



## School Meals Debt Policy

As from April 2013, Keresforth Primary School will adopt a 'no debt' policy relating to the school meal service.

The reasons for this are:

1. Barnsley Council has changed their policy.
2. From April 2013, 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/guardians. Every parent/guardian will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that **ALL** parents/guardians give this policy their full support. No parent/guardian would take their child to a restaurant and expect them to be given food without paying; the same applies at school.

If parents/guardians believe that their children 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 Meals Debt Policy:

Parents/guardians **must pay in advance** for the school meal by sending in cash or a cheque in a sealed envelope to the school office or online through the School Gateway. 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/guardian genuinely forgets to pay in advance, the school will grant a debt allowance of **ONE** meal. However this debt must be paid on the next school day and future meals must be paid for in advance before any meal is provided.

If the debt is not cleared, parents/guardians 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 Headteacher or Business Manager will phone the parent to ask them to make suitable arrangements for the provision of a lunch time meal for that day.

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

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

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

Yours sincerely  
Mrs H Otley  
Headteacher

# Keresforth Primary School

## School Meals Debt Policy & Procedure

### Establishing a debt policy

*Keresforth Primary School will ensure that parents are aware of this policy in the following ways:*

- *A letter to parents*
- *The school's newsletter*
- *The school brochure*
- *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' Appendix A**

#### 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 or text 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**

#### 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 recorded?*

*Check 3 has this parent made contact?*

**Action 4: Start Debt Collection Proceedings**

*School Business Manager to begin debt collection proceedings immediately, consider contact with Social Services.*

**APPENDIX A**

Parent or carer of xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXX  
xx/xx/xxxx

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child xxxxxxxx  
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 sending cash or a cheque in a sealed envelope to the school office or online through the School Gateway

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 £1.90 per day - £9.50 per week.

If you think your child may be entitled to free school meals, please contact the school office or online through the BMBC website or on the Benefits, Taxation and Payments helpline 01226 787787.

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

Yours sincerely  
Mrs H Otley  
Headteacher

## APPENDIX B

Parent or carer of xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXX  
XX/XX/XXXX

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child xxxxxxxx  
xxxxxxx 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 by sending cash or a cheque in a sealed envelope to the school office or online through the School Gateway.

The cost of a school meal is £1.90 per day - £9.50 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  
Mrs H Otley  
Headteacher