

Our Lady Queen of Peace

Catholic High School



School Meal Arrears Policy Summer 2025

Date of Policy	Sept 2025
Date of Review	Sept 2026

Schools Financial Services Policy – School Meals Arrears

Reviewed Summer 25

The Governors of Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic High School have reviewed the policy of School Meal Arrears Summer 2025 written by Lancashire County Council and have implemented this policy within school.

SCHOOL MEALS ARREARS POLICY

Introduction

This policy relates to the collection of school meals money and the approach to be taken in the case of debts arising when parents/carers fail to pay for school meals.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget is liable to cover the cost of this. As a result, money which should be spent on all pupils' education in school is used to pay for debts incurred by individual parents/guardians. The governing body see this as unacceptable and request that all parents/guardians give this policy their full support.

Parents/guardians can view this policy on the school's website.

General Principle

- School meals must be paid for in advance. School meals are available to pupils at a cost of £2.50 per day or at no cost to those in receipt of a free school meals.
- Payment should be made via the schools electronic payment system ParentPay.

Free School Meals Entitlement

If parents/guardians 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/guardians make use of it.

The school is only allowed to provide free school meals to pupils where this is officially approved and the school informed by the Local Authority.

Procedure for Collection of Arrears

It is accepted that on occasion arrears may arise for various reasons, however, arrears cannot be allowed to accumulate. The governing body has therefore agreed the following policy where arrears arise.

1. An outstanding dinner money letter will be sent to parent/guardian after one day of accumulated arrears, requesting immediate payment (Appendix 1).
2. If unpaid, an accumulated dinner money arrears letter will be sent after each collection of a dinner ticket by the pupil, advising immediate payment (Appendix 2).
3. If unpaid, a telephone call will be made requesting payment and that packed lunch may need to be provided if the debt continues.
4. A final letter non-payment of dinner money arrears will be sent informing the parent/carer that no meals will be provided for their child(ren) if payment has not been received by a specified date, (i.e. in accordance with the policy

when four weeks' arrears have accumulated). This letter will also advise that an LCC Invoice will be issued that would be subject to LCC Debt Recovery Policy (Appendix 3).

The LA advise that no meals to be provided to pupils when arrears exceed six weeks. The pupil will be asked to bring in a packed lunch.

Once the final letter deadline has expired an LCC Invoice may be issued therefore being subject to LCC Debt Recovery Policy where legal proceedings may commence.

The school will assess each case and if a child is deemed in need of a meal due to poverty or safeguarding, the school will provide a school meal. The cost of this will be added to the balance. If parents/carers think they are eligible for Free School Meals, they should contact the LA. If parents/carers are struggling to pay for the school meals, they should contact the school directly.