

Revised | 2022



Brecknock and Torriano Schools Federation Debt Recovery Policy 2022-23

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|----------------|-------------|
| Committee | Resources |
| Last reviewed | Autumn 2022 |
| To be reviewed | Autumn 2023 |

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1. Aims

The Brecknock and Torriano Schools Federation will take all reasonable measures to collect all debts as part of its management of public funds. Parents are expected to pay all fees in advance and actively encouraged not to accrue any debt on their child's account. However, the school has a responsibility to support parents who may be behind in payments for vital services and ensure that they understand the debt recovery procedures currently in place.

2. Meals and Free School Meal Eligibility

Payment for meals is expected to be made in advance, in full, on a weekly or half termly basis. Both schools are cash free, payment is expected to be made via the school online payment system (ParentPay at Brecknock and Arbor at Torriano).

The school is informed by the Local Authority (LA) when there is a change in free school meal eligibility, and letters are sent home to parents informing them of this. If parents are eligible they will be backdated to the date provided by the LA. If they are no longer eligible they will be charged from the following week.

If a parent would like to change their child's meal preference (pack lunch or school dinners) a request form from the office will need to be completed. A week's notice is required for meal changes to take place and the office will send an email confirmation informing when this change will take place from.

3. Trips and Club Debt Management

In order to secure a place for an after-school club or a residential trip, payment must be received prior to the trip taking place or the club start date. A place for a residential trip or a club will not be reserved without payment. Failure to pay for a trip or club will result in the place being withdrawn and offered to the next child on the waiting list. Clubs will not be allocated the following term if there are any outstanding payments remaining from the previous term's clubs.

Breakfast club will be charged to the parent's ParentPay (Brecknock) or Arbor (Torriano) account on a weekly basis, following the booking. Payment is required the week in advance of the child's attendance. Wrap around care will be charged to the parent's account on a monthly basis. Payment is required in advance of the child's attendance.

Families with financial difficulties whose children wish to participate will be invited to discuss individual needs with the Executive Headteacher or Director of Business Operations.

4. Debt Recovery

| Level | Action | Time Scale | Member of Staff |
|--------------------------------------|---|----------------------|-----------------|
| Step 1 – 1 st reminder | Debt reminder message via ParentPay (Brecknock) or Arbor (Torriano) | 1 st week | Admin Assistant |
| Step 2 – 2 nd reminder | Debt reminder email and follow up phone call | 2 nd week | Admin Assistant |
| Step 3 – Final reminder | Email notification of action being taken to prevent further debt accumulation e.g. move from school lunch to packed lunch, cancel wrap around care etc. | 3 rd week | Finance Officer |

Debtors are expected to settle the amount owed by a single payment as soon as possible after receiving the first overdue reminder. If no response is received from the reminders and notifications issued (table above), a call will be made by the Finance Officer requesting that the debtor attend a meeting with the Executive Headteacher, Director of Business Operations and a Resources Committee Governor to discuss repayments.

If there are genuine repayment difficulties and the debtor requests a negotiation of the repayment terms, they must contact the school and speak to the Executive Headteacher or Director of Business Operations to discuss how the school can support them with this. If there is no contact, it will be assumed that the payments will be

made in the requested time. The negotiation of repayment terms is at the discretion of the Director of Business Operations or Executive Headteacher. A record of all such agreements will be kept and a letter will be issued to the debtor confirming the agreed terms. The settlement period should be the shortest that is judged reasonable.

5. Writing off Debts

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 Brecknock and Torriano Schools Federation debt recovery policy will observe the relevant financial regulations and guidance set out in The DFE Schemes for Financing Schools. In particular:

- Any debt over £100 requires the written approval of the Resources Committee, a debt of over £1000 requires the written approval of the Full Governing Body. A formal record of any debts written off will be maintained and this will be retained for 7 years.
- The Brecknock and Torriano Schools Federation will not routinely initiate any legal action to recover debts, but will refer any debts which it has not been able to collect (unless a decision to write-off the debt is demonstrably a reasonable course of action) to the Resources Committee to consider taking legal or other action to recover the debt.