School Meals Debt Policy

(Whole School)

Cinnamon Brow C of E Primary School has adopted a 'no debt' policy regarding payment for school meals.

Aims: To reduce the level of school meals debt.

Objectives:

· To take prompt action to ensure that school meals debts do not build up
· To have a clear threshold beyond which debts will not be allowed to increase
· To ensure that parents are made aware of the policy
· To ensure a fair and consistent approach to dealing with dinner money payments.

All debts incurred are paid from the school budget. This means that money allocated for learning resources are relocated for payment of debts around school meals.

The Procedure:

Parents **must** pay for meals **in advance** on ParentPay. This can be either via online payment processing with a debit/credit card, or via a PayPoint card.

Parents who don't want their child to have a school lunch should provide a healthy packed lunch.

Non-Payment:

If a child has not paid for a meal the school will make a decision about next steps. We appreciate that sometimes it can be easy to forget to pay for lunches and for that reason we will allow parents a maximum of **£11.50 per child** leeway (this is the equivalent of one week of meals). If payment is not received once the debt reaches **£11.50** parents will be responsible for providing their child with a packed lunch. This will prevent parents incurring large debts and should help families to budget for their child's dinner money.

In the instance of a debt payment not being received and a packed lunch not being provided, a member of the Office Team will phone the parent to ask them to come to the school with a packed lunch. This will be carried out sensitively as it is appreciated that the family's circumstances may be challenging at current. The services of the Pastoral Support and Welfare Officer may be mentioned if it is felt to be appropriate.

Parents will be contacted by School Ping or telephone in the first instance to remind them of the outstanding monies owed and encourage them to clear this or call in if they wish to discuss this further. If the debt continues, a letter will be sent with the request to make an appointment to discuss the outstanding monies and come to an

agreement to ensure the monies owed are paid. Failure to clear the debt despite reminders and offers of support may result in recovery via a solicitor.

Free School Meals:
If a parent or guardian believes that their child may be entitled to free school meals then additional information on this statutory right can be obtained from the school office. Only eligible pupils will qualify and the school will be happy to assist parents and guardians with the necessary application form if required.

The school website will contain information regarding this policy and also user friendly guidance on how to claim free school meals.

If a parent or guardian is notified by Warrington Free School Meals team that their child is no longer eligible for Free School Meals, then they are required to notify the school immediately to prevent incurring a school meal debt.

Establishing a Debt Policy:

Cinnamon Brow C of E Primary School will notify parents of this policy through the following ways:
• Letters to parents
• The school website

Notification will occur at least once each year and more frequently following its implementation. New parents coming to the school will be given a copy of the policy as part of the induction process. All parents will be signposted towards the school website where a copy of this policy is available.

A report on outstanding debts will be presented to Finance, Premises, Health and Safety and Personnel Committee once per term for governors to evaluate and decide upon appropriate action.

Agreed: 1st March 2019