

Paget Primary School Meals Debt Policy

Paget Charging and Remissions Policy - point 11 Debt Management states:

School recognises that a debt to school is money owed to the Public Purse. As a result, it is essential that debt is kept to a minimum and efforts are taken to recover money. School encourages communications between parents and school wherever possible to avoid debts building up. Where there is a non-voluntary charge made for a service or event e.g. school dinners, we state that these must be paid a week in advance. These fees can be paid half termly if the parent wishes.

This policy provides clarity and consistency in managing debt and will also help parents clearly understand what is expected of them. Every meal must be paid for.

The Free School Meals system is there for parents who cannot afford school meals. Applying for Free School Meals is straight forward, and parents can apply, assuming eligibility is authorised the child can take a free school meal the following school day.

Debt policy implementation

Key Information

1. All parents are provided with a copy of the debt policy when their child joins the school.
2. All school lunches must be paid for in advance
3. No child should be sent to school with no money in their account and expect to be given a meal
4. Parents who don't want their child to have a school lunch, should provide a healthy packed lunch or arrange to take them home for lunch

Level 1

Indicator: A child's account goes into debt

- Check 1 is this a FSM child, are dates correct?
Check 2 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?
Check 3 does this parent normally pay on time, is this just a one off?

Action 1: send a 'Gentle debt reminder' Appendix 2

This letter is already set up for you to use in ParentPay. Run it instantly in Pupils>Mail merge

Level 2

Indicator: A child comes to school again without the debt being paid or a packed lunch

- Check 1 is this a FSM child, are dates correct?
Check 2 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?
Check 3 has this parent made contact?

Action 2: Personal contact

Someone will phone the parent to ask them to either bring money or pay online or bring sandwiches to school before lunchtime or arrange to take their child home at lunchtime.

Level 3

Indicator: The parent does not comply with any of these options,

Check 1 is this a FSM child, are dates correct?

Check 2 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?

Check 3 has this parent made contact?

Action 3: send Strong debt letter Appendix 3

The head teacher will send a final letter. This too is setup in ParentPay.

Level 4

Indicator: The parent consistently does not comply with any of these options,

Check 1 is this a FSM child, are dates correct?

Check 2 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?

Check 3 has this parent made contact?

Action 4: bring in outside agencies

School to notify debt management company/Solicitor who will initiate further action

APPENDIX 1

School Meals Debt Policy for Parents

As from **01/01/2019** Paget Primary School has adopted a strict NO DEBT policy relating to the school meal service.

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. Every parent will agree that this is unacceptable, and we request that all parents give this policy their full support.

No parent would take their child to a restaurant and expect them to be given food without paying; the same applies at school.

If parents believe that their children may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals, please contact the School Office immediately to register for eligibility (pupil premium) in order to claim (from Nursery to 6 years). This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify.

Children in reception, Year 1 and year 2 are entitled to a free meal each day under the Government Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme.

Parent/s must pay in advance for the school lunch using any of the methods of payment outlined below:

- Online using ParentPay **THIS IS OUR PREFERRED METHOD**
- Pay point Card at a local pay point store
- Send cash or cheque in a marked envelope (up to 31st December 2018 only)

Children will not be provided with a school lunch unless it is paid for, except those that are entitled to free school meals. If a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance, the school may

grant a debt allowance of 1 meal. However, this debt must be paid the next day, and future meals must be paid for in advance before any meal is provided.

If the debt is not cleared, parents must either provide a packed lunch or take the child home for lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received, nor a packed lunch provided, the head teacher will phone the parent to ask them to come to school with the money or ask them to pay online immediately. Otherwise they must provide sandwiches before lunch time or arrange to take their child home for lunch.

If payment of the debt is not received by the next day, the Headteacher reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against parents to recover the debt.

We hope that by implementing this debt policy we are able to help parents manage school dinner money better and at the same time ensure that all money that is for children's learning is available for just that.

APPENDIX 2

Paget Primary School

Parent or carer of *Mark Smith*
1 The Court
Green Lane
Pype Hayes
Birmingham

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child *Mark Smith Class: 5G*

As at 01/07/2018 your account is showing a debt of £-11.90

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately. Once the debt is cleared please ensure the account is always in credit.

You have 2 ways to pay:

1. In the secure online payment system ParentPay, using the login already provided, go to www.parentpay.com NB THIS IS OUR PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD Your username and password are:

Username: xxxxxx **Password: yyyyyyy**

2. Send in money to school in a marked envelope

No matter how you pay you can check the account balance anytime by logging into your ParentPay account at www.parentpay.com. You can see what meals have been taken and when.

The cost of a school meal is £2.30 per day - £11.50 per week (£2.00 per day for Nursery). If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

APPENDIX 3
Paget Primary School

Parent or carer of Mark Smith
1 The Court Green Lane
Pype Hayes
Birmingham

01/07/2018

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child *Mark Smith Class: 5G* despite a previous written reminder and a telephone call

As at *01/07/2018* your account is showing a debt of **£-11.90**

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately.

You have 2 ways to pay:

1. In the secure online payment system ParentPay, using the login already provided, go to www.parentpay.com NB THIS IS OUR PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD
Your username and password are:

Username: xxxxxx Password: yyyyyyy

2. Send in money to school in a marked envelope

No matter how you pay you can check the account balance anytime by logging into your ParentPay account at www.parentpay.com. You can see what meals have been taken and when.

The cost of a school meal is £2.30 per day - £11.50 per week. (£2.00 per day for Nursery)

Since non-payment for school meals affects the quality of service we offer to the children, we need to ensure that all payments are up-to-date, and I am afraid that if the debt is not cleared by the end of this week it will not be possible to provide your child with a school meal. You will need to make your own arrangements for your child's lunch.

The school reserves the right to begin legal proceeding to recover the debt and to inform social services of our concerns that you are not providing a meal for your child at lunch time.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Date agreed by the Governing Body: _____

Signed: Chair of the Governing Body: _____

Review Date: October 2023