



## ST MICHAEL & ST JOHNS RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Collection of School Meals Money and School Meals Debt Policy

*Following the example of Jesus, together we learn, love and respect one another to be the best we can be.*

#### **Introduction**

This policy concerns the collection of school meals money and the approach to be taken in the cases of debts arising when parents/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).

#### **General Principle**

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 during that week or if the school is to accept pupils having an occasional meal monies must be received during that week.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. 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.

#### **Free School Meals Entitlement**

KS2 pupils will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, except those confirmed as entitled to free school meals. If parents/carers believe that their child(ren) may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals they should contact the County Council. As this allowance is a statutory right for qualifying pupils it is important that parents/carers make use of it. The school is only allowed to provide free school meals to pupils where this is officially approved and informed in writing by the Local Authority.

#### **Procedure for Collection of Arrears**

It is accepted that on occasion arrears may arise for various reasons eg pupils forget their dinner money or are absent on the day it is collected. However, arrears cannot be allowed to accumulate. The governing body has therefore agreed the following policy where arrears arise.

A gentle reminder letter will be sent home after 1 week of accumulated arrears (Appendix 1)

The parent/carer will be informed in writing where three weeks' arrears have accumulated and advised to make immediate payment (Appendix 2).

A final letter to the parent/carer informing them that no meals will be provided for their child(ren) if payment has not been received by a specified date, (ie in accordance with the policy the date when four weeks arrears have accumulated).

No meals to be provided to pupils when arrears exceed four weeks.

Once the final letter deadline has expired the debt will be passed onto the debt recovery team at Lancashire County Council where legal proceeding may begin.

## APPENDIX 1

Date:

Gentle reminder letter

Child's name:

Dear parent/guardian

According to our records there is outstanding dinner monies for your child(ren).

Please send in £\_\_\_\_\_ tomorrow, this is for w/c\_\_\_\_\_

If you wish to pay by cheque, please make it payable to LCC.

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

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## APPENDIX 2

Date:

Accumulated School Meal Arrears

Child's name:

Dear parent/guardian

Following the letter dated \_\_\_\_\_ sent home regarding outstanding school dinner money, our records show that this has not been paid for the period \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. To date the amount of arrears is now £\_\_\_\_\_. We now request that you attend a meeting to discuss the situation with the Head teacher. Please telephone the school office to arrange this.

If the debt is not cleared, you must provide a packed lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, we will phone to ask you to come to school with the money or to provide sandwiches before lunch time.

This needs to be paid as soon as possible please, cheques are to be made payable to LCC. 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(ren) despite previous letters sent home on \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Arrears to date total £ \_\_\_\_\_

If following the school policy on dinner money arrears, a copy of which you were sent when your child started at the school, I must inform you that if payment is not received within 5 working days of the date of this letter, the debt will be referred to the LCC Debt Recovery Team.

I am obliged to warn you that the debt recovery procedure can result in a summons to Court. Until the debt is cleared, I must instruct you to make alternative arrangements for your child(rens)'s lunch as no meals will be provided in school from \_\_\_\_\_.

Cheques are to be made payable to LCC.

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

Yours sincerely

Headteacher