



St Clare's Catholic Primary School Debt Policy

Rationale

This policy has been compiled recognising the difficulties placed on school in balancing the social welfare of pupils with the responsibility of managing the School Budget.

St Clare's Catholic Primary School has adopted a strict NO DEBT policy relating to school meals. Money owed affects the school overall budget and must be settled promptly.

Free School Meals

A child's entitlement to Free School Meals (FSM) is determined by Lancashire County Council. Parents are informed of the decision to grant FSM by Lancashire County Council and when the entitlement is due for renewal, Lancashire County Council contacts parents directly. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that they apply for renewal of entitlement. Lancashire County Council *will not* back date FSM payments and any debt incurred by late application for FSM renewal.

Debt recovery

Payment for school meals

- All school meals need to be paid for in advance.
- When a pupil has failed to produce dinner money the school may allow a meal to be provided where it is felt that this is an emergency situation, e.g. money lost on the way to school, minor domestic problem, etc. Details of this are recorded and a record is maintained. The parents will be contacted.
- Where a pupil continues to require meals and no payment is made, a letter is sent (or phone call /'call-parents' text) informing parents that they must either clear the outstanding debt or provide a packed lunch for the child.
- If parents fail to provide either payment or a suitable meal, a referral can be made to Children's Services on the grounds of neglect.
- When a parent genuinely forgets to pay dinner money the school may grant a debt allowance of 1 meal. The school will contact the parents advising them of the situation and the amount outstanding. This debt must be cleared the next day and future meals must be paid for in advance before any meal is provided.
- In the case when, after letters have been sent home and debt is still outstanding, a packed lunch is not provided, parents will be phoned to either make payment immediately, provide a packed lunch or take the child home for lunch.
- If the outstanding debt remains unpaid the Governing Body will take Debt Recovery Action commensurate to the size of the debt to recover this.
- Children's Services may be informed that parents are not carrying out their legal responsibility of duty of care by not providing food for their child at lunchtime.

February 2018

Date Reviewed September 2023