COLLECTION OF SCHOOL MEALS MONEY AND DEBT 2022/2023 (Awaiting approval from Governors)

Introduction
This policy concerns to the collection of school meals money and the approach to be taken in the cases of debts arising when parents/carers fail to pay for school meals. Parents/carers will be sent a copy of this policy when their children start at the school.

General Principle
School meals must be paid for in advance. Meals are to be ordered via Parent Pay. A meal can be ordered the day before until 12.00 am. Meals can also be booked weekly or for the whole term. Payment for meals needs to be made via Parent Pay.

Free School Meals Entitlement
Pupils will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, except those confirmed as entitled to free school meals. If parents believe that their child/children 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/carers make use of it.
The school is only allowed to provide free school meals to pupils where this is officially approved and informed in writing by the Local Authority.

Procedure for Collection of Arrears

The Parent Pay system will not allow pupils to go into arrears. Unless there is money in the account meals cannot be ordered. If a child has no packed lunch and has not ordered a meal on Parent Pay the office will order a meal for the child. A message will be sent home to parents to pay for the dinner via Parent Pay. Pupils can only go into arrears if we book the lunch through Parent Pay (forgotten lunch.) In the case if arrears on the account the following is applied:

1. A text message or letter will be sent home after 1 week of accumulated arrears (Appendix 1).

2. The parent will be informed in writing when two weeks' arrears have accumulated and advised to make immediate payment (Appendix 2).

3. A final letter to the parent informing them that no meals will be provided for their child/children if payment has not been received by a specified date, (i.e. in accordance with the policy the date when four weeks' arrears have accumulated). **No meals are to be provided to pupils when arrears exceed four weeks.**

4. Once the final letter deadline has expired the debt will be passed onto the debt recovery team at Lancashire County Council where legal proceeding may begin.

Reviewed September 2022

APPENDIX 1

Reminder for School Dinner Arrears – No 1

Date:

Child's name:

Dear Parent/ Carer

According to our records there is outstanding dinner monies for your child(ren).

Please find enclosed a statement, please pay £_____ via parent pay before tomorrow. If you have trouble with your Parent Pay account, please contact the school office immediately for support in accessing your account or resetting your password.

If you have any queries, please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely

K McKeating

Mrs K McKeating
Headteacher

APPENDIX 2

Accumulated School Meal Arrears No 2

Date:

Child's name:

Dear Parent/ Carer

Following the letter dated _____ sent home regarding outstanding school dinner money, our records show that this has not been paid for the period _____to_____.

To date the amount of arrears is now £_____.

If the debt is not cleared, you must provide a packed lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, we will phone to ask you to come to school with the money or to provide sandwiches before lunch time.

This needs to be paid as soon as possible please via Parent Pay, if you have trouble with your Parent Pay account please contact the school office immediately for support in accessing your account or resetting your password.

If you have any queries and/ or wish to discuss this matter, please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely

K McKeating

Mrs K McKeating
Headteacher

APPENDIX 3

Non Payment of School Dinner Money Arrears – Final Letter

Date:

Child's name:

Dear Parent/ Carer

Our records show that you have not cleared the school dinner money arrears for your child(ren) despite previous letters sent home on _____ and _____.

Arrears to date total £_____

The school policy on dinner money arrears, a copy of which is enclosed with this letter and therefore I must inform you that if payment is not received within 5 working days of the date of this letter, the debt will be referred to the LCC Debt Recovery Team.

I am obliged to warn you that the debt recovery procedure can result in a summons to Court. Until the debt is cleared, I must instruct you to make alternative arrangements for your child(rens)'s lunch as no meals will be provided in school from _____ (insert date).

All payments need to be made via Parent Pay, if you have trouble with your Parent Pay account please contact the school office immediately for support in accessing your account or resetting your password.

Should you wish to discuss any issue regarding this debt, please contact the school.

Yours sincerely

K McKeating

Mrs K McKeating
Headteacher