

St. Matthew's C of E Primary School Policies

Our Policy: Payments for School Meals

Approval Date: April 2020
Review Date: April 2021

Aims

Our school meals policy aims to:

- Outline School's procedures regarding school meals;
- Ensure a smooth, efficient and cost-effective operation of the school meal provision;
- Offer a fair and equitable process for payment of school meals;
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of school staff and parents;
- Ensure we adopt a consistent and fair approach to debt incurred by parents/carers whose children take school dinners.

School Meal Procedure

- School meals are available to all pupils in KS2 at a cost of **£1.80 per day** / £9.00 per week.
- Payment for school meals must be made **in advance**.
- Payment should be made as follows:
 - On the first day of the half-term for the full half-term ahead;
 - In weekly instalments on the Monday of each week.
- Parents must pay by cash.
- Cash payments must be made in a sealed envelope, clearly labelled with the pupils name, class and amount enclosed.
- If children are absent their dinner money is credited for the following week.
- Refunds may be given for credits if a child is leaving this school to attend another.
- If a child forgets their packed lunch a school meal will be provided; this should be paid for on the following day.
- The office must be informed at the start of a new term of any changes in meal arrangements.

Statutory Free School Meals

- Parents/Carers who are in receipt of certain benefits, may be entitled to Statutory Free School Meals. The School Office are available to assist parents in an application for Free School Meals.
- Children who have a packed lunch but who are entitled to Free School meals must notify the school office if changing from one to another.
- All applications for Free School Meals are treated with the strictest confidence.

Universal Infant Free School Meals

- All parents of children in Reception, Year One and Year Two (Key Stage 1) are currently entitled to Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) funded by the Government.
- Parents may choose to provide a packed lunch instead of claiming a UIFSM at their own expense, we request that you notify the office if this is your choice.
- Parents of children who have a packed lunch but who are entitled to Universal Free School meals should notify the school office if changing from one to another.

Responsibility of the School

It is the responsibility of the School to ensure:

- That money received at the school office is processed in a timely manner;
- That Parents/Carers are reminded when dinner money has not been received to prevent arrears accumulating.

Responsibility of Parents / Carers

It is the responsibility of Parents / Carers to ensure the following:

- Their child is provided with a packed lunch or a school meal;
- School meals are paid for in advance or evidence of entitlement to Free School Meals is provided to the School Office;
- Any money is sent into school in a sealed and clearly labelled envelope. School cannot take responsibility for money which is sent into school and is not in a sealed and / or clearly marked envelope.
- Requests for dinner money arrears are responded to to prevent further arrears accumulating.

Debt Policy

- School operates a strict no debt policy regarding school meals.
- If your child has taken school meals for which payment has not been received, parents will be notified and payment requested. Payment must be made immediately to the school office.
- If payment is not received by the date requested, a letter will be sent requesting payment and detailing the consequences of non-payment and a final date by which payment must be made.
- If the arrears remains unresolved a final letter will be issued detailing the school's course of action.
- School reserves the right to withdraw school meals for pupils where arrears exist and remain unpaid.
- Where school meals remain unpaid and a packed lunch is not provided, the Head Teacher, as designated Child Protection Officer may refer the case to social services to inform them that Parents/Carers are failing to carrying out their responsibility of care by not providing food for their child at lunchtime.
- If a reasonable arrangement to clear a debt cannot be made, the school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to secure payment.
- Within letters requesting payment of school meal arrears, the option of arranging a confidential payment plan will be offered.

The school cannot accept arrears amounting to more than one weeks payment. These debts are not written off by the Local Authority and therefore the school must pay them out of the school budget. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents.

We hope that by implementing this debt policy we are able to help parents manage school meal payments, and ensure that all money allocated to the school for our pupils learning is available for that purpose

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every year, or earlier if considered necessary.

Date of Policy:	April 2020
Date agreed by Governors:	April 2020
Next Review Date:	April 2021