

“A unique family working together to be the best”

Forest Lodge Community Primary School



Dinner Debt Policy



FOREST LODGE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL SCHOOL MEALS DEBT POLICY

As from Thursday 29th August 2013, Forest Lodge Community Primary School has adopted a clear 'no debt' policy relating to the school meal service. 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 debts incurred by parents. Every parent will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents give this policy their full support.

No parent would take their child to a restaurant and expect them to be given food without paying; the same applies at school. If parents believe that their children may qualify for 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.

Parent/s must pay in advance for the school meal by uploading funds on the Parent Pay website www.Parentpay.com. Children will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, except those that are entitled to free school meals. If a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance, the school may grant a debt allowance of 1 meal. However this debt must be paid next day and future meals must be paid in advance before any meal is provided. If the debt is not cleared, parents 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 will phone the parent to ask them to come to school to discuss the issue. Otherwise they must provide sandwiches before lunch time or arrange to take their child home for lunch.

If payment of the debt is not received by the next day, the Headteacher reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against parents to recover the debt. Social Services may also be informed that these parents are not carrying out the responsibility of care by not providing food for their children at lunchtime.

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

If you have any concerns please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs C Caldwell (Headteacher)

Establishing a debt policy

Forest Lodge Community Primary will ensure that parents are aware of this policy in the following ways:

- A letter to parents
- The school's newsletter
- The school prospectus
- The school website

This will ensure that all parents get the same message in a consistent way. This should be done at least once each year, more often when it is first introduced. All parents should be provided with a copy of the policy when their child joins the school.

Debt policy implementation

Key Information

1. All parents are provided with a copy 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 who don't want their child to have a school lunch, should provide a healthy packed lunch or arrange to take them home for lunch

Level 1

Indicator: A child's record shows a debt

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

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

Check 3 does this parent normally pay on time, is this just a one off?

Action 1: send a 'Gentle debt reminder' Via a Text Service

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 recorded correctly?

Check 3 has this parent made contact?

Action 2: Personal contact. Someone will phone the parent to ask them to bring in the money owed or bring sandwiches to school before lunchtime or arrange to take their child home at lunchtime.

Level 3

Indicator: The parent 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 recorded correctly?

Check 3 has this parent made contact?

Action 3: send Strong debt letter Appendix B

APPENDIX A

Parent or carer of xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx

Xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Xxxxxxxx

Xxxxx

xx/xx/xxxx

Dear Parent/Carer

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child xxxxxxx
xxxxxxx Class: xx

As at xx/xx/xxxx our records show a debt of £-xx.xx

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately by uploading funds on Parentpay.com.

NOTE: All meals MUST be paid for in advance in accordance with our debt policy
(copy enclosed). If you don't wish for your child(ren) to have a school meal please
provide them with a healthy packed lunch or arrange to take them home for lunch.
The cost of a school meal is £1.75 per day - £8.75 per week.

Enclosed is a Free School Meals Information leaflet for Parents and Guardians,
detailing the eligibility criteria and how to apply for free school meals, or
alternatively call 0116 4547009 OPTION 3 to check eligibility (this process takes less than 5 minutes).

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

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

APPENDIX B

Parent or carer of xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx

Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Xxxxxxxx

xxxxx

xx/xx/xxxx

Dear Parent/Carer

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child xxxxxxx
xxxxxx Class: xx despite a previous written reminder and a telephone call.

As at xx/xx/xxxx our records show a debt of £-xx.xx

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately onto the Parentpay system.

The cost of a school meal is £1.75 per day - £8.75 per week.

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 and I am afraid that if the debt is not cleared by the end of this week it will not be possible to provide your child with a school meal. You will need to make your own arrangements for your child's lunch.

The school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to recover the debt and to inform social services of our concerns that you are not providing a meal for your child at lunch time.

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

Yours sincerely

Claire Caldwell
Head Teacher