



THE RACKHAM

C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dinner Money Debt Policy

Policy Number: SCH 067

Date: September 2024

The Rackham C of E Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment.

Introduction

The responsibility of ensuring school meal payments are made by parents lies with the school and the school is liable for any debts outstanding. Therefore, a policy is required to ensure school meal debts are kept to a minimum. In writing this policy, the Governors of The Rackham C of E Primary School wish to implement a policy that ensures meals are paid for, whilst being sympathetic to Parents and Carers during financial difficulties and ensuring children still receive a meal at lunchtime.

Procedures

School meals should be paid for in advance and must be paid within one week of meals being taken. All meals should be paid for through MCAS (My Child at School).

When a child leaves, the school office shall check the balance of the child's account and refund any credit balances and obtain any debt outstanding.

When adults are invited to lunch, meals must be booked and paid for on MCAS by the date given. No meals will be provided after this date.

If you think that your child may be eligible to receive free school meals, please refer to the following website www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals.

Debt procedures

If payment for school meals has not been made within one week of meals being taken, then the following process will be followed:

Step 1: A "debt letter one" will be sent by email to the parents/carers (see Appendix A). This letter requests that the child is provided with a packed lunch until the debt is cleared. The School Office will ensure this is adhered to: if the child arrives at school without a packed lunch the parent/carer will be telephoned asking them to bring this into school. If no packed lunch is brought in, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will be consulted and the child will be given a school packed lunch. They will not normally be allowed a hot school meal.

Step 2: For those parents/carers who received "letter one" and have not cleared their debts within 5 school days since letter one was sent, the school will contact the parent/carer to request an appointment with the Headteacher to discuss the outstanding debt.

Step 3: If this meeting is not kept, or a satisfactory solution agreed, the debt will be referred to the governing body, who will make a decision on how to deal with this debt, including but not limited to a claim in the Small Claims Court.

We acknowledge that on occasion, families have financial difficulties and in these proven circumstances, the school will work hard with the family to agree a solution which is not to the detriment of the child.

In the event of a child leaving The Rackham C of E Primary School with an outstanding debt, the Governing Body will need to consider pursuing payment by other means, including but not limited to making a claim in the Small Claims Court.

