The Principal:
      * Will prescribe and regularly review the arrangements for debt recovery in line with FCAT Processes.
2. **Fees**
   1. Fees are **£ 5.50** per session for children from Reception through to Year 6, for Nursery children the fees are **£8.75** per session – this is because we need a higher staffing ratio when Nursery children attend After School Club.
3. **Payment information**
   1. Fees are payable in advance on Monday morning (or the first day your child attends After School Club) and should be paid through **Parent Pay** (Please ask for details if you do not have these) **or Online Banking** using the following Bank Details.

* **Bank Account Name: Mereside Primary**
* **Bank: Lloyds Bank**
* **Sort Code: 30-90-90**
* **Account Number: 29041260**
* **When paying online, please quote your child’s name as the reference and insert ASC Fees after their name.**

If it is inconvenient to pay fees at that time they should be paid to the After School Club Supervisor.

* 1. Cheques will be made payable to Mereside Primary.
  2. Any charges made against the school for un-presented cheques will be passed onto the parent/carer.
  3. One weeks’ notice and payment of fees for the notice period will be required to withdraw your child from After School Club if attending on a regular basis for over 1 half term.

1. **Late collection**
   1. Staffing ratios must be maintained at all times. If a child is collected late, this can lead to staff needing to stay beyond the end of their normal working hours. This incurs a cost which will be passed on to parents at £5.00 for the first 15 minutes and a further £1.00 for each subsequent 5 minute period.
   2. As a last resort and only where absolutely necessary and after all attempts to contact a family member has been made, any failure to collect a child without notice will result in support being requested from Children’s Social Care in returning the child to the care of the family.
2. **Difficulty with payments**
   1. Mereside Primary School and Children's Centre will work with parents to ensure all avenues for assistance with payments are explored. Parents may face financial difficulties and, understandably, would like to ensure as little disruption to their child’s care as possible. Parents and carers experiencing such difficulties should contact the School Business Manager as early as possible, to reach a suitable arrangement for both parties.
   2. In the event of **two weeks missed payments** your child will not be able to attend After School Club until all outstanding arrears have been cleared.
3. **Debt collection**
   1. The Academy Council Board has a duty to ensure the school receives all the funds to which it is entitled including After School Club fees.
   2. In line with FCAT Debt recovery Procedures the following communication will occur for Non-payment of debts:

* 2 weeks from date of account – first reminder;
* 5 weeks from date of account – second reminder;
* 8 weeks from date of account – final reminder.
* If, after 10 weeks from the date of account, the account has still not been settled, legal action will be considered by the Corporate Services Lead and the Academy Principal. In determining whether to pursue legal action to recover the debt, the following will be considered:
  + Hardship – where paying the debt would cause financial hardship;
  + Ill health – where our recovery action might cause further ill health;
  + Time – where the debt is so large compared to the person’s income that it would take an unreasonable length of time to pay it all off;
  + Financial impact on the Academy;
  + Financial impact on the debtor;
  + Potential impact of any precedent set.
  1. If legal action is not pursued, or has been unsuccessful, individual irrecoverable debts may be written off in accordance with the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook 2018 as follows:
* Debts of less than £1,000 may be approved for write off by the Academy Principal and Chief Executive Officer;
* Debts over £1,000 must be approved for write off by the Board of Directors.
* In all cases, the Corporate Services Lead must provide 30 days’ notice of the intention to write off any debts owed to the Secretary of State for Education.
* Where the debt to be written off exceeds any of the following, the Corporate Services Lead must obtain the Education Funding Agency’s prior approval:
* 1% of total annual income (defined as grant income as disclosed in the Trust’s last set of audited accounts) or £45,000 (whichever is smaller) per single transaction;
* Cumulatively, 2.5% or 5% of total annual income in any one financial year.

1. **The process for pursuing debts**
   1. **First formal reminder letter –** If the debt is yet to be paid two weeks after non-payment of fees, a formal letter will be sent to the debtor. When the first formal reminder letter is issued your child/children will not be able to attend any further After School Club sessions until the outstanding arrears have been paid in full.
   2. **Second formal reminder letter** - If the debt is yet to be paid five weeks after a first formal reminder, a second formal letter will be sent to the debtor. These letters allow the debtor every opportunity to settle their debt and ensure the school can prove all reasonable steps have been taken to recover the debt should the issue proceed further.
   3. **Final reminder letter -** If no response is received following the second reminder and no more than eight weeks from the date of account, the school will send a final letter to the debtor
   4. **Possible legal action** – If no payment is made ten weeks after the first letter is sent, the matter will be referred to the Principal who will decide whether to take legal action against the debtor.
2. **The waiving of debts**
   1. The waiving of debts is at the discretion of the Principal of Mereside Primary School.
   2. A debt may be waived when it is believed the debtor is experiencing serious financial hardship or if all reasonable avenues to recover the debt have been exhausted and it is believed it would not be cost effective to pursue the debt through legal action.
   3. The Principal and Chief Executive Officer is authorised to waive off debts of up to £1,000.
   4. Debts over £1,000 must be referred to the Board of Directors for FCAT.