



Stoke Park Primary School

Dinner Money Policy

Version History		
Version	Date	Detail
1.0	2019	Ratified by Governors 21/3/2019
2.0	October 2020	Reviewed A Jelf & A Annear

Stoke Park Primary School Dinner Money Policy has been adopted to ensure that there is a consistent and fair approach to debt incurred by parents/carers whose children take school dinners. The responsibility falls on the school to pursue instances of non-payment. Unpaid dinner money results in the school budget directly funding any outstanding debts that cannot be recovered thereby directly affecting the amount of money that is available to provide education to all pupils.

Provision of School Meals

The Schools Meals Service is no different to any other business in that meals have to be paid for by someone. Free School Meals are available for parents who meet certain criteria including the receipt of state benefits. Anyone who may qualify for Free School Meals should contact the school office for further information. Free School Meals are a statutory right and it is important that all parents/carers who qualify take up their child's entitlement so that they can receive a school meal each day.

Information on the entitlement to free school meals and an application form can be found on the Bristol City Council website.

<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/fsm>

If a child's entitlement to free school meals expires or the parents/ carers personal circumstances change the parent/carer must provide a packed lunch or pay for a school dinner at the point of ordering, using the Parent Pay system.

Cost of School Meals

School meals are available to children at a cost of £2.15 per day or at no cost to those in receipt of Free School Meals entitlement or Universal Free school meals in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. School meals **must** be paid for when ordered. Any revision to the school meal prices will be notified to parents/carers the term prior to the new charge taking effect.

Payment for School Meals

Payment should be made when meals are ordered using the School Gateway system. This applies to staff as well as parents/carers of pupils.

Management of School Meal Debts

To ensure that the School's budget is not adversely affected by the cost of school meal debt the Governors consider the fairest system to all families is to pursue a 'Zero Tolerance' approach. Although, this may seem harsh to some parents it is important that the school budget is spent for the benefit of all our pupils and not a small number.

If a child arrives at school without a packed lunch or pre payment, or if a child's entitlement to free school dinners has ceased, the school will telephone/text the parent/carer in the first instance to establish if alternative arrangements have been made.

When a child has failed to pre order and pay for a meal the school may allow a meal to be provided where it is felt that this is a temporary situation. e.g. temporary hardship. However details should be recorded in writing and a record maintained and monitored.

If a child takes a school meal which has not been paid for, a letter/text detailing how much is owed will be sent to the parent/carer. Prompt action will be taken to address any debt issue at an early stage in order to prevent arrears amassing.

Where a child continues to require meals, the school must establish if the child is entitled to free school meals, or if the parent/carer is experiencing hardship which affects their ability to pay. Under these circumstances the parent/carer should be invited to apply for free school meals or speak confidentially to the School Business Manager.

Monitoring and Recovery of School Meal Debts

At each meeting of the Governing Body Resources Committee, the School Business Manager will provide Governors with details of any outstanding dinner money debt and the current position with regard to such debt. The aim of the school's dinner money policy is to minimise the opportunity for debt balances to build up. The School does however, reserve the right to begin legal proceedings to recover outstanding school meal debts.

All Write-offs of outstanding debt must be approved by the Governing Body Resources Committee following submission of details of the debt by the School Business Manager together with reasons for no further action being taken.

Reviewed 23rd October 2020 A Jelf & A Annear