



Collection of School Meals Payment and School Meals Debt

Introduction

This policy concerns to the collection of school meals money and the approach to be taken in the case of debts arising when parents/carers fail to pay for school meals. Parents/carers will be sent a copy of this policy when their children start at the school.

General Principle

School meals must be paid for in advance. If a pupil is to have meals for the duration of the week monies must be received before the start of that week or if the school is to accept pupils having an occasional meal monies must be received on the day of the meal.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for this. As a result money which should be spent on all pupils' education in school is used to pay for debts incurred by individual parents / carers. The governing body see this as unacceptable and request that all parents / carers give this policy their full support.

Free School Meals Entitlement

Pupils will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, or if the pupil is confirmed as entitled to free school meals. If parents/carers believe that their child/children may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals they should contact the County Council. As this allowance is a statutory right for qualifying pupils it is important that parents/carers make use of it.

The school is only allowed to provide free school meals to pupils where this is officially approved and the school informed by the Local Authority.

Procedure for Collection of Arrears

It is accepted that on occasion arrears may arise for various reasons eg pupils forget their dinner money or are absent on the day it is collected. However, arrears cannot be allowed to accumulate. The governing body has therefore agreed the following policy where arrears arise.

1. A reminder text will be sent home on day three of accumulated arrears.
2. The parent/carer will be informed in writing when two weeks' arrears have accumulated and advised to make immediate payment (Appendix 1).
3. A final letter to the parent/guardian informing them that no meals will be provided for their child/children if payment has not been received by a specified date, (ie in accordance with the policy the date when two weeks' arrears have accumulated) (Appendix 2).

No meals to be provided to pupils when arrears exceed three weeks.

If you are having financial difficulties please discuss this with either the Headteacher or the School Office. In certain situations we may be able to arrange a payment plan to recover the debt, providing that it is a regular payment and no further meals are taken until the debt is recovered in full.

Once the final letter deadline has expired the debt will be passed onto the debt recovery team at Lancashire County Council where legal proceeding may begin.

Policy Created: 23/01/2019
Review Date: January 2020



APPENDIX 2



Date:

Accumulated Dinner Money Arrears

Child's name:

Dear parent/ guardian

Following the letter dated _____ sent home regarding outstanding school dinner money, our records show that this has not been paid for the period _____ to _____.

To date the amount of arrears is now £_____.

If the debt is not cleared, you must provide a packed lunch for your child/children. In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, we will phone to ask you to come to school with the money or to provide sandwiches before lunch time.

This debt needs to be paid as soon as possible please, via ParentPay.

If you have any queries and/ or wish to discuss this matter please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Date:

Non payment of school dinner money arrears.

Child's name:

Dear parent/ guardian

Our records show that you have not cleared the school dinner money arrears for your child/children despite previous text and letter sent home on _____ and _____.

Arrears to date total £_____

In following the school policy on dinner money arrears, a copy of which is on the Tonacliffe website, www.tonacliffe.lancs.sch.uk, I must inform you that if payment is not received within 5 working days of the date of this letter, the debt will be referred to the LCC Debt Recovery Team.

I am obliged to warn you that the debt recovery procedure can result in additional costs and potentially a summons to Court.

Until the debt is cleared, you must make alternative arrangements for your child/children's lunch as no meals will be provided in school from _____ (insert date).

Payment should be made on ParentPay within 5 working days.

Should you wish to discuss any issue regarding this debt, please contact the school.

Yours Sincerely

Headteacher