



## **School Meal Provision and Debt Management Policy 2019**

***Learn, Challenge, Play, Succeed***

### **Policy Aims**

- To outline the School's procedures regarding the administration of school meals.
- To work with parents and carers to provide a flexible approach to the lunchtime nutritional needs of the pupils.
- To ensure the smooth, efficient and cost effective operation of the school dinner internal process.
- To clarify the roles and responsibility of school staff, parents / carers and pupils.
- To present a workable, fair mechanism for the collection of school dinner money.
- To minimise the opportunity for debt balances to build up.

### **Policy Statement**

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that school meals provisions are accessible to all children and that procedures are in place for the recovery of any outstanding debt.

The School Meals and Debt Recovery Policy has been adopted to ensure that there is a consistent and fair approach to debt incurred by Parents/Carers whose child(ren) take school dinners. The responsibility now falls on the school to pursue instances on non-payment. The school budget will be directly affected by any outstanding debts that cannot be recovered, thereby directly affecting all children in school. We are confident that every Parent/Carer will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents give this policy their full support.

**Parents are responsible for providing a lunch for their child(ren), this may be in the form of a:**

- ❖ Paid Meal (via Parent Pay)
- ❖ Universal Free School Meals (UFSM)
- ❖ Application of a Free School Meal Entitlement (FSM)
- ❖ Home packed lunch
- ❖ Lunch at home, by choice or requested by the Head teacher

Parents must pay for school meals in advance, unless their children have a FSM or a UIFSM. Information on how to apply for FSM and UIFSM is available at the school office.

Leftwich Community Primary School has set clear procedures for the payment and collection of school meal income and any arrears that occur. Parents and staff can use Parent Pay for school dinner and educational visit payments.

Snacks are currently not available to be paid for on Parent Pay and must be paid in cash to the School Cook.

### **Meal Arrangements**

- Pupils should opt at the beginning of each day as to whether they wish to have school meal, a packed lunch from home or go home for dinner.
- If a child forgets their packed lunch and is given a school meal, parents/carers must pay for that meal on the same day or the following morning at the latest (except for children in receipt of Free School Meals). The office staff will try to contact parents to let them know.

### **Payment procedure for school meals**

- The cost of the school meal is currently £2.30 per day/£11.50 per week, payable in advance – daily, weekly, monthly or on a half-termly basis.
- Parents/Carers are expected to make payments on Parent Pay for pupils' meals and trips.
- Refunds may only be given for credits at the end of term, or if a child is leaving the school to attend another.
- If a child forgets their packed lunch and is given a school meal, parents/carers must pay for that meal on the same day or the following morning at the latest (except for children in receipt of Free School Meals).

### **Universal Free School Meals (UIFSM) – Reception, Year 1 and 2**

- From September 2014, all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are eligible for Universal Free School Meals.

### **Free School Meals (FSM) – Year 3, 4, 5 and 6**

Parents/Carers who are in receipt of certain benefits, may be entitled to Free School Meals. These include:

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- The guaranteed part of State Pension Credit

- NASS – Support under PART VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit provide you are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income.
- (As assessed by HM Revenue and Customs) that is £16,190 or below
- Working Tax Credit for the four-week period immediately after your employment has finished.
  
- ❖ If a child is eligible for FSM or UIFSM, but a parent/Carer has not made a claim via the Application, and a school meal is given, parents/carers must pay for the meal on the same day.
- ❖ Parents/Carers must apply for FSM or UIFSM if they want to claim a free school meal for their child(ren).
- ❖ Parents/Carers must list all and make a claim for all children who are eligible for a free school meal.
- ❖ Contact details for applying for Free School Meals are available from the school office.
- ❖ Please be aware that all applications for Free School Meals are treated with the strictest confidence.

### **Debt Management Policy**

The school cannot tolerate debt on Parent Pay. Children will not be provided with a school lunch unless the Parent Pay account is in credit. It is the Parents/Carers responsibility to track any debts occurring and payment should be made immediately. If there are any disputes over meals taken, Parents/Carers must contact the school office.

- As from November 2019 the school has adopted a strict NO DEBT policy relating to school meals.
- Children will not be provided with a school dinner unless it is paid for in advance (except for those who have a valid claim for children entitled to FSM or UIFSM).
- The school is not obliged to provide a school dinner where payment is not forthcoming or where authorisation for free school meals has not been received. School will therefore, act promptly to address such issues at an early stage, in order to prevent arrears of dinner monies from accumulating to a point beyond parents means to settle.
- If a Parent/Carer genuinely forgets to pay, the school may grant an exception and allow the Parent/Carer to pay the following day. This debt must be paid the next day and future meals must be paid for in advance before any meal is provided.
- We request that all parents give this policy their full support. If debts are incurred, the school has to pay for the meals eaten. This means that money which should be spent on all the children's education has to be used for debts incurred by parents who have not paid for their child's meals.
- If a debt is not cleared, Parents/Carers must either provide a packed lunch or take the child home for lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received,

nor a packed lunch provided, the Head Teacher(s) will telephone a Parent or Carer.

- If a reasonable arrangement to clear a debt cannot be made, the school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to secure payment.
- We hope that by implementing this debt policy, we are able to help parents manage school dinner money efficiently.
- The school will, in exceptional circumstances postpone the refusal to provide meals where parents have advised the school of their financial situation and school is satisfied that the funding will be forthcoming.
- The school will work closely with Parents/Carers to create a payment plan to help resolve the situation, if requested. However, where no attempt is made to clear the debt, it will follow the procedure of the school's Dept Management Policy.

Chair of Governors Signature : .....

Date: .....