The Gates
Primary School
Westhoughton

**School Payment Policy**
November 2026
Mrs R Slater

**Background**

The Gates Primary School Payment Policy has been adopted to ensure that a consistent and fair approach is taken towards debt incurred by parent/carers whose children take school dinners or are in nursery. If debts are incurred and cannot be recovered, Bolton Council will recoup the debt through the school budget, thereby affecting the amount of money that is available to provide education to all pupils.

## Provision of School Meals

Free School Meals are available for parents who meet certain criteria including the receipt of state benefits. Any parent/carer that believes they may qualify for Free School Meals should contact the school office for further information. Free School Meals are a statutory right and it is important that all parents/carers who qualify take up their child's entitlement so that they can receive a school meal each day.
Information of the entitlement to free school meals and an application form can be found on the Bolton Council website:

http://www.bolton.gov.uk/website/pages/Freeschoolmealsandschoolclothingallowance.aspx

If a child's entitlement to free school meals expires or the parent/carers personal circumstances change the parent/carer must provide a packed lunch or send payment in advance for school dinner.

**Cost of School Meals**

School meals are available to children at a cost of £2.65 per day. Payment to be made weekly in advance via the payment portal on MCAS. Reminders will be sent to parents if their child's account drops below £5.00.
Parents will be notified of any price increases prior to the new term.

## Nursery Fees

**Payments for Nursery fees**

Payment to be made weekly in advance via the payment portal on MCAS. Reminders will be sent to parents if their child's account drops below £5.00.

**Cost of nursery fees**

Nursery Fees are payable a week in advance

- Parents in receipt of the Government 30 hours funding are charged for the additional time in school will be a flat fee of £30.00 per week.
- Parents in receipt of the Government 15 hours funding only that attend the school full time are charged for the week at £110 per week.

## Management of School Debts

To ensure that the School's budget is not adversely affected by the cost of school meal debt or nursery fee debt, the Governors consider the fairest system to all families is to pursue a consistent approach when managing parental payments. School recognises that families do experience financial difficulties from time to time. Please contact the office if you are unable to make school dinner and/or nursery payments

- Arrangements can be made to clear any debt by instalments; however, the amount should be acceptable to both the school and the parents and repayment plan will be agreed to
- An up to date statement of account for both nursery fees and school dinner money is available on request from the office team.
- If payments not brought up to date within a reasonable amount of time the school reserve the right to withdraw the service. For nursery fees this means withdrawal of the nursery place. For school meals this means that parent/carer will be required to provide a packed lunch as no meal will be provided in school.

### Dinner Money

Message reminders will be sent weekly advising parents of the amount owing on their account. This amount must be paid in full weekly or settle in full for the half term a week before the end of each half term. If this is not paid, parents will be advised in writing that school meals will be withdrawn and that a packed lunch is to be provided on the first day back after the start of the new half term/term. If at any time the debt exceeds £50 then school reserve the right to withdraw school meals and parents will be required to provide a packed lunch for their child. The outstanding amount will be sent to Bolton Local Authority for Debt Collections actions.

### Nursery Fees

Reminders will be sent to parents advising of action required as per the timescales below:-

| Timescales | 1 week overdue | 2 weeks overdue | 3 weeks overdue | 4 weeks overdue |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Communication issued | Text message reminder/phone call | Phone call and 1st reminder letter sent – *App 1* | 2nd reminder letter sent – *App 2* | Final letter – *App 3* |
| Action required | Payment made to bring account in order | Payment made to bring account in order | Arrangement to be in place by end of week 3 OR payment made to bring account in order | Payment in full |
| Action by school | | | | Withdrawal of service by school<br>Debt to be transferred to Bolton Local Authority for Debt Collection actions |

**Appendix 1 - Letter 1**

Dear

**Re: first Reminder – Nursery Fees for Name, Class**

***Insert Name*** has been receiving nursery provision, but we have not received any nursery fees in the last two weeks. The outstanding balance on ***Insert Date*** is –£0.00. We would be grateful if payment could be arranged by ***Insert date***. We would like to remind you that nursery fees are due weekly in advance on Mondays as per the Nursery Policy.

If you have any queries regarding your nursery arrears or you would like to speak to someone regarding payment please contact the office who will be happy to help you.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs R Slater
Business Manager
The Gates Primary School

**Appendix 2 -Letter 2**

Dear

**Re: Second Reminder – Nursery Fees for Name, Class**

***Insert Name*** has been receiving nursery provision, but we have not received any nursery fees in the last three weeks. The outstanding balance on ***Insert Date*** is –£0.00. We have written to you previously on ***Insert date*** regarding this matter but we have not had any contact from you. If payment is not received in full by ***Insert date*** we will have to consider withdrawing your nursery place.

If you have any queries regarding your nursery arrears or you would like to speak to someone regarding a payment plan please contact the office who will be happy to help you.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs R Slater
Business Manager
The Gates Primary School

**Appendix 3 - Letter 3**

Dear

**Re: Third and final Reminder – Nursery Fees for Name, Class**

***Insert Name*** has been receiving nursery provision, but we have not received any nursery fees in the last four weeks. The outstanding balance on ***Insert Date*** is –£0.00. We have written to you on two previous occasions but the debt still has not been settled. If payment is not received in full or significant steps are not made to reduce the debt by ***Insert date*** your nursery place will be terminated on *Insert date* and the debt will be referred to Bolton Council who will implement their own debt recovery procedures.

If you have any queries regarding your nursery arrears or you would like to speak to someone regarding a payment plan please contact the office who will be happy to help you.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs R Slater
Business Manager
The Gates Primary School