



Simmondley Primary School School Meal Debt Policy

Introduction

As from February 2014, Simmondley Primary School has adopted a clear policy relating to our school meal service. This is to ensure that a consistent and fair approach to debt incurred by parents/carers whose children take school dinners.

As the LEA is no longer accountable for the administration of dinner money debt, the responsibility now falls on the school to pursue. 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/carers. Every parent/carer will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents give this policy their full support. No parent/carer would take their child to a restaurant/supermarket and expect them to be given food without paying; the same applies at school.

Free School Meals

Free School Meals are available for parents who meet certain criteria including the receipt of state benefits. If parents/carers believe that their child may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals please contact www.derbyshire.gov.uk/quidsin or the school office. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify.

Cost of School Meals

School meals are currently available to children at a cost of £1.95 per day (£9.75 per week). Any revision to the school meal prices will be notified to parents/carers as soon as practicable.

Payment for School Meals

Parents/carers must pay in advance for school meals by sending in cash (the correct amount where possible as change will not be given due to cash not being held on site) or a cheque (made payable to Derbyshire County Council) in a marked envelope. Payment must be paid on a Monday or the first day back after a holiday. If parents/carers wish to pay in advance for the term, we would ask that you make payment for the first week following a half term holiday, the Office will then send out reminders detailing the amount for the remainder of the term.

Management of School Meal Debts

To ensure that the School's budget is not adversely affected by the cost of School meal debt the Governors consider the fairest system to all families is to pursue a 'Zero Tolerance' approach. Although, this may seem harsh to some parents it is important that the school budget is spent for the benefit of all our pupils and not a small number. A reminder slip will be sent from the Office on the first day of unpaid dinner money, if dinner money has not been received by Wednesday, a reminder text will be sent to the parents/carers, for any dinner money still outstanding on Friday a telephone call home or to the parents/carers mobile will be made to discuss the outstanding Debt.



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Consequences of Non Payment for School Meals

When the debt exceeds £10 for a child, a formal letter will be sent to the parent/carer informing them to provide their child with a packed lunch to prevent further arrears. If the child is not provided with the requested packed lunch and the parent/carer cannot be contacted, the School will provide a sandwich and drink only.

If payment of the debt is still not received, the Headteacher reserves the right to take further action, such as Social Services being informed that these parents/carers are not carrying out the responsibility of care as they are not providing food for their child at lunchtime. It is not the responsibility of the school to provide lunch for pupils. It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to provide a meal, either a school lunch, a packed lunch or take the child home.

Conclusion

We hope that by implementing this debt policy we are able to help parents manage school dinner money effectively, reduce the administration time and costs involved chasing dinner money debts and at the same time ensure that all money for children's learning is available.

Date policy agreed: 6th February 2014, to be reviewed Spring 2016