



# Queen Victoria School Parental Charges (Debt Recovery Procedures and Sanctions)<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

1. Queen Victoria School (QVS) is fully funded for tuition and boarding by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and, as such, is a Publicly Funded school.
2. The Board of Her Majesty's Commissioners (HMC) for the Government of QVS, is responsible for ensuring that procedures are in place for the recovery of outstanding debt.
3. Any money owed to QVS has an impact on the budget and may affect the resources which can be provided to all students, thus disadvantaging other families. The school will therefore take all reasonable measures to collect debts as part of its management of Public Funds.
4. This document sets in place the procedures that will be followed in order to ensure the invoice is paid and, if a debt is outstanding, how debt recovery will be implemented.

## Acceptable Settlement Period

5. All invoices are to be settled within two weeks of receipt or on the first day of term (whichever is later), after which debt recovery procedures will be applied (see Para 6 for procedures), if there is no prior agreement of a repayment plan (see Paras 13-15).

## Debt Recovery Procedure

6. Where payment from the parent/guardian has not been received in accordance with Para 5, above, the following steps will be taken:

**Step 1: Informal 'overdue payment' reminder from the Deputy Resources Manager (DRM).**

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<sup>1</sup> The document forms part of the QVS Debt Management Policy.

- a. An initial reminder may be informal and can be made either in person (when a parent/guardian comes to collect/drop off their child), by telephone, e-mail or personal letter.
- b. A record of all communications will be kept in a debtors file.

**Step 2: First Formal 'overdue payment' reminder letter from the Resources Manager (RM)**

- a. A formal reminder letter will be issued after **10 working days** has passed since the informal reminder discussed/sent.
- b. Copies of all correspondence will be kept in a debtors file.

**Step 3: Second Formal 'overdue payment' formal reminder letter from the School Business Manager (SBM).**

- a. A second reminder letter will be issued a further **10 working days** after the First Formal reminder letter, through the Military Chain of Command for those still serving
- b. Copies of correspondence will be kept in a debtors file.

**Step 4: Final 'overdue payment' formal reminder from the Head of QVS**

- a. If no response is received, or agreement reached, from the three reminders, the debt will be referred to the Head who will write to the debtor personally, copied to the Military Chain of Command for those still serving. This letter will also serve as **Notice of Intention** of further action to follow.
- b. The debtor may be invited to meet the SBM, the Head or a member of HMC to discuss how the debt will be settled.
- c. Copies of correspondence will be kept in a debtors file.

## **Notice of Intention**

7. If no response is received from the Head's letter within **10 working days** the matter will be referred to MOD Legal Services for further action. For those still serving we reserve the right to access JPA records and investigate recovery procedures in conjunction with the relevant Service personnel authorities.

## **Failure to Respond to Reminders / Settle a Debt and sanctions**

8. QVS will make every effort to work with parents to prevent debts mounting. The debtor will be advised that, in line with QVS policy, where debt is outstanding at this stage, the pupil against whom the debt has been accrued - and any siblings at the school – will be allowed to participate **only** in **free** extra-curricular activities and visits until the debt is settled.

9. The debtor may be advised that he/she will be required to pay in advance, or agree to a payment plan (see Paras 13-15).

10. Subsequent siblings who apply for admission will be considered as per the normal entry requirements; however, extra due diligence will be made by QVS of ability to successfully meet the Parental Charge.

## Ultimate Sanction

11. If inability to pay cannot satisfactorily be demonstrated (see Para 15, below) this may result in the child(ren) being removed from QVS.

12. This decision, and its basis, will be recorded and reported to HMC and MOD.

## Negotiation of Repayment Terms

13. Debtors are expected to settle the amount owed by a single payment as soon as possible after receiving the first 'overdue payment' reminder. If a debtor requests for 'repayment terms' these may be negotiated at the discretion of the SBM. A record of all such agreements entered into will be retained. In all cases, a letter will be issued to the debtor confirming the agreed terms for repayment. The settlement period should be the shortest that is judged reasonable, and normally before the pupil leaves QVS and/or before the parent/guardian leaves the Armed Forces.

14. The SBM and/or Head QVS will decide whether any debtor, who has been granted extended settlement terms, will be offered any further 'credit' or will, in future, be required to pay in advance. This decision and its basis will be recorded and reported to HMC.

15. Where individuals are genuinely unable to pay, the School, through the HMC Waivers Committee, may, in certain circumstances, reduce or waive a debt (based on evidence of inability to pay). A sensitive approach to debt recovery will be carried out.

## Methods of Payment

16. **Serving personnel** are encouraged to settle the agreed amount in full or by instalments direct from salary; Standing Order; or Direct Debit.

17. **Parents or Guardians who have left the Armed Forces** are encouraged to settle the agreed amount in full or by instalments by Standing Order or Direct Debit.

18. Alternative payment methods, such as voucher schemes, are continually investigated and should be discussed with the Deputy Resources Manager in the first instance.

## Counselling Services & Support

19. There are a number of Service charities that may be able to provide financial assistance, counselling and debt management advice. They may be contacted through Unit Welfare Officers and the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen's Families Association (SSAFA). Service charities include:

- Royal Caledonian Educational Trust
- RN and RM Benevolent Trust
- RN and RM Childrens Fund
- Army Benevolent Fund
- RAF Benevolent Fund

20. **All debts should normally be repaid prior to the pupil leaving QVS.**

**Please sign and complete the details below, and return this copy to QVS in the envelope provided:**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Service: Army / RN / RAF / RM / Other (delete as appropriate)

Anticipated date of leaving, or date left, HM Forces: \_\_\_\_\_

Service No. \_\_\_\_\_ (as applicable)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_