



School Meal Arrangements, Payment & Debt Policy

September 2019

Review date: September 2020

Payment for School Meals

- School meals must be paid for in advance.
- Parents/ carers are reminded of the cost of school meals at the beginning of each term on the school newsletter.
- Parents/ carers are expected to pay on Monday morning each week or may pay for longer periods up to a term in advance if more convenient.
- Parents may pay by cash or cheque payable to Lowerplace Primary School, in a labelled envelope.
- Change will not be given, any overpayment will be credited to the child's account
- If children are absent and parents notify school before 10am, their dinner money is credited for the following week.
- If a child leaves school after 10am and a school meal has been ordered for them, then this is still payable.
- If a child forgets their packed lunch and is given a school meal, parents/ carers must pay for that meal the following day (except for children in receipt of Free School Meals).
- Where a child's dinner money amount is in credit, refunds will only be given:
 - at the end of each academic year, and only where the account is in credit by over £5 (unless explicitly requested by parents)
 - where a child is leaving our school
 - at the parents/carers request, for amounts above £20. Should the account have previously been in arrears, then school reserves the right to refuse a refund of monies.
 - where a child has been awarded free school meals, and a refund is due

Late Payments - School Meals

- If parents/ carers fail to make payment in advance, a gentle reminder letter will be sent home in the first instance, requesting immediate payment.
- Should payment not be received within 7 days of this letter, a further letter will be sent home, requesting payment by a specified date. Should payment not be received by the specified date, the Headteacher may issue a cessation of service letter. (The Headteacher will assess each case individually, taking into consideration all the circumstances).
- Where parents/ carers have communicated that they are having difficulty paying the debt, the school may work with the parent/ carer to agree a suitable repayment period.
- Once the cessation of service letter has been issued, children will not have the option of transferring back to school meals until the debt has been cleared.
- If the debt has been cleared, the child will be allowed to transfer back to meals, however, meals will only be provided if paid for in advance. If payment is not received in advance, then the meal service will cease immediately.
- Once a cessation of service letter has been issued, parents/ carers must either provide a packed lunch or take the child home for lunch. If a debt payment is not received, and a packed lunch has not been provided, the Headteacher/ School Business Manager will telephone the parent or carer asking them to come to school with the payment immediately, provide sandwiches or take the child home for lunch.
- Should the debt fail to be cleared within a satisfactory period (determined by school), then the school reserves the right to pass the debt to the authority's debt recovery team for further action.

Free School Meals

- Parents. Carers of junior children (Year 3, 4, 5 & 6) who are in receipt of certain benefits, may be entitled to Free School Meals.
- Parents should contact the local authority to determine whether they are eligible.
- Parents/ carers of infant children (Reception, Year 1 & Year 2) are currently entitled to free school meals.
- Please be aware that all applications for Free School Meals are treated with the strictest of confidence.

Changes to School Meal Arrangements

- Changes to meal arrangements can only commence at the beginning of each week.
- Notice must be given by completing the 'meal changes form' and submitting to the school office, no later than Friday morning of the preceeding week.
- Should the form not be received by the school office, school meals will continue to be ordered, and payment will be due, regardless of whether meals have been taken.

Breakfast Club

- Places for the Breakfast Club must be paid for in advance, at the school office. In exceptional circumstances, payment may be made in the morning, prior to children arriving at Breakfast Club.
- If parents/ carers fail to make payment in advance, a gentle reminder letter will be sent home in the first instance, requesting immediate payment.
- Should payment not be received within 7 days of this letter, a further letter will be sent home, requesting payment by a specified date. Should payment not be received by the specified date, the Headteacher may issue a cessation of service letter, which means that your child will not be able to attend Breakfast Club until the debt is paid. (The Headteacher will assess each case individually, taking into consideration all the circumstances).
- Where parents/ carers have communicated that they are having difficulty paying the debt, the school may work with the parent/ carer to agree a suitable repayment period.
- Following a cessation letter, and once the debt has been cleared, the child will be allowed to attend Breakfast Club, however, payment must be made in advance. If payment is not received in advance, then the child will not be able to attend Breakfast Club.
- Should the debt fail to be cleared within a satisfactory period (determined by school), then the school reserves the right to pass the debt to the authority's debt recovery team for further action.

Debts - General

- Where a parent/carer owes money to school, and fails to clear the debt within the specified timeframe, the school reserves the right to utilise any payment issued to school from the parent/carer, towards clearing the oldest debt.

Review of Policy

Headteacher: _____

Chair of Governors: _____

Policy to be reviewed: September 2020