



Dinner Money Policy

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1. Introduction

This policy has been created to assist Yewtree Primary School to adopt a consistent approach to dinner money debt that has been incurred by parents whose children take school dinners. It provides clarity and consistency in managing the debt and will also help parents to have a clear understanding of what is expected of them.

2. Payment for School Meals

As of September 2024 the cost of a school meal is £2.80 per day.

Parents/carers are expected to pay for school meals in advance on a Monday morning each week or if they wish may pay up to a term in advance if more convenient.

Yewtree Primary School operate an online payment system within Arbor

If a child is absent, the dinner money stays as credit.

Refunds may only be given for credits at the end of a term, or if a child is leaving the school.

Menus are available to view on line, in the main reception office and in each classroom.

If a child forgets their packed lunch, a meal may be provided by the school, however, parents/carers will be contacted and the meal must be paid (this does not apply for children in receipt of Free School Meals).

3. Free School Meals

Parents/Carers who are in receipt of certain benefits may be entitled to Free School Meals. These include:

- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit (Not Working Tax Credit)
- Pension Credit Guarantee and be in receipt of Child Tax Credit above the basic family element
- Universal Credit

If you are in receipt of one of the benefits above your child may be entitled to receive free school meals, it is essential that parents/carers apply for this at the same time as applying for benefits. To apply for Free School Meals please log onto [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk](#). Please note, children will not be given a free meal until confirmation has been received from Hertfordshire County Council.

4. Universal Infant Free School Meals

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 (Key Stage 1) are entitled to receive a Universal Infant Free School Meal.

Even though a child is entitled to receive a universal infant free school meal, parents/carers who receive benefits are asked to also register on the free school meal website with the local authority, this will ensure that their details are included in the information that is used to calculate the **Pupil Premium Funding** which schools receive as part of their annual funding.

This funding is used to provide resources throughout the academies to support children in their education and learning journey ensuring that they achieve their full potential. If a parent/carer is entitled to receive free school meals but does not register their entitlement this will impact on the amount of Pupil Premium Funding that the school receives.

5. Debt Policy

We request that all parents give this policy their full support. If debts are incurred, the school will have to cover the cost of the meals taken. This will mean that money which should be spent on the children's education has to be used for debts incurred by parents.

- The cost of school dinners should be paid for in advance – at the beginning of each week or on a daily basis if this is more suitable for parents/carers.
- Children may not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for in advance (except for those children entitled to Free School Meals or Key Stage 1 children).
- If a parent/carer genuinely forgets to pay, the school may grant an exception and allow for payment to be made. This debt must be paid within 7 days.
- Parents/Carers who incur debts will be contacted. If the debt is not cleared, they will be informed that the school can no longer provide a meal, they will be instructed to provide their child with a packed lunch.
- When a debt exceeds 2 weeks worth of school meals per child a message will be sent to the parent/carer informing them to provide their child/ren with a packed lunch to prevent further arrears.
- If the debt exceeds 4 weeks worth of school meals per child and/or actions proves unsuccessful in securing dinner money arrears, a formal letter will be sent to the parents/carer explain that the School is not obliged to provide a school dinner where advance payment is not forthcoming or where authorization for free school dinners has not been received.

6. Appendix 1: Reminder Letter

Date

Gentle Reminder Letter

Childs name:.....

Class:.....

Dear Parent/Guardian,

According to our records your school meals payments are in arrears. The debt amounts to £.....

Please settle this amount as soon as possible by making payment via Arbor.

Information on who is eligible for Free School Meals is available at:

If you would like assistance with claiming Free School Meals, please contact the office. Parents should note that Free School Meals are only awarded from the date of application and therefore the outstanding debt to school must still be paid.

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

Kind Regards,

7. **Appendix 1: Reminder Letter**

Date

Accumulated School Meal Arrears

Childs name:.....

Class:.....

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Following our letter datedregarding outstanding school dinner money, our records show that this has not been paid.

The amount of arrears is now £.....

If this debt is not cleared immediately, you must provide a daily packed lunch for your child from this point until the debt is cleared. Please note, no further school meals will be provided until this debt is cleared.

This debt needs to be paid within five working days, by making payment on Arbor.

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

Kind Regards,

8. Appendix 1: Reminder Letter

DATE

Non Payment of School Dinner Money Arrears

Childs Name:

Class:

Dear Parent/Guardian

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:.....

I must inform you that if payment is not received within five working days of the date of this letter, the debt will be referred to Hertfordshire County Council Legal Department.

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

Yours sincerely