

Fees Collection and Exclusion Policy

This policy outlines the procedures and guidelines for managing the collection of school fees across GDST schools. It ensures a structured, fair, and transparent approach to credit control and pupil exclusion due to non-payment.

Objective

- Ensure clear communication of fee payment terms to parents.
- Minimise the risk of non-payment and late payment.
- Maintain positive relationships with families and safeguard the welfare of pupils while ensuring financial discipline.

Scope

This policy applies to all signatories of a parent contract in respect of pupils enrolled at a fee-paying GDST school. All year groups are treated equally, and where arrears are due, appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the policy.

Agreement Terms

A legally binding agreement is formed when a contract is signed. Payment of school fees, as outlined in the terms and conditions, constitutes a contractual obligation. Invoices are issued termly in advance by the GDST Fees Department.

Fee Payment Terms

Invoices are issued by email or post before the term begins. Invoices will include the pupil's name, school, reference number, amount due, due date, and payment instructions.

- **Termly Payment:** Fees are payable in advance by direct debit on the first day of each term.
- **Monthly Payment:** With prior agreement by the GDST Fees Department, fees may be paid in four equal monthly instalments by direct debit. If a direct debit mandate is rejected or cancelled, the full term's balance or remaining debt becomes immediately due.
- **Direct Debit Defaults:** We understand that occasional payment issues can arise. If a monthly direct debit payment is missed on three occasions, the option to pay fees monthly will be withdrawn. In such cases, the full balance for the term remaining will become payable immediately. To help ensure future payments are managed smoothly, fees will then be required to be paid termly in advance by direct debit.

- **Charges and Interest:** A £12 administration fee applies to unpaid direct debits. From January 2026 a £100.00 administration fee will be incurred in cases where a direct debit is not held, and the full-term fees are not received by the first day of the term.
- **Liability:** All signatories to the Parent Contract are jointly and severally liable for all fees, additional charges, and any fees in lieu of notice.

Late Payment and Arrears

The GDST Fees Department will contact parents promptly after a missed payment. A sequence of standardised reminders will be used, escalating in tone. Where appropriate, the team may offer to discuss temporary payment arrangements.

Standard communications consist of:

- **First Reminder:** Issued by the GDST Fees Department to the bill payer when an account falls into arrears. This communication provides 14 days to address the arrears.
- **Second Reminder:** Issued by the GDST Fees Department to the bill payer if arrears remain unpaid after that 14-day period. This communication provides a further 14 days to address the arrears and warns of possible temporary exclusion. At the same time that the second reminder is issued, an email will also be sent to any other contract signatories to inform them that arrears are due and to request payment.
- **Temporary Exclusion:** Issued by the GDST Fees Collection team to all signatories to the parent contract after the second 14-day period has expired. This formal notice advises that, if arrears are not cleared by a specified date, typically before the end of the term, the pupil will be excluded from returning to school for the new term. This action will be taken due to the non-payment of fees.
- **Permanent Exclusion:** If arrears remain unpaid, a final letter from the Chief Executive will be issued within 7 days of the pupil being excluded from school. The pupil is removed from the school roll, and the local authority is notified if applicable.
- **Parent Contact:** All discussions regarding payment arrangements must be handled by the GDST Fees Collection team at the Trust Office. The school must not negotiate payment terms. This is to ensure that payment arrangements are negotiated fairly and consistently across the Trust.

Reinstatement Following Payment of Outstanding Fees

Temporary Exclusion

If a pupil has been temporarily excluded due to unpaid fees, and the outstanding balance is subsequently settled in full:

- *The pupil may return to the school*
- *Reinstatement will be coordinated promptly, subject to:*
- *Confirmation of payment*
- *Any necessary administrative checks*
- *Future fees will be required termly in advance*

Permanent Exclusion

If a pupil has been permanently excluded and removed from the school roll due to prolonged non-payment:

- *Payment of the outstanding balance does not guarantee reinstatement*
- *A new application must be made via the school*
- *If accepted, future fees will be required termly in advance*

Appeal Process

There is no right to appeal against exclusion in cases of non-payment of fees. This policy reflects the contractual obligations agreed upon by all signatories to the Parent Contract. The Trust has a responsibility to ensure financial sustainability and fairness across all families. As such, decisions regarding exclusion due to unpaid fees are final and not subject to review or reversal.

Parents are encouraged to engage with the GDST Fees Collection team at the earliest opportunity if they are experiencing financial difficulties. The team is available to discuss potential payment arrangements before arrears reach the stage of exclusion.

Ongoing Debt Collection

The GDST Fees Department will continue to pursue any outstanding balances even in the event of a pupil's permanent exclusion. This may include initiating legal proceedings where necessary, and any such action may incur additional charges, including interest and court costs, in accordance with the Trust's Terms and Conditions.

Data Handling and Confidentiality

All financial and personal data will be managed in line with UK data protection laws. Information will be stored securely and accessed only by authorised staff.

Governance and Oversight

This policy is reviewed regularly to reflect operational and economic changes.

Related Documents

- Parent Contract
- Exclusion for non-payment of Fees - Guidance for Schools

Policy Administration

For further assistance, please contact the GDST Fees Department at feesdepartment@wes.gdst.net.