

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School



DEBT RECOVERY POLICY

Reviewed January 2025

Introduction

This policy has been written to help our school adopt a consistent approach to debt incurred by parents. It provides clarity and consistency in managing the debt and will help parents clearly understand what is expected of them. The school wishes to avoid a situation, which allows parents to accrue debts which they can then find difficult to clear.

The Governors of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School insist that a system that works best is a zero tolerance approach.

It is very time consuming for the school office staff to continually chase parents for payment – by letter, phone call, or in person. It is also highly embarrassing for all concerned and occasionally it can have a negative effect on our relationships with families. However, the school is no different from any other business and payment must be made for all services taken.

The School will make parents aware of this policy in the following ways:

- A letter to parents
- Reminders in the School newsletter
- School website

This will ensure that all parents receive the same message in a consistent way. This will be done at least once a year. By implementing this debt policy, we are aiming to help parents manage their payments to the school.

Most importantly this also ensures that money allocated to the school to further the education of our children is used for this purpose and not for clearing accrued debts.

In the event of debts remaining unpaid or a child leaving the school with an outstanding debt, the matter will be referred to the School Governing Body, who reserve the right to pursue payment by other means, including making a claim through the Small Claims Court.

School Dinners

The Free School Meals system, which is provided by the government, is available for parents of children of **all ages** to claim if they are in receipt of certain benefits. To apply for this benefit please speak to the school office where you will receive confidential assistance and guidance on how to make a claim.

Universal Free School Meals

All pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1 are currently entitled to receive Universal Infant Free School meals. As such, no payments are required to receive a school dinner.

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As a result, the following policy only relates to pupils in Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6) whose parents pay for school meals.

All parents will be reminded about the policy when their child joins KS2.

Key Information

- All school lunches must be paid for in advance using Parentpay.
- No child should be sent to school without a credit on their account and expect a meal.
- Where a debt has accrued amounting to the equivalent of five meals parents will be asked to provide packed lunches until the debt has been cleared and the online ordering account will be suspended.
- Parents who do not send in a packed lunch will be telephoned asking them to bring a meal into school before 12.00 pm.
- The school is not obliged to provide a school dinner where payment is not forthcoming or where authorisation for free school meals is not been received.
- Parents who ignore this reminder may be reported to social care on the basis of neglecting to feed their child.

Breakfast and After School Club

There is an additional cost to the school for running the Breakfast and After School Club. This includes staff wages, food and drink and the cost of equipment and activities. These costs must be covered by the fees paid by parents.

Key Information

- Children must be signed into and out of the Club by parents/guardians. This provides an accurate record of attendances to be charged.
- Daily attendance will be recorded on Parentpay the following day (Monday for Friday's attendance).
- It is expected that attendance should be paid no later than the end of each month, although payment can be made daily or weekly if you prefer.
- If payment is not made, contact will be made by letter and the child's/children's place at the Club will be suspended until such time as the debt is cleared.
- In persistent cases, once any outstanding debt is cleared, payment will be requested in advance of attendance.
- Parents may pay in advance of their child attending.