



Walthamstow Hall

FEE PAYMENT POLICY

Introduction

1. The Parents' agreement with the School to pay fees, extras and fees in lieu of notice ("Fees") is set out in the School's Terms and Conditions and the Parent Contract (former Form of Undertaking)(the "Contract"). The aim of this Policy is to ensure that the Contract is complied with and that parent(s) and/or other contracting parties ("Parents") are aware of the process to be followed by the School in the event that it is not.

Anti-money laundering

2. Any payments received by the School will be handled in accordance with the School's obligations under the Money Laundering Regulations 2007. The School may require satisfactory evidence of identity and address of a person who is seeking to pay fees. The School will not accept cash in settlement of invoices.

3. Where there is an unusual transaction it may be reported to the National Criminal Intelligence Service.

Payments

4. Parents are contractually obliged to pay fees termly in advance and extras termly in arrears. Fees will be invoiced in advance of the start of each term and will include the preceding term's extras, if applicable. Invoices are due and payable before the commencement of the term to which they relate.

5. Fees will not be refunded or waived for absence through sickness, or if a term is shortened or a vacation extended, or if a pupil is released home after public examinations or otherwise before the normal end of term (provided that the School remains open to the pupil and they wish to stay at School during that period), or for any cause other than exceptionally and at the sole discretion of the Headmistress.

6. Payment by Direct Debit into the School's bank account is the preferred method of payment.

7. Payments can also be made by cheque, banker's draft and by instalments pursuant to Paragraph 15 of this Policy.

8. For the avoidance of doubt, Parents should be aware that BACS payments and banker's drafts are treated as cleared funds. Cheque payments clear after ten days. Payments made by Standing Order clear after 48 hours.

9. Any queries regarding the payment of Fees should be addressed to the Finance Manager. If one or more items on the bill are queried, the balance of the invoice must be paid in accordance with the Contract.

10. Cash. As stated at Paragraph 2 (above), the School will not accept cash in settlement of invoices.

11. Company cheques or transfers. The School reserves the right to refuse payment of invoices from companies or businesses unless they have a formal third party agreement with that company or business for the payment of Fees. The School also reserves the right to refuse to accept payment from a company account unless it can be demonstrated that the Parents own 51% or more of the company from which the payment is proposed to be made.

12. Payments from Third Parties. The School reserves the right to refuse payment from a third party unless there is a formal third party agreement in place for the payment of Fees. Any agreement with a third party (such as a grandparent) to pay Fees due to the School does not in itself release Parents from liability if the third party defaults and does not affect the operation of the Contract, or any provision of this Policy, unless an express release has been given in writing, signed by the Bursar.

Part payments

13. Any payment made to the School for less than the full amount due in respect of outstanding invoice(s) will be taken as a payment on account of the outstanding invoice(s) and will be applied to the oldest debt in time, if applicable, or, where all debts are of equal age, to the debt relating to the eldest child, if there is more than one.

Advance Payments

14. Advance payments will be subject to a separate contract between the School and the Parents which provides for, amongst other conditions, a refund of the unused part of the prepayment in the event of the Pupil's leaving the School earlier than expected. Fees in lieu of notice (where applicable) and any other sum due and owing to the School at that time will be deducted from the sum to be refunded.

Instalment arrangements

15. An agreement by the School to accept payment of Fees by direct debit, or any other arrangement for payment of fees by instalments, is concessionary and will cease automatically in the event of any default for 60 days or more. On ceasing, the full amount of Fees then due shall be payable forthwith as a debt and a late payment charge will be due.

16. Details of instalment arrangements and other methods of payment are included in the Contract.

Dishonoured Cheques

17. In the event that any cheque "bounces" or is otherwise dishonoured, the School will serve formal notice of the non-payment to the Parents and reserves the right to commence proceedings for recovery of the sum owed under the Bills of Exchange Act 1882 or otherwise in the event that the School is not put in funds within 14 days of such notice being sent. The amount of any bank charges incurred by the School for returned cheques will be charged on the next invoice.

