Fee Recovery Policy
Information for Fee Payers

Policy Title:	Fee Recovery Policy
Last Review:	August 2026
Next Review:	August 2027
Responsibility:	Bursar, Headmaster
Other relevant policies:	Bursary Policy Parental Contract

1. Definitions

All signatories to the Parental Contract are jointly and severally liable for the payment of fees. For the purposes of administering fee collection, at the point of admission the family is asked to nominate one adult to receive fee communications. For the purposes of this document, that adult is termed the "parent" in general and then the "Debtor" when the parent is in breach of payment terms.

The main parties to this policy are:

- the Bursar
- the Headmaster
- the Assistant Bursar

The Assistant Head Pastoral is also consulted when matters escalate where a pupil is at risk of exclusion.

2. Introduction

West House School has a responsibility to parents, employees and governors to act at all times with financial propriety and to ensure the long-term financial stability of the School is maintained. Notwithstanding this, West House also has a responsibility to pupils to ensure continuity of their education and to provide parents with a range of payment plans and to provide adequate notice when a pupil is at risk of exclusion due to non-payment of fees.

The School and the Governors recognise that some families may face unforeseen circumstances whilst their children are at School and may have difficulty in meeting the fee payments. Whilst each case is individual, the Governors have produced agreed guideline to assist School staff in balancing a supportive role with parents whilst ensuring that fees are collected.

The purpose of this policy is therefore:

- To ensure that all key staff are aware of the School's Fee Recovery Policy and of the actions that will be taken;

- To provide the Bursar and their team and the Headmaster with direction and support when dealing with debtors so that a balanced, fair and appropriate response is consistently provided;

- To ensure that the reputation of the School is preserved within the local community.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

i. The Terms and Conditions
ii. The Bursary Policy

3. Notification of School Fees

Invoices for school fees are sent to parents by email at least three weeks before the start of term to at least one parent / carer who has opted to be the primary contact for the pupil. The invoice includes payment terms as does the covering note.

4. Payment Terms

Fees are expected to be paid in full on or before the start of term unless a school fee plan agreement has been set up. Bank transfer is the preferred method.

The following payment options are available:

Bank Transfer	In full on or by the first day of term
Cheque	To be received on or by the first day of term. This will be banked using internet banking on the first day of term.
School Fee Plan (SFP)	Agreement needs to be in place with SFP prior to the first day of term. SFP pay the fee in full during the first week of term. Parents set up monthly direct debit repayments with SFP.

The payment of school fees in cash is not permitted.

5. Fee Recovery Process – current pupils

The Bursary team use a combination of email statements, personalised emails, telephone calls, meetings, and formal letters in an escalating process. The final sanction for current pupils is exclusion from school.

Initial email statement and reminder

An initial statement is sent out within 5 days from the Engage Accounts system once all receipts from the beginning of term have been processed.

Second email statement and reminder

Interest is applied from 7 days after the 1st day of term. A second statement is sent out by email from the Bursary team (Via Engage system) once interest has been applied.

First telephone call and third email statement

The Bursary Assistant will commence individual telephone conversations with the remaining Debtors to prompt payment 2 weeks after the start of term. This call allows the Bursary Team to identify any changes in circumstances and early indications of hardship. All parties to the Parent Contract will be notified at this stage.

Formal arrears letter

A formal arrears letter will be sent out by the Bursar by email within 4 weeks of the start of term addressed to all parties to the Parent Contract, outlining our intention to exclude the pupil for non-payment of fees and will provide a time frame for this action. The Head will be informed of the Debtors that have progressed to this stage.

Notice to exclude for non-payment

If no payment or response is received following the first formal letter, written notice will be provided to exclude a pupil for non-payment of fees in accordance with the Parental Contract. Exclusion will usually occur after the half term break.

Exclusion for non-payment

It is the responsibility of the Headmaster and the Bursar to enact exclusion for non-payment of fees. A pupil cannot return to school until the payments outlined in the Notice to exclude have been made to the satisfaction of the Bursar.

