



Dinner Money Arrears Policy

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This Policy has been compiled recognising the difficulties placed on primary schools in balancing the social welfare of pupils with the management of the school's budget.

The Governing Body is committed to a transparent, consistent and fair approach to the efficient operation of the school dinner system.

Aims of this document

1. To outline the school policy regarding school dinners;
2. To present a workable, fair mechanism for the collection of dinner money;
3. To work with parents to provide a flexible approach to the lunchtime nutritional needs of our children; provide a packed lunch, pay online via SCOPAY or send payment for a school dinner in a named and sealed envelope

The preferred method of payment for dinner money is via our online system (SCOPAY). Dinners can be booked and paid for in advance on this system. If dinner money is being paid for via cash or cheque then payments must be received in an envelope clearly marked with the child's name and class on a Monday morning rather than in arrears. Cheques should be made payable to "Our Lady's Catholic Primary". Dinner money is payable, on a Monday morning, directly to the Kitchen Manager or alternatively payments may be sent to the class teacher to be dealt with at morning registration.

We appreciate that circumstances change and that on rare occasions a child may unexpectedly need a school meal later in the week. In this case, payment should be made on that day.

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 a temporary situation eg. Money lost on the way to school, domestic problem etc. Parents will be contacted and the meal should be paid for at the next opportunity.

If a pupil arrives at school without a packed lunch, payment or if a pupil's free entitlement has expired, the school will telephone home in the first instance to establish if alternative arrangements have been made. If subsequently a meal is required, then a letter will be sent detailing how much parents owe. Payment needs to be made immediately and can be made online, sent in with your child or paid directly to the Kitchen Manager.

Where a pupil continues to require meals and no payment is made, the matter will be referred to the School Business Manager or the Principal and an appointment made to meet with the parent to discuss the situation. A date for the repayment of the debt should be agreed.

If, in the opinion of the Principal, failure to provide a meal could have serious consequences for that pupil, a meal should be provided and details recorded in writing and maintained as a record.

The school will not tolerate debt amounting to more than one week (five days) payment, currently equating to £11.50 per week. This is per family and not per child. If a parent repeatedly fails to provide a packed lunch or sufficient monies to cover the costs of school dinners, this may be a matter for Social Services.

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If the matter remains unresolved, the Principal and Governing Body will decide how to address the situation, which may include referring the debt onto a collection agency/solicitor. If payments are received in the form of a cheque and this cheque is subsequently not honoured, further payments must be in cash.

The school is not obliged to provide a school dinner where payment is not forthcoming or where authorisation for free school meals has not been received.

NB. If you are experiencing hardship which affects your ability to pay for school dinners, you are invited to speak confidentially to the Principal.