Late Payment

18. The School reserves the right to make a late payment administration charge for every invoice not paid before the first day of each term. In addition to this administration charge, interest may, at the absolute discretion of the School, be charged on a day-to-day basis on Fees which are unpaid following the first day of term. Interest will be charged, accruing on a daily basis and will be advised in the annual fees letter. The Parents shall also be liable to pay all costs, fees, disbursements and charges including legal fees and costs reasonably incurred by the School in the recovery of any unpaid Fees regardless of the value of the School's claim. Cheques delivered at any time after the first day of term will be presented immediately and will not be considered as payment until cleared. Any sum tendered that is less than the sum owing may in any event be accepted by the School on account only.

19. Parents who have not paid fees by the first day of term will be sent a first reminder notice 7 days after the first day of term informing them that a late payment administration fee of £200 will be charged should the debt not be settled in full in cleared funds within 10 days of the date of the first reminder notice.

20. After a further 7 days the Bursar's Office will send a letter to Parents and will offer the opportunity for Parents to meet with the Finance Manager to discuss the situation and provide full details of their financial position.

21. After a further 7 days, if still in default of payment, Parents will be asked to meet the Bursar to discuss the situation. If such a meeting does not take place and payment is still outstanding, Parents will be given notice that the Bursar will recommend to the Headmistress that their daughter(s) will be excluded from half term pending payment of all outstanding fees. This notice of exclusion for non-payment of Fees will be confirmed in writing in accordance with the Contract.

22. If the account of a pupil who has been excluded for non-payment has not been cleared in full 28 days after the start of the exclusion, the pupil will be deemed withdrawn without notice.

23. The deposit will not be returned/credited and a term's fees in lieu of notice will be due. An invoice will be raised and in default of payment, recovery action initiated.

24. Year 11 and Year 13 Pupils. The Parents of any Year 11 or Year 13 pupils with a significant outstanding balance must have satisfied the Bursar of their ability to pay by Easter in order for the pupil to sit their examinations.

Legal Action

25. The School reserves the right to take legal action to recover Fees, interest and legal costs against all contracting parties, regardless of who actually made payments previously and regardless of any related ancillary relief order(s) in matrimonial proceedings. For the avoidance of doubt, the School will instruct solicitors to pursue debts on their behalf.

Joint and several liability

26. Parents are advised that in the event there is more than one signatory to the Contract (or more than one contracting party), each of the contracting parties are jointly and severally liable for the whole of the obligations under the Contract. For the avoidance of doubt, this means that they are each responsible for payment of all the Fees. The School has no obligation to pursue all of the contracting parties in subsequent litigation.

Insolvency and notifications

27. Parents are reminded of their obligations to inform the School of any court orders or insolvency proceedings against them. In the event of personal insolvency, the School reserves the right to submit a proof of debt in respect of any outstanding Fees to the appropriate Trustee in Bankruptcy.

Bursaries

28. Parents are referred to the School's separate Bursary Policy and are reminded that bursaries are not awarded retrospectively.

29. In the event that Parents encounter difficulty in paying Fees, they are encouraged to notify the Finance Manager of this at the earliest opportunity, in order that proper consideration of eligibility for a Bursary can be given.

Voluntary Donations

30. Any Gift Aid donations are separate and distinct from payment of Fees under the Contract.

Trips

31. The School reserves the right to refuse permission for pupils to attend trips, educational visits or receive other extras such as music lessons, unless Fees have been paid in full.

Notice of Withdrawal

32. Parents are reminded of their obligation under the Contract to give at least one full term's notice in writing of the removal of any pupil from the School. For the avoidance of doubt, Paragraph 3 of the Contract (Financial Terms and Conditions) states that if a pupil is withdrawn on less than a term's notice, fees in lieu of notice will be immediately due.

Information sharing

33. The School will obtain, use, hold and process "personal data" including "sensitive personal data" such as that regarding Parents' financial position lawfully and fairly in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

34. The School also has the right to seek information from current or previous schools about unpaid Fees and to inform any future school or educational establishment of Fees which are unpaid at the School in accordance with the agreed Independent Schools' Code of Practice for Schools¹.

This is a Governing Body policy. It will be reviewed regularly by the Governing Body.

Walthamstow Hall policies are approved, ratified and reviewed regularly by the Governing Body in the light of statutory requirements.

Reviewed June 2017
Next Review date June 2018

Signed: Date:

Mrs J Adams
Chair of Governors

¹ Code of Practice for Schools (2017) – agreed by the GSA, HMC, IAPS, ISA and the Society of Heads.
FEE PAYMENT POLICY June 2017