6. Fee Recovery – former pupils

Once a pupil has left the School, either in the normal course after their final term of Year 6, or due to withdrawal or exclusion, the following steps will be taken to recover any outstanding debt. Often a Debtor with outstanding fees is known to the Bursar and may already have a repayment plan in place. If this is the case, repayments are monitored. Where this is not the case, the Fees Team will take the following steps to recover the debt:

Check status of the pupil and any circumstances which may prevent collection of the debt

The Bursar will review the outstanding amounts related to leavers with the Headmaster to determine whether the debt should be pursued. Circumstances where debts might be credited are if the pupil has suffered illness or has been absent for significant periods from school or where there has been a documented dispute about the provision of education.

Statement and reminder email

A first reminder is sent to all leavers by 15th September once the status of all pupils is known. If the pupil has provided sufficient notice, the Acceptance Deposit is deducted from any outstanding fees.

Formal request for proposal for repayment

If no payment is received, the Bursary Team will write to the Debtor to request a repayment proposal, reminding them that any costs incurred by the school to recover the debt using an external Debt Collection agency will be added to the outstanding amount.

Transfer to external Debt Collection agency

If no repayment proposal is received by the Half term, or if one is started but payments are irregular or stop completely, the Bursar will provide final written notice of transfer the file to a Debt Collection agency for collection.

7. Negotiation of Alternative Repayment Terms

Debtors usually settle the amount owed by a single payment as soon as possible after receiving the first “overdue statement”. If there are exceptional circumstances which give rise to parents having difficulty paying fees in the short term, when they have otherwise had a history of regular prompt payment, then an alternative repayment plan can be agreed and documented and the escalation process is paused. If a Debtor deviates from the agreed payment plan, then the usual escalation process is restarted.

The School charges interest on any late payments as provided for in the Parental Contract.

The Bursar will ensure that the Headmaster is kept fully informed where a repayment plan has been agreed.

8. Grants for parents experiencing financial hardship

The Bursary policy sets out the guidelines for the grant of hardship funds and Bursaries for existing pupils. In all cases, grants are means tested.

9. Notice of exclusion at key transition points

The Bursar will meet with the Head and the Chair of Governors to discuss the fee position of Debtors highlighted those at risk of exclusion for non-payment for the start of the next academic year. The Bursar will provide written notice of at least one term to the selected debtors that should outstanding fees remain unpaid, then the pupil will not be allowed to continue into the next school year. This allows families sufficient time to make arrangements to transfer to a different school if payment cannot be made.

10. Formal arrears meetings

Any party may decide on a case by case basis, to require Debtors to attend in-person meetings at any point throughout the escalation process depending on the individual circumstances of the case. The Bursar will be present at all meetings with Debtors and will be always accompanied by one other member of staff.

11. Reporting of Outstanding Debt

The Bursar will ensure that the amount of outstanding fees is known and can be determined at any time and will supply a report to the Head on a weekly basis.

The Bursar will report to each meeting of the Property and Finance Committee the levels of outstanding fees greater than one term. This will be as a total sum with comparisons to the previous term and at an individual fee level (no names provided), setting out the current position within the fee recovery process.

12. Debt Provisioning for accounts

Debts will be provided in the following ranges depending on the judgement of the Bursar and recent history of payment:

Current full fee pupils and recent leavers with recent payment history	No provision required
Current full fee pupils more than 1 term of arrears	20% provision

Leavers with no payment plan agreed	50% - 100% provision depending on Statement of Means and recent payment history

13. Debt Write Off

Debts continue to be pursued and collected regardless of the levels of provision assessed where there is an agreed payment plan to clear arrears in a reasonable time frame of no longer than 2 years with regular payments as set out in Paragraph 5 above.

When no agreement can be reached, a Debt Collection agency is used to negotiate an appropriate repayment plan using a Statement of Means to consider the assets and commitments of all parties to the Parental Agreement. Where this review shows that the prospect of collection in full is unrealistic, the Bursar and Headmaster will propose a negotiated settlement to the Debt collection, balancing costs of recovery, length of repayment period and likelihood of success.

The Bursar together with the Headmaster are authorised collectively to write-off debts of up to one term's fees in value.

Proposals to write off debts greater than one term's fees in value will be submitted for approval at the Property and Finance Committee. A record of the write-off, the reason for it and the approval for it will be recorded as part of the minutes.

14. Costs of Fee Recovery

The parent will be responsible for any additional costs that arise in the recovery of the debt.

15. Use of External Agencies

The use of external Debt Collection agencies is permitted.