

Cheviot Learning Trust
Debt Recovery Procedure for Overdue Payments from Parents/Carers

Statement of intent

Cheviot Learning Trust (the Trust) is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of financial circumstances, and has established policies and procedures to ensure that no child is discriminated against by our offering of school trips and extracurricular activities. While this is the case, the Trust will take all reasonable measures to ensure the repayment and recuperation of any outstanding debts incurred by individual schools on behalf of a pupil, as part of its management of public funds.

This procedure ensures all Trust schools adopt a consistent approach to debt incurred by parents/carers. It provides clarity and consistency in managing the debt and will also help parents/carers clearly understand what is expected of them.

Legal framework

This procedure has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2024) 'Academy trust handbook 2024'

This procedure operates in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Financial Policy and Regulations
- Charging and Remissions Policy

Making payments

Payment requests may relate to activities, services or optional extras that can be charged for in accordance with the Charging and Remissions Policy. This includes school meals, wraparound childcare, additional nursery sessions, or optional activities such as after school clubs or enrichment week trips.

We expect payments to be made *in advance* via our electronic payment system using the My Child at School app, please contact the school office if you require more information about setting up an MCAS account. If applicable payments for childcare can also be made via government registered childcare voucher schemes and/or Tax Free Childcare.

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Outstanding balances

If your MCAS account has an outstanding balance you can expect to receive the following reminders from school to bring your account up to date:

- Initial reminder from the school - email, phone or text correspondence notifying an outstanding balance.
- First formal reminder from the school - an individual letter issued 2 weeks after the initial reminder (can be sent electronically).
- Second formal reminder from the school - a second letter issued after a further 2 weeks sent by post.

It is expected that debt will be repaid as soon as possible, however, this can be negotiated at the discretion of the Headteacher, particularly in light of any exceptional circumstances. A payment plan for separate instalments can be arranged and will be agreed in writing.

If reminders are not responded to and your MCAS account is not brought up to date, schools will refer the debt to the Trust Central Finance Team for collection. Withdrawal of activities or services may occur until engagement about how the debt will be repaid.

Debt recovery procedures

Once a debt is referred to the Central Finance Team, a sales invoice will be issued directly from the Cheviot Learning Trust finance system. Reminder letters will be sent at 30 and 60 days. Failure to make payment may result in legal action being taken.

The waiving of debts is at the discretion of the Headteacher (up to £350) and/or the Chief Financial Officer. A debt may be waived when it is believed the debtor is experiencing serious financial hardship. Please contact the school if you feel this applies to you.

We hope that by implementing this process we are able to ensure that our available school budget is used for its intended educational purpose. We request that all parents and carers work with us to avoid unnecessary time spent chasing debts by making regular payments in advance via MCAS.