# Charging, remissions & debt collection policy

# Maytree Nursery School

**This policy has been agreed and adopted by the Governing Body.**

**Signed by Chair of Governors:** Siobhan Turner **Date:** 07/07/2021

**Policy review period 2 years:**
Reviewed: Summer 2021
Next review: Summer 2023

**Documents consulted/information sources/related documents:**
- Model policies from other Lambeth schools
- Finance policy
- Lambeth Schools Financial Procedures Manual
- Lettings policy

## Aim of this policy

This policy outlines charges we make for a variety of services we offer, goods we sell and provides information about the school fund. It includes details about charges, remittance and collection of monies. Please note that all charges listed below are subject to review at any time.

## Charging

**Dinner money**

Dinner money is chargeable on a daily basis unless the child is entitled to Free School Meals. Parents are informed about the cost of a meal when their child starts at nursery. School meals are charged at £2.50 per day. Payments are made weekly in advance, by card or cheque at the school office and BACS online.

**Breakfast and After School Club**

Breakfast and After School Club can be booked in advance for a set number of days per week or alternatively can be booked on an ad hoc basis once a child has been registered for the provision. Bookings for after-school clubs can be made on the day upto 12.00 noon, parents can bring their child for breakfast club without booking if the service is running and staffing levels and food are in place. There is a daily charge for both these clubs. Breakfast Club is charged at £6 per day and after school club at £10 per day. Payment is made by card, BACS or cheque at the school office usually in advance. Payment for ad-hoc bookings will be made by the end of the week.

**Top-up fees for additional hours to Nursery Education Fund (NEF) and Early Learning Offer (ELO) funded provision during the core day (excluding breakfast and after school club sessions)**

Nursery provision is free for the first 15 hours (part-time) or 30 hours (full time) for those eligible, thereafter sessions are chargeable on a "per session" basis (Top-Up). Sessions are booked in advance. Arrangements for booking and payment are detailed in the contract. See 'Contract for additional charged nursery sessions (Top up)'. Fees are based on £8.00 per hour, a 2 week deposit is made and parents/carers are invoiced in advance every month. Payments can be made in card, cheque, childcare vouchers or through direct payment (BACS).

**Holiday provision**

Holiday provision is available at Maytree for children from all three schools for a fee of £45 for the core day (9:00am to 3:00pm) and £65 for the extended day (8:00am to 5:45pm). Breakfast, lunch and tea are included depending on session times booked. Parents can book for as many or as few days as required however must be booked in advance to ensure sufficient staffing levels are planned. Actual provision offered depends on demand. Payment is made by card BACS or cheque at the school office in advance.

**School sweatshirts**

The charge for sweatshirts will be set by the Executive Headteacher but in principle will be broadly in line with costs to the school and are currently £8:00 for sweatshirts and £5:50 for T- shirts. Payment is made by card or cheque at the school office at the point of sale.

**School fund**

School fund is a voluntary payment and supports a wide variety of activities including:

- educational visits to a wide variety of places including farms, theatres, parks, woods etc. School fund contributes to admission costs, transport expenses and packed lunches;
- visitors and performers to the school, for example, artists, dancers, storytellers, musicians, etc;
- resources for workshops.

All children are included in activities provided for by the fund, regardless of whether a contribution has or has not been made by a parent/carer. Information about school fund expenditure is included in the newsletter to parents. Parents are informed about the school fund on the home visit and by text reminders. Payments are made to the school office on a weekly, monthly or termly basis by card or cheque. Weekly contributions are as follows:

1 part-time child £1.00
1 full-time child £1.50
2 part-time children £1.50
1 part-time and 1 full-time child £2.00
2 full-time children £2.00

# Remissions

Where the parent of a child is in receipt of a qualifying state benefit(s) or other special circumstances, the Governing Body will consider remitting charges in part or in full.

The Governing Body invites parents to apply in writing, in the strictest confidence, for the remission of charges in part or in full. The Executive Headteacher will authorise any remission in consultation with the Chair of Resources. These will be notified on a termly basis to the Resources Committee.

# Debt and Debt Recovery

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.

