



## West Lodge School

A co-educational prep school for 3-11 year olds

### West Lodge School Payment of School Fees Policy

#### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 As school fees are the school's primary source of income, it is imperative that collection of school fees is effective.
- 1.2 The aim of this policy is to ensure a robust, non-discriminatory and fair approach to the method by which we deal with parents who have not paid their child's school fees on time.
- 1.3 The objective of this policy is to ensure there is consistency in terms of approach and methodology. It is imperative that a standard process exists and that all involved are aware of this.
- 1.4 School fees are always due on or before the start of the current school term and are non-refundable.
- 1.5 Parents who have signed up to School Fee Plan (SFP), will have their fees paid slightly later in the term direct from SFP.
- 1.6 Term dates are published on line and displayed in the school in advance for all interested parties to view and note.

#### **2 Payment of fees**

- 2.1 Parents or guardians jointly and severally (where applicable) agree to pay the fees applicable to each term directly to the school's nominated bank account. Where parents separate during the course of the Pupil's duration at the school, both parents **remain jointly liable** for fees.
- 2.2 Fees for each term are due and payable as cleared funds before the commencement of the term to which they relate. If an item on the fee invoice is under query, the 'undisputed' balance of the fee invoice must be paid. Please advise the Finance Officer of any disputed items by emailing [accounts@westlodge.org.uk](mailto:accounts@westlodge.org.uk) and if it is determined that a charge was applied in error, this will be credited to the Pupil's account.
- 2.3 Cash payments will no longer be accepted at the school for the payment of school fees. Accepted methods of payment for fees will now include: bank transfer or cheque. Alternatively, Parents may choose to pay cash into the school's bank at a NatWest Bank branch using the bank details on the school invoice.

- 2.4 Any returned cheques will be subject to a £20 fee, whereupon the balance due must be paid using cleared funds.
- 2.5 West Lodge School, like many other independent schools, offer a Fees In Advance (FIA) facility where an advance lump sum payment to the school, from parents, can be used to cover some or all of the termly tuition fees for part, or all, of the pupil's time at the school. The advantage of using a FIA scheme is that parents are offered a small discount rate for paying in advance. If you are interested in participating in the FIA scheme, please contact the school Bursar or Finance Officer.
- 2.6 An agreement with a third party (such as School Fee Plan) to pay the fees or any other sum due to the school does not release the parents from liability if the third party defaults and does not affect the operation of any other of these terms and conditions, unless an express release has been given in writing, signed by the Head Teacher.
- 2.7 If Parents are removed from, or cancel their School Fee Plan agreement (for whatever reason) and any fees are unpaid, parents will then need to pay the outstanding fees directly to the school. If an agreement with a third party is terminated, please advise the school Bursar of this by emailing [bursar@westlodge.org.uk](mailto:bursar@westlodge.org.uk)
- 2.8 Once your child turns 5 and is of compulsory school age, Childcare Vouchers cannot be used to fund tuition fees. Government guidance stipulates that these sources of payments cannot be used for your child's compulsory education or "private lessons during school time" such as music lessons. Childcare Vouchers can only be used for care that is outside of core school hours and takes place on school premises. For example – breakfast club, crèche and after school clubs but not lunches, Parents' Association, instrument charges or trips
- 2.9 Once your child turns 5 and is of compulsory school age, the Government Tax Free Childcare account cannot be used to fund tuition fees. As per the point above, Government guidance stipulates that these sources of payments cannot be used for your child's compulsory education or "private lessons during school time" such as music lessons. The childcare account can only be used to pay for care that is outside of core school hours and takes place on school premises. For example – breakfast club, crèche and after school clubs but not lunches, Parents' Association, instrument charges or trips.
- 2.10 It is the Parents' responsibility to ensure payments to West Lodge School are in accordance with the points above and adhere to Government Guidance. Parents who do not use Childcare Vouchers or funds from the Government Tax Free Childcare account as advised may be reported to the relevant body and will be financially liable for repayment of any tax or government funding.
- 2.11 Effective from January 2025, independent schools are required to charge and collect VAT on tuition fees for pupils of statutory school age. However, Nursery classes that are wholly, or almost wholly, made up of children below compulsory school age remain exempt from VAT.
- 2.12 Extra-curricular activities and clubs, which are educational in nature, are be subject to VAT when provided by a private school.

