



# School Meals Arrears Policy

Reviewed Spring 2025

## **Trinity & St. Michael's C.E./Methodist Primary School**

**Policy Effective Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025**

### **SCHOOL MEALS ARREARS POLICY**

#### **Introduction**

This policy relates to the collection of school meals money and the approach to be taken in the case of debts arising when parents/carers fail to pay for school meals.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget is liable to cover the cost of this. This is further compounded by limited office resource being utilised for time consuming credit control processes. As a result, money which should be spent on all pupils' education in school is used to pay for / manage debts incurred by individual parents/guardians. The governing body see this as unacceptable and request that all parents/guardians give this policy their full support.

Parents/guardians can view this policy on the school's website at any time.

#### **General Principle**

- School meals are available at no cost to those in receipt of Free School Meals or Universal Infant Free School Meals (Reception, Year 1 and 2).
- School meals for all other children must be paid for in advance. Payments can be made to your ParentPay balance at any time or frequency to ensure that a credit balance, or nil balance, is maintained for the meals required for your child.
- Currently, each school meal is charged at £2.70. Any changes to the current rate will be advised in advance via ParentApp communications.
- Payment should be made by via ParentPay, school's electronic payment system.

#### **Free School Meals Entitlement**

If parents/guardians believe that their child(ren) may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals they should contact the County Council, or speak to the school office who can assist with an application. As this allowance is a statutory right for qualifying pupils it is important that parents/guardians make use of it.

The school is only allowed to provide free school meals to pupils where this is officially approved, and the school has been informed by the Local Authority.

#### **Procedure for Collection of Arrears**

Following due consideration, the governing body has agreed the following policy where arrears arise.

1. ParentPay balances will be reviewed daily by the school office. Parents/guardians will be contacted via ParentApp message regarding any debit balances arising, requesting payment.

2. School will be unable to provide your child with further school meals until the balance has been paid. In practice, this means that we will not extend credit beyond the cost of one day's school meal.
3. We will contact parents via telephone during the course of the morning if your child requests a school meal during the period of arrears. You would then need to arrange immediate payment via ParentPay or bring a packed lunch to school prior to 12:30pm.
4. Our Senior Leadership Team reserve the right to apply flexibility to the policy outlined above on a discretionary basis. In the event of circumstances arising which may temporarily affect your ability to arrange payment for your child's school meals, please contact the school office to discuss in confidence.
5. If, by way of discretionary exception on our part, arrears should be permitted to arise and payment is not forthcoming, we will write to you to request that payment is received within 14 days of the date of our letter. If your balance should remain unpaid, a final letter will be sent advising that an LCC invoice will be issued that would be subject to LCC Debt Recovery Policy, potentially leading to legal proceedings.