



Action in case of non-payment of Membership Fees: Procedure

1. Background

Income from membership fees is essential in order to cover the costs of Scouting. These include, but are not restricted to, membership fees paid to the national, District and County Scout organisations; insurance, maintenance and utility bills; equipment and programme (badges etc). Consequently membership of the Scout Group is conditional on timely payment of the fee.

Non-payment of fees will result in membership being forfeited, as is allowed for in the national Policy Organisation and Rules of Scouting (section 3.3).

However, the Group does not wish financial hardship to be a barrier to access to Scouting and has measures in place to cover such an eventuality. These are accessed on confidential request to the Group Scout Leader and typically involve the fee being divided equally between the family, the Group foregoing some of the amount and support from Romsey District Scout funds.

The following procedure is to be adopted when no request for financial support has been obtained and, therefore, is assumed to be a “won’t pay”, rather than “can’t pay” situation. Following this procedure will ensure that parents are fully informed of the expectations and consequences of failure to pay, whilst giving fair notice.

2. Prevention of the problem

- 2.1 The annual membership fees will be decided by the Group Executive Committee each January, taking into account the Group’s financial situation and budget expectations. The fees will take effect from 1st April that year, for the financial year to 31st March the following year.
- 2.2 The amount may differ between sections, reflecting the different requirements of the age groups.
- 2.3 The Group’s Membership Administrator will communicate the fees to parents each February by both email (through OSM) and paper copy, distributed via the section meetings. The information document will include:
 - The amounts of the fees for the forthcoming financial year, both as single annual amounts and as equal monthly instalments.
 - That the normal method of payment is by monthly direct debit, through the OSM-GoCardless system, with the amount being due on the 25th of each month. Exceptionally, if the parent cannot use this method or does not wish to do so, they must make alternative arrangements with the Membership Administrator before the first payment is due.
 - That payment of the fee is a condition of membership, and that non-payment will lead for forfeit of membership.
 - How to access support in the case of financial hardship.
 - Signposting to the parents’ guide to the payment system which is in the members area of the Group’s website.
 - A reminder for the parent/guardian to confirm that their section lead has their correct, current email address, as payment requests and reminders will be sent by that route. Also to check that emails from the system are being received and not sent to the junk folder.
 - Contact details for the Membership Administrator.
- 2.4 Members who join during the year will be given the same information as in 2.3, with the first monthly payment being due on the first payment date after the young person’s investiture.

3. Automated requests for payment and reminders

- 3.1 The Membership Administrator is responsible for adding members to the fee schedule on OSM and updating it as required, for example when the member moves between sections (see role description). At this point the system will issue an email asking the parent to “Set up a direct debit”.
- 3.2 Just before the payment becomes due another automated email will be sent, informing the parent that the amount is due and, assuming they have set up the direct debit, it will be taken.
- 3.3 If a direct debit has not been set up, and the parent has not “paid manually” (see 3.4) the system will issue two further reminders at 10-day intervals that payment is now overdue. Setting-up the direct debit will trigger the immediate payment of all outstanding amounts.
- 3.4 By specific, exceptional arrangement with the Membership Administrator, payment can be made termly by cash, cheque or bank transfer. Termly payments will be due on 1st May (Summer Term, covering April to July), 1st September (Autumn Term, covering August to November) and 1st January (Spring Term, December to March). When the payment is received the Administrator will mark the corresponding 4 months on OSM as “paid manually”. This will prevent payment requests and reminders being issued. If the parent does not pay the termly amount on time the system will continue to send monthly payment requests, as in 3.2 and 3.3.

4. Reminders sent by the Membership Administrator

- 4.1 If, despite the automated reminders, a membership fee remains unpaid one month after the due date the Membership Administrator will send a manually-generated email to the address of the main contact parent/guardian on OSM. It is recommended to send this email from the Administrator’s own email provider, rather than direct from OSM, in case the OSM emails are being sent to junk. The email will include the following:
 - A reminder that membership is conditional on payment of the membership fee
 - The total amount due (by this time it will be at least 2 months’ subscription)
 - That payment is required by (date 2 months from when payment was originally due)
 - That this can be paid in one of the ways outlined in the annual fee letter (note, setting up the direct debit will immediately trigger a demand for *all* overdue fees – i.e. more than one month may be demanded at once)
 - That support is available, on request, in cases of financial hardship.

