



North Primary School and Nursery

Dinner Money Debt Recovery Policy

Date policy adopted: 13.06.24

Due for review: Summer Term 2025

The Governing Body has resolved to ensure that all children receive a meal at lunch time whilst recognising the school budget should not be used to pay for debts incurred by individual parents/carers.

CONTENTS

1.0 Confirmation that the Debt Recovery Policy for Traded Activities has been discussed and adopted by the full governing body

2.0 Introduction

3.0 General Principle

4.0 Free School Meals

5.0 Procedure for collection of arrears

Appendix 1 – Gentle reminder letter

Appendix 2 - Accumulated school meals arrears letter

Appendix 3 - Non-payment of school dinner money arrears

1.0 Confirmation that the Dinner Money Debt Recovery Policy in respect of North Primary School and Nursery has been discussed and formally adopted by the full governing body.

Signed by:

Chair of Governors: Date:

Print name: Mrs Jan Blackwell

Chair of Finance Committee.....Date:.....

Print name: Mrs Adele Jennings

Headteacher:Date:

Print name: Mr Alan Garnett

Agreed at the full governing body meeting on: 13.06.24

2.0 Introduction

This policy concerns the collection of school meals money and the approach to be taken in cases of debts arising when parent/carers fail to pay for school meals. Parents/Carers will be sent a copy of this policy when their children reach Key Stage 2 (KS2).

All pupils in the Foundation Stage and Key stage 1 are now entitled to receive Universal Infant Free School meals

3.0 General Principle

- 3.1 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 in advance of that week.
- 3.2 If the school is to accept pupils having an occasional meal, monies must be received in advance.
- 3.3 If debts are incurred, these have to be paid from the school budget. This means that 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.

4:0 Free School Meals

- 4.1 KS2 pupils will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for in advance, except those confirmed as entitled to free school meals.
- 4.2 If parents/carers believe that their child/children may qualify for entitlement to free school meals, they should contact the school or complete an online application form on the Local Authority website.
- 4.3 As this allowance is a statutory right for qualifying pupils it is important that parents/carers make use of it.
- 4.4 The school is only allowed to provide free school meals to pupils where entitlement has been verified.

5:0 Procedure for Collection of Arrears

- 5.1 It is accepted that on occasion arrears may arise for various reasons. However, arrears cannot be allowed to accumulate.
- 5.2 The governing body has therefore agreed the following policy where arrears arise.
 - A gentle reminder letter (by Parentmail) / text message will be sent home after one week. (Appendix 1)
 - The parent/carer will be informed in writing where payment has not been received following the gentle reminder request in immediate payment (Appendix 2).

- A final letter to the parent/carer informing them that no meals will be provided for their child/children if payment has not been received by a specified date in accordance with the policy, the date when four weeks of arrears have been accumulated. (Appendix 3)
- 5.3 Any parent/guardian experiencing financial difficulty may discuss their situation with the Headteacher (either in writing or via a meeting) and will be considered confidentially on an individual basis.
- 5.4 No meals to be provided to pupils when arrears exceed four weeks.
- 5.5 Once the final letter deadline has expired the Governing Body will decide whether legal proceedings should begin.

APPENDIX 1

Date

Gentle Reminder Letter

Child's name:

Dear Parent/Guardian

According to our records there are outstanding dinner monies for your child/children.

The arrears are for the week commencing

Please make the payment of £ immediately via your Parentmail account.

Please note that failure to clear the debt may lead to your child not being able to have a school meal.

If you have any queries regarding the above, please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX 2

Date:

Accumulated School Meals Arrears

Child's name:

Dear Parent/Guardian

Following our letter dated regarding outstanding dinner money, our records show that this has not been paid.

To date, the amount of arrears is £..... Please email to acknowledge receipt of this letter and to inform the school of your intentions to make payment. If this is not received, we will request that you attend a meeting to discuss the situation with the Headteacher. Please telephone the school office to arrange an appointment.

These arrears need to be cleared immediately. Payment can be made via your Parentail account.

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

If you are experiencing financial difficulty, you may discuss your situation with the Headteacher (either in writing or via a meeting) and the matter will be considered confidentially on an individual basis.

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

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX 3

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 letters sent home on and

Arrears to date total £

In accordance with the school policy on dinner money debt recovery (the policy was shared with all parents in July 2024 and is available on the school website), I must inform you that if payment is not received within 5 working days, the Governing Body will be asked to consider starting legal proceedings for debt recovery. I am obliged to warn you that the debt recovery procedure can result in a summons to Court.

Until the debt is cleared no meals will be provided in school and you need to provide a packed lunch for your child/children.

If you are experiencing financial difficulty, you may discuss your situation with the Headteacher (either in writing or via a meeting) and the matter will be considered confidentially on an individual basis.

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

Yours sincerely

Headteacher