



21st Romsey (Nursling & Rownhams) Scout Group



Charity number 302269

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 (sections 3.1 and 15.8).

However, the Group does not wish financial hardship to prevent access to Scouting and has measures in place to cover such an eventuality. These are available on 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 the following 31st March.
- 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 by posting the notification in the members’ area of the Group website. 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 1st 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 1st of the month that follows 4 trial attendances. Normally the young person will have been invested during that time, or will be soon after. If the young person does not continue after the trial attendances no fees will be due.

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. 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 neither used the "pay now" option on OSM, nor "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 monthly by cash or cheque. For convenience, security and clarity the Administrator will provide pre-labelled envelopes for the purpose; these will state the name of the young person, their section, the month the payment covers and the amount due. Payments must be placed in the "Treasurer's post box" for banking. The Treasurer will inform the Administrator of amounts received, so that OSM can be updated as "paid manually".

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 email the main contact parent/guardian, as listed on OSM. It is recommended that this email be sent direct from the Administrator's 21st Romsey email address, rather than from OSM, in case the latter emails are being automatically treated as 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 that 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
0 minus 1 month	New members, and those moving section, assigned to the schedule on OSM and 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 and other arrangements have not been made continue ...		OSM
0 + 10 days and 0 + 20 days	Automated "payment overdue" emails issued	3.3	OSM
0 + 1 month	Manually generated email 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 Scouting membership fees for *(insert months that are outstanding)* for *(insert name of young person)*. *(insert amount)* was due on 1st *(insert month)*, with another payment due on 1st *(insert month)*. An automated email requesting payment was sent to you on each of those dates, 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 future payments, is to “join” the payment schedule, which will set up a monthly direct debit – to do this only takes a few moments. If you require a link to the payments area of OSM please let me know. Note that setting-up the direct debit will immediately trigger payment of all the overdue amounts, so please ensure that sufficient funds are available.

If you would prefer to pay by cheque please send me one for *(insert amount that is outstanding)*, and payable to “21st Romsey Scout Group”, before *(insert date 1 month from email)*. I will then discuss the method of future payments with you.

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)



21st Romsey (Nursling & Rownhams) Scout Group



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 Fees

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). I will record that you paid those months manually and liaise with you about the method of future payments.

If I have not received full 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 3.1 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

Action in case of non-payment of Membership Fees: Procedure v 1.2

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



21st Romsey (Nursling & Rownhams) Scout Group



(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 £3. 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:

Title of Document:	Action in case of non-payment of Membership Fees: Procedure
Author:	Randell McKay, initially as Group Scout Leader, this version as Executive Committee Member
Version number	1.2
Main changes since last version:	Throughout: Scout logo updated Section 1: POR section reference updated Section 2.3: Removed reference to notification of annual fees by paper copy; replaced by adding notification in the members' area of the Group's website Section 2.3 and Appendix 1: Updated due date to 1 st of each month Section 2.4: Changed to first payment being due after 4 trial attendances, rather than after investiture as that might be delayed. Section 3.4: Process clarified Throughout: Removal of references to termly payment; all now monthly
Approved by:	Executive Committee, 21 st Romsey Scout Group
Date v1.0 approved:	21 September 2017
Date this version approved:	16 November 2021
Review date:	November 2024 unless earlier review becomes necessary