A template for this email is given in Appendix 1. A copy will be sent to the GSL.

- 4.2 Immediately after sending the email the Administrator will send a text to the main contact number on OSM, directing the parent to the email. A template for this text is given in Appendix 2.
- 4.3 If the action in 4.1 and 4.2 results in full payment and the direct debit subscription being set up no further action needs to be taken, apart from the normal monitoring.
- 4.4 If the outstanding payments have not been received 2 months after the original due date the Membership Administrator will inform the Group Scout Leader (GSL). The GSL will be responsible for subsequent action.
- 4.5 The GSL will send a final reminder letter to the main contact parent / guardian, enclosing a copy of the email from 4.1 and informing the parent of the current amount due (now at least 3 months’ fee) and that if full payment is not received by a date 3 months after the original due date it will be assumed that the parent wishes to forfeit the young person’s membership through non-payment of the membership fee. A template for this letter is given in Appendix 3.
- 4.6 If the action in 4.5 results in full payment of the outstanding amount, and the direct debit subscription being set up, the GSL will inform the Membership Administrator accordingly.

- 4.7 If the deadline given in 4.5 passes without receipt of payment the GSL will write to the parent/guardian, informing them that it is now assumed that they wish to relinquish membership, that membership has been cancelled and the young person's name has been removed from the register. A template for this letter is given in Appendix 4.
- 4.8 The GSL will inform the leader of the appropriate section and the Membership Administrator accordingly.
- 4.9 At 6-monthly intervals the GSL will report on non-compliance with the payment schedules to the Executive Committee.

5. Summary of timeline

Payment date = 0 MA = Membership Administrator
 OSM = On-line Scout Manager (membership system)

Time	Action	Para.	Person(s) responsible
February each year (0 minus 2 months for existing members)	Decision on the amount of the annual membership fees.	2.1	Executive Committee
0 minus 2 months	Parents informed of the annual fees and payment method.	2.3	MA
	Those parents wishing to pay termly inform the Membership Administrator and make first payment.	2.3	Parents
0 minus 1 month	Members assigned to the schedule on OSM.	3.1	MA
	Record made on OSM of those who have "paid manually" for the term.	3.4	MA
	Automated "set up a direct debit" emails issued.	3.1	MA
0 minus 1 week	Automated "payment will be requested" emails issued	3.2	OSM
Day 0 payment due date	Automated payment request email issued and, if direct debit has been set-up, payment taken. If direct debit has not been set up continue ...		OSM
0 + 10 days and 0 + 20 days	Automated "payment overdue" emails issued	3.3	OSM
0 + 1 month	Manually generated reminder sent to parent, with a deadline for full payment and set-up of direct debit of 0 + 2 months. Copy of email sent to GSL.	4.1	MA
	Above email immediately followed by a text to the main contact number for the parent on OSM, directing them to the email.	4.2	MA
0 + 2 months	Membership Administrator informs GSL of non-response.	4.4	MA
	"Final reminder" letter sent to parent, with a deadline for full payment and set-up of direct debit of 0 + 3 months.	4.5	GSL
0 + 3 months	"Membership ended" letter sent to parent.	4.7	GSL
	Section leader and MA informed that membership has been ended.	4.8	GSL
Every 6 months	Payment non-compliance summary reported to Executive Committee	4.9	GSL

Appendix 1: Template for manually-generated email (section 4.1)

(insert date, though normally not required if e-mailed)

Subject: Overdue Scouting membership fee

Dear *(insert parent's name)*

You do not appear to have paid the *(insert month) (insert section)* membership fee for *(insert name of young person)* – *(insert amount)* was due on 25th *(insert month)*, with another payment due on 25th *(insert month)*. An automated email requesting payment was sent to you that date, with two subsequent reminders at 10-day intervals.

You are respectfully reminded that membership of the Group is conditional on payment of the membership fee. Therefore, please could you attend to this as soon as possible and in any case by *(insert date 1 month from email)*.

The easiest way to pay, and to prevent missing a future payment, is to set up a direct debit - it only takes a few moments. Note that setting-up the direct debit will immediately trigger payment of all the overdue amounts, so please ensure sufficient funds are available.

If you would prefer to pay termly (4 months) please send a cheque *for (insert amount for 4 months, or as appropriate)*, made to "21st Romsey Scout Group", to me before the above date.

