



St Alban's RC Primary School

School Meals Policy

Date	Review Date	School Lead	Nominated Governor
March 2020	March 2022	Martin Smith	Jennifer Roughead

The school meals service is no different to any other business in that meals have to be paid by someone. St Alban's School Meals Policy has been adopted to ensure that a consistent and fair approach to debt incurred by parents/carers whose children who take school dinners is achieved.

Aims

- To outline the school's procedures regarding school meals;
- To work with parents to provide a flexible approach to the lunchtime nutritional needs of our pupils
- To ensure the smooth, efficient and cost effective operation of the school dinner system
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of school staff, parents and pupils
- To present a workable, fair mechanism for the collection of school dinner money.

School meals are available to pupils at a cost of £2 per day or at no cost to those in receipt of a free meal entitlement.

Should a child arrive at school without a packed lunch, the school office will text parents in the first instance to establish if alternative arrangements have been made, however if they have no response or no packed lunch is brought into school for the child they will be given, and charged for, a school meal.

If payment has not been made

If your child has taken a school meal which has not been paid for you will be sent a reminder the following day detailing how much you owe via text. Payment must be made immediately and can be sent in with your child or paid directly via ParentPay or at PayPoint. If payment is not received a week later, a letter will be sent detailing the consequences of non-payment and a final date by which payment must be made (Appendix 1). If the matter remains unresolved, you will be sent a second and final letter requesting payment and detailing the school's next course of action (Appendix 2).

The school cannot tolerate debt amounting to more than one week's payment; as if debts are incurred then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents. If a parent repeatedly fails to provide a packed lunch, or sufficient monies to cover the cost of school meals, there may be a referral to Social Services as this has an effect on a pupil's welfare.

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, and some schools are known not to provide a meal in these circumstances. If authorisation for free school meals has been received after a debt amount is outstanding, this debt should still be paid. We will therefore act promptly to address such issues at an early stage, in order to prevent arrears of dinner monies from accumulating to a point beyond parents means to settle.

The school will in exceptional circumstances postpone the refusal to provide meals where parents have advised the school of their financial situation and school is satisfied that the funding will be forthcoming.

The school will work closely with parents in working out a form of payment plan to help resolve the situation if requested by the parent. However, where no attempt is made to clear the debt it will follow the procedure of the school's Debt Management Procedure.

Information regarding free school meals is available from the School Office. To be eligible you must be receiving one of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (not Working Tax Credit), with an annual income of below £16,190
- Pension Guarantee Credit
- Employment and Support Allowance, income related
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act, 1999
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit, with an income of £7,400 or less

Please note that all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to receive a free school meal, regardless of income, in line with the Government's Universal Infant Free School Meals initiative. There is no need to make an application to the Local Authority for parents of these children.

Therefore, you should only apply for free school meals in the July of the year that your child is entering Year 3, or if your child is Year 4 or older if you believe you meet the low income eligibility criteria.

Headteacher:		Date:	
Chair of Governors:		Date:	

St Alban's RC Primary School

Enjoying and Excelling in the Presence of God



Westbourne Avenue, Walkerdene, Newcastle upon Tyne. NE6 4HQ (0191)2625552
e-mail: admin@stalbans.newcastle.sch.uk

Appendix 1

DATE

Parent/carer of **NAME**,

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child **NAME** in **CLASS**, despite a previous text reminder. Your account is showing a debt of **AMOUNT**.

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately.

Please pay this at the school office, via ParentPay or at a PayPoint with the relevant barcode (available from school office).

The cost of a school meal is £2 per day.

Since non-payment for school meals affects the quality of service we offer to the children, we need to ensure that all payments are up-to-date and I am afraid that if the debt is not cleared within a week it will not be possible to provide your child with a school meal. You will then need to make your own arrangements for your child's lunch.

The school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to recover the debt and to inform social services of our concerns that you are not providing a meal for your child at lunch time if dinners continue to be ordered without the debt being cleared.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Smith
Headteacher



Head Teacher: Mr M.M. Smith



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Appendix 2

DATE

Parent/carer of **NAME**

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child:

NAME Class: **YEAR** despite a previous text and written reminder. Your account is showing a debt of £ **AMOUNT**.

In accordance with our school meal's policy, your child will not be provided with school dinners as of DATE until the debt is settled.

Please ensure you have made sufficient provision for your child's lunch as is your legal responsibility. Once the debt has been cleared your child is welcome to resume school meals with payment in advance.

The school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to recover the debt and to inform social services of our concerns that you are not providing a meal for your child at lunch time if dinners continue to be ordered without the debt being cleared.

Please contact school to discuss your outstanding debt, failure to do so will result in the activation of the school's debt management recovery procedure.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Smith
Headteacher



Head Teacher: Mr M.M. Smith

