



School Meals Debt Policy

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Author (name & job title):		Claire Frier School Business Manager	
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V2	7/9/21	LG	Information from Cypad removed and School Money added
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1. Introduction

Stanley St Peters Primary School

School Meals Debt Policy

This policy has been written to help our school adopt a consistent approach to debt incurred by parents/carers whose children take school dinners. It provides clarity and consistency in managing the debt and will also help parents/carers clearly understand what is expected of them.

The Free School Meals system is there for any parents that qualify and therefore, who may not be able to afford school meals.

It is very time consuming for the office staff to continually chase parents for money - by letter, phone call or in person. It is also highly embarrassing for all concerned and occasionally it can have a negative effect on our relationships with families. We, of course, would like to avoid this situation if at all possible as we have worked incredibly hard to build good relationships with all parents and carers of children who attend our school.

We feel that a system that works the best is a zero tolerance approach. We understand that it may seem a very hard stance, however, every meal must be paid for and if this is not done by the parent/carer, the money has to come from our budget which means less money is available to spend on the children's education.

The school will make parents/carers aware of this policy in the following ways:

- A letter to parents
- The policy will be placed on the school website

This will ensure that all parents/carers get the same message in a consistent way.

All parents will be made aware of the policy when their child joins the school.

Key Information

1. All parents/carers are made aware of the debt policy when their child joins the school.
2. All school lunches must be paid for in advance
3. No child should be sent to school with no money in their account and expect to be given a meal
4. Parents/carers who don't want their child to have a school lunch, should provide a healthy packed lunch as an alternative

Debt policy implementation

Level 1

Indicator: A child's account goes into debt

- Check 1 is this a FSM child, are dates correct?
- Check 2 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?
- Check 3 does this parent normally pay on time, is this just a one off?

Action 1:

- Send a gentle debt reminder by text, telephone or in person

Level 2

Indicator: A child comes to school again without the debt being paid or a packed lunch

- Check 1 is this a FSM child, are dates correct?
- Check 2 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?
- Check 3 has this parent made contact?

Action 2: Personal contact

- School will phone the parent/carer to ask them to make payment through School Money online or bring sandwiches in before lunchtime

Level 3

Indicator: The parent/carer does not comply with any of these options,

- Check 1 is this a FSM child, are dates correct?
- Check 2 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?
- Check 3 has this parent made contact?

Action 3: Referral to Learning Mentor

Level 4

Indicator: The parent consistently does not comply with any of these options,

- Check 1 is this a FSM child, are dates correct?

Check 2 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?

Check 3 has this parent made contact?

Action 4: outside agency contact

- Learning Mentor will establish level of concern with a view to gaining advice from and/or referral to social services

OR

- Referral to debt collection agency could be made

Dear Parents / Carers

School Meals Debt Policy

We are writing to make you aware that Stanley St Peters Primary School has a NO DEBT policy relating to the school meals.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for any unpaid meals. I am sure everybody will agree that this is unacceptable and we hope that all parents give this policy their full support.

If you believe that you may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals please contact the office for more details. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify. We will help you all we can with your application.

School lunches must be paid for in advance online through School Grid. You will receive an email from School Grid once your account is set up, which you will then need to activate by following their instructions.

If a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance, the school may grant a debt allowance of one meal. However, this debt must be paid on the next day and future meals must be paid for in advance.

If the debt is not cleared, parent/carer must provide a packed lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, the office will phone the parent/carer to ask them to make a payment online through School Grid or provide sandwiches before lunch time.

We hope that by bringing this debt policy to your attention that we are able to help parents/carers manage school dinner money and at the same time ensure that all the money that is for children's learning is available for that purpose.

If you have any concerns, please don't hesitate in contacting me.

Yours sincerely

Miss Michelle Wiggins

Head Teacher