

## General Welfare Requirement: Organisation

Providers must plan and organise their systems to ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs.

## Finance

### 4.10.3 Debt procedure

#### Statement for St Joseph's Pre-School

##### Statement of Intent

To ensure that the rules of payment of money owed to St Joseph's Pre-School are clear to all. The Pre-School is a charity and not for profit. All fees are used to ensure the running of the setting and it is in the best interests of every child that fees are paid promptly and fully so they can benefit from consistency of care and routine. It also enables staff to concentrate on your child and, where applicable, other governance matters, thus not being distracted chasing unpaid fees and impacting on the rewarding Pre-School experience we aim to offer your child.

##### Rules of Payment

- The Treasury Administrator will issue an invoice within two weeks of the start of a term, stating a due date. If it is not possible to pay the fees immediately and in full (at each payment date set out on the invoice where payments are made over two months), then it is the parent/carer's responsibility to agree a payment plan with the Treasurer/Treasury Administrator (who will confer with the chair and staff).
- Invoices for extra sessions are issued on the day or when booked. Payment of these are required within 7 working days of the date on the invoice.
- Invoices for late collection are issued on the day or as soon as possible after the event, and payment is required within 7 working days of the date on the invoice.
- St Joseph's Pre-School's preferred method of payment is by BACS (bank transfer). Bank details are given on the invoice. Parents must use their child's name as a reference and send an email to the Treasury Administrator to confirm payment.
- St Joseph's Pre-School accepts childcare vouchers. Parents must use their child's name as a reference and send an email to the Treasury Administrator to confirm payment.
- Cheques, made out to 'St Joseph's Pre-School', and cash are accepted. Please hand in person to the Lead Practitioner in an envelope addressed to the Treasurer with your child's name as a reference.
- Parents will be reminded, during the term, that their child's invoice is outstanding (if applicable).
- Concessions cannot be made for absences as the Pre-School cannot fill a child's space with another child.

##### *Non-payment of fees (including contracted early morning sessions)*

- If payment has not been made by the initial invoice payment due date, nor a payment plan agreed by both parties, a first reminder will be issued giving a final payment due date, two weeks from the initial invoice payment date. This will include a flat fee payment charge of £15. However, this charge will be waived if payment is received within 7 calendar days of the date of the reminder.
- If no payment is forthcoming by the final payment due date and there is no payment plan in place, then, subject to St Joseph's Pre-School's discretion:

- [non-funded sessions] a formal letter will be issued to the parent/carer advising them that the child's non-funded sessions will be immediately withdrawn and offered to another family – if applicable - subject to St Joseph's Pre-School's discretion, i.e. taking into account any external factors relating to the child; or
- [funded sessions] a formal letter will be issued to the parent/carer advising them that their child can only attend funded (NEF) sessions (i.e. those funded by the GCC and recorded on the nursery portal) at the setting until the outstanding monies are paid.
- Failure to pay by a given date will lead St Joseph's Pre-School Committee to decide whether to pursue reimbursement of monies owed through the Gloucester and Cheltenham County and Family Court by making a court claim for the said money.
- If a payment plan has been agreed, but no payments received, then a first reminder will be issued giving a final due date. This will be two weeks either from the initial invoice payment date or from the last date a payment was received. It will also include a flat fee payment charge of £15. However, this charge will be waived if payment of the outstanding monies is received within 7 calendar days of the date of the reminder.
- If an agreed payment plan is in place, but there is repeated default on payments, then:
  - St Joseph's Pre-School has the right to take away the child's non-funded sessions immediately and offer them to another family, subject to St Joseph's Pre-School's discretion, i.e. taking into account any external factors relating to the child. A formal letter will be issued to the parent/carer advising them of this action and whether it is St Joseph's Pre-School's intention to pursue reimbursement of monies owed through the Gloucester and Cheltenham County and Family Court by making a court claim for the money.
  - A formal letter will then be issued to the parent/carer advising them that their child can only attend funded (NEF) sessions (i.e. those funded by the GCC and recorded on the nursery portal<sup>1</sup>) at the setting whilst any outstanding balances are to be paid. The letter will also advise whether it is the Committee's intention to pursue reimbursement of monies owed through the Gloucester and Cheltenham County and Family Court by making a court claim for the money.
  - If a court claim is raised then an additional fee of will be levied in line with initial Court costs and interest will be charged on the outstanding balance.
- Once all outstanding monies have been paid then reinstating any non-funded hours or increasing NEF hours can be discussed – dependent on space and staff availability.

### **Extra Sessions and Ad Hoc Early Morning Sessions - Post Late Payment**

- Following a £15 late payment charge within a pre-school year, extra sessions or early morning ad hoc sessions will need to be paid for in advance of attendance. You can either settle the balance
  - via the pre-school bank account at least 24 hours before the extra session or ad hoc early morning session, with confirmation by email to the Treasury Administrator and the Lead Practitioner with a screen shot of the payment. This is the pre-school's preferred method of payment.
  - in cash or cheque (made payable to St Joseph's Pre-school) direct to the Lead Practitioner the day before the session. This must be in a sealed envelope, addressed to the Treasurer, with the child's name and the reason for and amount of payment.

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<sup>1</sup> No extra sessions will be available to the child other than those funded through the local authority (GCC)

### Late Fee invoices – Non-Payment

- If payment has not been made by the invoice payment due date, a first reminder will be issued giving a final payment due date, one week from the initial invoice payment date. This will include a flat fee payment charge of £15. However, this charge will be waived if payment is received within 7 working calendar days of the date of the reminder. The balance can be settled:
  - via the pre-school bank account at least 24 hours before the extra session, with confirmation by email to the Treasury Administrator and the Lead Practitioner with a screen shot of the payment. This is the pre-school’s preferred method of payment; or
  - in cash or cheque (made payable to St Joseph’s Pre-school) direct to the Lead Practitioner. This must be in a sealed envelope, addressed to the Treasurer, with the child’s name and the reason for and amount of payment.

### Retrieving money through the courts re continued non payment

Application through the Gloucester and Cheltenham County and Family Court or any other form of litigation, is a last resort which will only be undertaken when all other options have been explored. Legal action will only be taken when the Pre-school Committee is confident such action does not contravene other stated aims and policies and procedures of the Pre-school, and when they have carefully considered the effect of such action on the child.

### Further Guidance

- Gov.uk: [Make a court claim for money](#)
- Gov.uk: Fees in the Civil and Family Courts ([EX50A](#))
- Citizens Advice: [Making a small claim](#)

### Associated policies and procedures

- 4.10: Payment of Fees

Version Number	Author	Purpose of change	Date
1.0	L Farrer	New document. Requirement of the 2022-23 GCC Local Provider Agreement.	28/03/2023 Cttee Mbr (S Webb)
2.0	L Farrer	Updated to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Court Fees;</li> <li>• interest payable if Court proceedings are instigated; and</li> <li>• inclusion of process for extra sessions following a late payment and £10 surcharge</li> </ul>	30/04/2023 Chair (A Hitchings)
3.0	K Coupe	Updated to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• final paragraph on Family Court or any other form of litigation;</li> <li>• the addition of a “Further Guidance” section.</li> </ul>	4/07/2024 Treasurer (L Farrer)

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Purpose of change</b>	<b>Date</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• reference to early morning sessions (contract and ad hoc) and late collection fee;</li><li>• admin charge updated as per Committee Meeting 20 June 2024 – rise from 1 September 2024</li></ul>	