If you believe that you have paid, or can't find these emails, or have a problem in paying please contact me immediately. Support is available, on request, in cases of financial hardship.

Further information on the payment process is available in the members area of the Group's website: www.21stromsey.co.uk .

Thank you

Regards

(insert name of Membership Administrator)

Membership Administrator

(insert address and telephone number of administrator)

Appendix 2: Template for follow-up text (section 4.2)

Scouting membership fee overdue: Please see the email sent to you earlier today, which was sent to the address you have registered with us. If you cannot immediately find it try the junk mail; if you still have no success please contact me. Thanks.

(insert name of MA)

Membership Administrator, 21st Romsey Scout Group

Appendix 3: Template for final reminder letter (section 4.5)



Insert address of GSL
(insert telephone number of GSL)
email: gsl@21stromsey.co.uk

(insert address of parent)

(insert date)

Dear *(Mr / Mrs / Ms)* *(insert surname)*

Re: *(insert full name of member [young person])*
Overdue Scouting Membership Fee

Final reminder

Further to various emailed reminders to your registered address, culminating in one on *(enter date of manual email)* (copy enclosed) I respectfully remind you that you have not paid the £*(insert total amount)* membership fee for *(insert first name of young person)* (Beaver/Cub/Scout) membership for the period *(enter dates from and to)*. The first monthly instalment of these payments was due on *(enter date)*, so is now more than two months overdue.

If you wish to continue *(enter name of young person)*'s membership of Scouting please make this payment immediately by setting up a direct debit, following the instructions in the automated emailed reminders. Note that setting-up the direct debit will immediately trigger payment of all the overdue amounts, then will continue monthly. Alternatively, send me a cheque, payable to "21st Romsey Scout Group" for *(insert amount for one term, 4 months)* and I will record that you paid those months manually.

If I have not received payment by *(enter date one month from date of letter)* it will be understood that you wish to relinquish membership of our Scout Group and we will terminate *(insert name of young person)*'s membership accordingly¹. Consequently, *he/she* will no longer be insured and will not be permitted to participate in Scouting activities from *(enter date one month and one day from date of letter)*.

As previously advised², if you have difficulty in paying as a consequence of financial hardship please contact me, as there is support available.

If you have decided to end *(insert name of young person)*'s membership we thank *him/her* for *his/her* past contribution and wish *him/her* well for the future.

Yours sincerely

(enter name of GSL)
Group Scout Leader

References:

1. National Scout Policy Organisation & Rules: Rule 3.3 Forfeit of membership and rule 15.8 Termination of Youth Membership
2. 21st Romsey notification of membership fees *(enter relevant financial year)* (copy enclosed)

Enc: Copy of manually-generated email

Appendix 4: Template for ending of membership letter (section 4.7)



(Insert address of GSL)
(insert telephone number of GSL)
email: gsl@21stromsey.co.uk

(insert address of parent)

(insert date)

Dear (Mr / Mrs / Ms) (insert surname)

Re: (insert full name of member [young person])
Membership of Scouting ended

As you have not responded to my letter dated (enter date of previous letter) (copy enclosed), I understand that you have decided to relinquish (enter name of young person)'s membership of 21st Romsey Scout Group and that *he/she* will not be attending any more. Consequently, I have ended *his/her* membership as from today and instructed the section leader to remove (enter name of young person)'s name from the register.

Since (enter name of young person) is no longer a member of Scouting, nor a prospective member, *he/she* is not covered by the national Scout insurance policy and cannot take part in Scouting activities.

Whilst the Scout Group will not actively pursue the debt, it will remain on file. Therefore, if (enter name of young person) later decides that *he/she* would like to re-join 21st Romsey *he/she* would be welcome, subject to the following conditions:

1. There being an available space in the section. If there is not *he/she* will be added to the waiting list.
2. Before restarting, payment of the outstanding amount of (enter total owed to the date of ending of membership), plus an administration cost of £2. The latter is simply to cover the printing and postage of the letters that have been necessary as a result of this unpaid amount.
3. Prompt payment of subsequent membership fees, through the Group's monthly direct debit arrangement.

The same conditions will apply should another of your children wish to join the Group.

I am sorry that you have decided to end (enter name of young person)'s membership in this way, but wish *him/her* well for the future.

Yours sincerely

(enter name of GSL)
Group Scout Leader

Enc: Copy of final reminder letter

Version control:

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