



Lubenham All Saints Church of England Primary School

Policy for School Meals – Payments and Debts

- THIS DOCUMENT is a statement of aims and procedures for dealing with payments for school meals and recovering debts at Lubenham All Saints C.E. Primary School.
- IT WAS DEVELOPED during the spring term 2011 through a process of consultation with staff and Governors.
- IT WAS APPROVED by the Governing Body on:
27th October 2014
- THIS POLICY will be REVIEWED on:
Autumn 2017

Policy Statement

The responsibility of ensuring payments for school meals are made by parents lies with individual schools. Therefore, this policy document is required to ensure that school meals payments are made on time and dinner debts are kept to a minimum.

Many schools operate an extreme policy of “no money, no meal”. However, in formulating this policy, the Governors of Lubenham All Saints C.E. Primary School wished to implement one that ensured meals are paid for, whilst aiding parents / carers during financial difficulties and ensuring children still receive a meal at lunchtime.

Payments for school meals

At Lubenham All Saints C.E. Primary School children are able to bring their own packed lunch or order a hot meal which is cooked in school. Parents may ‘mix and match’ between these during the week.

The school requests that parents pay for hot school meals to be taken during the week ahead every **Monday**. This is essential, as dinner money payments are processed immediately and collected by the security agency on the same day. Money brought in later on in the week cannot then be processed.

Cheques for school meals should be made payable to “Lubenham All Saints CE Primary School”.

Universal Infant Free School Meals

Children in Years R, 1 and 2 are entitled to receive a free hot meal from September 2014.

Free School Meals

Those children who are eligible can receive a free school meal. Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they think they may be eligible for this support.

Procedures for outstanding debts

In collecting any outstanding debts a step-by-step process will be followed. The time lapse between the steps will normally be 5 school days. However, this may vary depending on factors such as the level of debt and the time period within a term. The next step will be implemented if the debt has not been repaid or no contact has been made with the Headteacher or the school office.

Step 1:

Each Friday, dinner debts will be reviewed and a ‘Debt Letter Gentle’ will be sent home via the child’s book bag. The letter will highlight the date when the dinner(s) were taken for which payment has not been received.

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Step 2:

'Debt Letter Strong' will be sent home by post.

Step 3:

A telephone call will be made to the parents / carers by the School Business Manager to ask them to make a mutually convenient appointment to meet the Headteacher and discuss the situation. In order to ensure contact is made, the School Business Manager will telephone home, mobile and work telephone numbers.

'Debt Letter Final' will also be sent home at this stage to insist that a packed lunch is brought to school and no further dinners are ordered.

Step 4:

If the meeting is not kept or a satisfactory resolution agreed, the debt will be referred to the Governing Body who will then take action, which may include a referral to Social Services for neglecting to provide a meal or raising a debt in the Small Claims Court.

(Letters referred to above are contained in the appendix to this policy).

Appendix

STEP 1 - "Debt Letter Gentle"

Dear Parent or Carer

According to our records there appears to be **<Balance/>** outstanding for **<PupilForename/>**'s dinners.

We would appreciate it if you can make arrangements to credit the account within 5 days.

I do realise that there are occasionally circumstances where payment of an outstanding amount can cause difficulty and, if this is the case, please feel free to come back and see me privately to discuss the options available.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely
Head Teacher

STEP 2 - "Debt Letter - Strong"

Dear Parent or Carer

You will recall my letter from last week dated **<date>** informing you that there was an outstanding balance for **<PupilForename/>**'s dinner money. I am concerned to note that the balance still remains **or** has increased to **<Balance/>**.

Please arrange to credit your account immediately.

Since non-payment for school meals affects the quality of service we offer to the children, we need to ensure that all payments are up-to-date. Therefore, can you please ensure the account remains in credit in future.

The price of a school meal is £2.10 per day - £10.50 per week.

As I said in my last letter I do realise that there are occasionally circumstances where payment of an outstanding amount can cause difficulty and, if this is the case, I would encourage you to come and see me privately to discuss the options available.

Yours sincerely
Head Teacher

STEP 3 – “Debt Letter – Final”

Dear Parent or Carer

You will recall my letter from last week dated <date> informing you that there was an outstanding balance for <PupilForename/>’s dinner money. I am concerned to note that the balance still remains **or** has increased to <Balance/>.

As no attempt has been made to clear the debt I am afraid that I must now insist that your **child/ren** bring in a packed lunch and no further hot meals are ordered.

I will be contacting you shortly to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet and discuss the situation and find a resolution.

Yours sincerely
Head Teacher

STEP 4 – Transfer to School Governor Letter A

Dear Parent or Carer

I am disappointed you were unable to make the meeting with me today to discuss <PupilForename/> outstanding dinner money. In line with the school’s Policy for School Meals – Payments and Debts, a copy of which is enclosed, I have no option but to refer this outstanding debt to the School Governors.

The School Governors will consider the situation and will contact you in due course over the action they will take which could include a referral to Social Services for neglecting to provide a meal for your child or making a claim in the Small Claims Court.

Yours sincerely
Head Teacher

STEP 4 – Transfer to School Governor Letter B

Dear Parent or Carer

I am disappointed we were unable to reach an agreement at our meeting today to discuss <PupilForename/> outstanding dinner money. In line with the school’s Policy for School Meals – Payments and Debts, a copy of which is enclosed, I have no option but to refer this outstanding debt to the School Governors.

The School Governors will consider the situation and will contact you in due course over the action they will take which could include a referral to Social Services for neglecting to provide a meal for your child or making a claim in the Small Claims Court.

Yours sincerely
Head Teacher