

Castle Hill Primary School School Meal Debt Policy



Reviewed on: April 2024

Next Review date: April 2025

Reviewed by: Head Teacher

Approved by: Full Governing Body

Su Broadhurst

Review frequency: Annually

As from 1st January 2018 Castle Hill Primary School adopted a strict NO DEBT policy relating to the School Meal and Breakfast Club 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 entitlement to Free School Meals please contact the office for more details on how to apply. 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 Breakfast Club or School Lunch using either of the methods of payment outlined below:

- Online using ParentPay - **THIS IS OUR PREFERRED METHOD**
- • Ask in the office about PayPoint payments

Parents are expected to regularly check their Parent Pay account to ensure there is always sufficient funds in their account.

Once the school dinner debt has reached 5 days accumulated debt then the school will contact the parent via email/text, on Fridays, to advise them of their debt and ask them to credit their account immediately. They will also be asked to provide sandwiches before lunch time or arrange to take their child home for lunch, as at this point the school will not order a school lunch even if it has been requested, until the debt is cleared. The same process will apply to Breakfast Club debt, (5 days accumulated debt) which should be paid on a weekly basis. If the debt continues over one week then the parent will be contacted by telephone. Once the debt is cleared then hot school lunches and spaces at Breakfast Club can be resumed.

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

If you have any concerns please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Broadhurst – Head Teacher.

The below protocol will be followed with regard to any outstanding debt for lunches or Breakfast Club on ParentPay.

Level 1

Indicator : A child's account goes into debt

1. Is this a FSM child, are the dates correct?
2. Is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?

3. Does this parent normally pay on time, is this just a one off?

Action 1 : Send a 'Gentle debt reminder' Appendix 1 (this could be via email or text).

Level 2

Indicator: A child comes to school again without the debt being paid or a packed lunch.

1. Is this a FSM child, are dates correct?
2. Is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?
3. Has this parent made contact?

Action 2: Personal contact – someone will phone the parent to ask them to either pay online, at a pay point or as a last resort bring the money into school. The child will need to bring in a packed lunch until the debt is cleared. A written record is to be kept of the phone call in Appendix 2.

Level 3

Indicator: The parent does not comply with any of these options.

1. Is this a FSM child, are the dates correct?
2. Is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?
3. Has this parent made contact?

Action 3: send Strong debt letter – Appendix 3

Level 4

Indicator: The parent consistently does not comply with any of these options.

1. Is this a FSM child, are dates correct?
2. Is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?
3. Has this parent made contact?

Action 4: bring in outside agencies – LEA to advise, small claims court, social services.

Appendix 1

Parent or carer of
Address 1
Address 2
Address 3

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child xxxxxxxx. As at 00/00/0000 your account is showing a debt of £-????.

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately. Once the debt is cleared please ensure the account is always in credit.

You have 3 ways to pay:

1. In the secure online payment system ParentPay, using the login already provided, go to www.parentpay.com NB THIS IS OUR PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD Your username and password are:

Username: xxxxxx

Password: yyyyyyy

2. Paypoint – pay in instalments

3. Send in money to school in a marked envelope

No matter how you pay you can check the account balance anytime by logging into your ParentPay account at www.parentpay.com. You can see what meals have been taken and when.

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

Yours sincerely

School Business Manager

Appendix 2

[illegible]

Appendix 3

Parent or carer of
Address 1
Address 2
Address 3

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child xxxxxxxx. As at 00/00/0000 your account is showing a debt of £-?????. Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately. Once the debt is cleared please ensure the account is always in credit.

You have 3 ways to pay:

1. In the secure online payment system ParentPay, using the login already provided, go to www.parentpay.com NB THIS IS OUR PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD Your username and password are:

Username: xxxxxx

Password: yyyyyyy

2. Paypoint – pay in instalments

3. Send in money to school in a marked envelope

No matter how you pay you can check the account balance anytime by logging into your ParentPay account at www.parentpay.com. You can see what meals have been taken and when.

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 until the debt is cleared, you are expected to provide a packed lunch for your child until it is. 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

Governors Body of
Castle Hill Primary School
Appendix 4

Level 4 letter

NAME

Overdue Amount £0.00

Despite previous reminders the above debt is still outstanding and no payment plan has been agreed. Please note that some payment must be received by (date 10 days)

If this debt remains unpaid it will be passed to our legal department at Shire Hall, Gloucester.

Please either, pay directly to ParentPay, request a barcoded letter or bring money direct to the school.

Yours sincerely

Governing Body of
Castle Hill Primary School