- 2.13 However, any before or after school childcare, or childcare-based holiday clubs provided by a private school that consist of care, continue to be exempt from VAT.
- 2.14 Vatable charges and fees are detailed clearly on the school's termly invoices.

### **3 Late or non-payment of fees**

- 3.1 A £100 admin fee will be charged if fees are not paid on time. Parents will be notified by email and/or letter to bring their account up to date within the next 7 days.
- 3.2 A report of all outstanding fees and payments made and/or missing will be passed to the Governors and possible pupil exclusion may follow.
- 3.3 If a debt rises to an unacceptable level, the school reserves the right, in extreme cases, to exclude the Pupil on 3 days written notice, if fees remain overdue for payment.
- 3.4 If a pupil is excluded for a period of 28 days, he / she will be deemed withdrawn without notice and a term's fees in lieu of notice will be payable immediately by the Parents.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 We understand that some families may face genuine hardship in paying fees. We ask that, in these circumstances, Parents or Guardians speak to the Bursar in confidence immediately.

### **4 Refunds of school fees**

- 4.1 Refunds will only be made where there is a legal liability under a court order or under the provisions of this agreement to make a refund
- 4.2 The pupil deposit will be refunded without interest less any sums owing to the school. Final invoices will be raised at the end of the term in the pupil's final term (term in which the pupil attends the school) and refunds will be processed by the start of the following term. This is to ensure that all balances (e.g. for clubs, crèche, trips etc. during the final term) have been charged and to ensure that no additional childcare vouchers are received after the final balances have been calculated.
- 4.3 School fees will not be refunded or waived if:
- The Pupil is absent through illness; or
  - A term is shortened or a vacation extended; or
  - The Pupil is released home before the normal end of the school day; or
  - The school is temporarily closed due, for example, to adverse weather conditions; or conditions outside of the control of the School.

- For any other reason.

## **5 Fee increases**

- 5.1 Fees are reviewed annually and are subject to increase from time to time.
- 5.2 Parents will receive at least half a term's notice of an increase in fees and are required to give the school written notice of withdrawal of the Pupil one term in advance, otherwise they will be liable to pay fees in lieu of notice. However, West Lodge School will endeavour to give a whole term's notice of an increase in fees, as this then allows Parents adequate time to give the school notice should they wish to withdraw their child for financial reasons.

## **6 Information about fees**

- 6.1 The Parents consent to the School making enquiries of the Pupil's previous schools for confirmation that all sums due and owing to such schools have been paid.
- 6.2 The Parents also consent to the School informing any other school or educational establishment to which the Pupil is to be transferred if any Fees of this School are unpaid.

## **7 Anti-money laundering**

- 7.1 Money laundering is the process by which the proceeds of criminal or illegally obtained money are processed or spent to create the appearance that they have come from a legal source. The term "money laundering" covers several offences relating to the improper handling of funds that are the proceeds of criminal acts, or terrorist acts. It relates to both the activities of organised crime but also to those who benefit financially from dishonest activities such as tax evasion or receiving stolen goods. West Lodge School is fully committed to compliance with the applicable provisions of The Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (Amendment) Regulations 2019 (MLR 2019) and all amending legislation.
- 7.2 From time to time, the School may need to obtain satisfactory evidence, such as sight of a passport, of the identity of a person who is paying fees. If the school suspects that money laundering may be taking place, it will submit a Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) to the National Crime Agency.

## **8 Indemnity**

- 8.1 The Parents shall indemnify the School against all losses, expenses (including legal expenses) and interest suffered or incurred by the School if the School is required to repay all or part of any sum paid to it by a third party credit provider on behalf of the Parents.

Signed:

Head Teacher:

Date:

Chair of Governors:

Date:

Next Review Date: November 2026