The school's debt recovery policy will observe the relevant financial regulations and guidance set out in the Lambeth Schools Financial Procedures Manual and any other legal requirements.

The school will not write-off any debt belonging to the Lambeth Council or another party. If in doubt as to the appropriate action to collect any such debts the school will seek advice promptly from officers of Lambeth Council. Procedures for writing-off debts are included in the school's Finance Policy.

**Debt collection procedures**

School staff are expected to follow the following procedures to secure the collection of all debts.

- Recording of goods or services supplied where payment is not received in advance or 'at the point of sale'.
- A record will be kept of all such supplies that details what was supplied, the value, the date(s) and the identity of the 'debtor', e.g. child, parent, hirer, etc.
- Where invoices are raised these should state the date by which payment is due.
- In all other cases correspondence with parents, etc. should indicate the maximum period that the school regards as reasonable before payment is overdue, e.g. payment for items purchased should be paid at the school office by, etc.

The following procedures will be followed when a debt starts to accumulate; individual agreements will be made to accommodate specific circumstances; admin staff will use their discretion and knowledge of individual families in the first instance and record any such arrangements. If these are not followed and office staff have any concerns they will immediately inform the Federation Business Manager (FBM) or Head of School to review what action to take.

***Dinner Money***

- Informal reminder issued when outstanding monies reach £15 will be made either in person (when a parent comes to collect/drop off the child) or by telephone/text.
- Reminder letter 1 will be issued one week after the informal reminder or following non-compliance with an individual arrangement.
- Meeting with the SBM or Head of School two weeks later for part-time and one week later for full-time children where a second reminder letter is issued which will include details of the settlement period that has been agreed by the parents. This will include advice that the child will be at risk of not being able to stay for lunch from a specific date until the debt has been cleared. If payment is not then made the parent will be reminded to collect their child for lunch in line with this letter.

***Breakfast and After School Clubs***

- Informal reminder issued when outstanding monies reach £24 as above (this will take much less time to accumulate than for dinner money). If the booking is ad-hoc no further bookings will be allowed until payment has been made. Admin staff will inform the Federation Business Manager (FBM) prior to any decision to withdraw the service.
- Reminder letter 1 - one week later as above. For parents who book regularly in advance no further bookings will be allowed following the issue of the letter, again Admin staff will inform the FBM prior to any decision to withdraw the service.
- Meeting with the FBM or Head of School two weeks later as above and issue of letter 2.

***Top Up Fees***

*Procedure for parents who book regularly and have a good payment record.*

- Informal reminder made after two weeks by the end of the week.
- Reminder letter 1 - one week following the informal reminder and the withdrawal of the service.
- Meeting with the FBM or Head of School two weeks later as above and issue of letter 2.

*Procedure for parents who book on an ad-hoc basis.*

- Informal reminder at the end of the week and no further bookings to be made until payment is received, again informing the FBM\Head of School prior to any decision to withdraw the service.
- Reminder letter 1 - one week following the informal reminder.
- Meeting with the FBM or Head of School as above.

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. Details of all reminders, whether verbal or in writing, should be recorded. Where a letter is issued, a copy must be retained on file.

***Holiday Fees***

All payments are made in advance and therefore there will not be any debt.

**Costs of debt recovery**

Should a debt fail to be recouped, the school will reserve the right to take the debtor to court to reclaim the original debt together with any additional costs incurred in doing so. The court costs involved are a percentage of the debt owed.

SLT will decide whether to take this course of action taking all circumstances into account. The debtor will be formally advised that they will be required to pay these additional costs incurred by the school in recovering the debt.

**Reporting of outstanding debt levels**

The FBM will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is known and can be determined at any time.

The FBM will present a list of outstanding and written-off debts to the Resources Committee who will review this every term to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debts is effective.

**Staff dinner money debt**
Staff are expected to clear any outstanding debt on their account within 30 days.

**Staff Discount**

The governing body has agreed that contracted staff working within the Federation will be entitled to a 20% discount on paid provision should they wish to place their child at one of the federation nursery schools. This applies to term time only additional hours and extended day provision.