

The Grange Trust Meal Debt Policy

Aims

Bramley Grange Primary School aim to:

- + Create a buzz for learning
- + Provide a warm, secure, welcoming environment
- + Dynamic challenging curriculum which meets the needs of all learners
- + Provide an inspirational, exciting place to be
- + Promote high expectations and a love of learning
- + Value everyone's contribution and respect each other
- + Nurture strengths and celebrate achievements
- + Acquire skills for life
- + Build partnerships with others to improve outcomes for our children and their families.

These aims are achieved through all school policies and schemes of work. It is realised through effective working partnerships between staff, pupils, parents, governors, other schools, the Local Authority and the wider community.....

Bramley Grange Primary School has adopted a strict NO DEBT policy relating to the school meal service.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means **that money which should be spent on children's education** is used to pay for debts incurred by parents. Every parent will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents give this policy their full support.

No parent would take their child to a café or restaurant and expect them to be given food without paying; the same applies at school. If parents believe their child might be entitled to Free School Meals, please contact the school office for more details. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that parents use it if they qualify. We will help parents with their application if necessary.

Parent/s must pay on a Monday for that week's dinners by Parentpay. Children will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, except those that are entitled to Free School Meals. If a parent genuinely forgets to pay, the school may grant a debt of 2 weeks dinner money, however this must be paid for as soon as is realised it is owing.

If the debt is not cleared, parents must provide a packed lunch. In a case where a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, the school office will telephone the parents and ask them to come to the school with a packed lunch before lunchtime. If payment of the debt is not paid by the next day, the Head Teacher reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against the parents to recover the debt. Social Services may also be informed that these parents are not carrying out their responsibility of care by not providing food for their children at lunchtime.

We hope that by implementing this School Meals Debt Policy we are able to **help parents manage their school dinner money better, and, at the same time,**

ensure that all money that is for children's learning is available for the school to spend on the children.

Debt Policy Implementation Flowchart

Key Information:

1. All parents are provided with a copy of the debt policy when their child joins the school (Appendix 1)
2. All school lunches must be paid in advance via Parentpay
3. No child should be sent to school with no money in their account and expect to be given a meal
4. Parents who do not want their child to have a school lunch should provide a healthy packed lunch.

Level 1

Indicator: A child's record shows a debt

Check 1: is this a FSM child? Are dates correct?

Check 2: is there a possibility that payments have not been recorded correctly?

Check 3: does the parent normally pay on time? Is this just a one off?

Action 1 – Send Letter 1 (Appendix 2)

Level 2

Indicator: A child comes to school, again, without the debt paid or a packed lunch

Check 1: is this a FSM child? Are dates correct?

Check 2: is there a possibility that payments have not been recorded correctly?

Check 3: has this parent made contact?

Action 2 – Personal Contact

Office staff will telephone the parent to ask them to pay on Parentpay or bring a packed lunch to school before lunchtime.

Level 3

Indicator: The parent does not comply with any of these options

Check 1: is this a FSM child? Are dates correct?

Check 2: is there a possibility that payments have not been recorded properly?

Check 3: has this parent made contact?

Action 3 – Send Final Reminder Letter 2 (Appendix 3)

Level 4

Indicator: The parent consistently does not comply with any of these options

Check 1: is this a FSM child? Are dates correct?

Check 2: is there a possibility that payments have not been recorded properly?

Check 3: has the parent made contact?

Action 4 – Notify Rotherham Borough Council Legal Services

Complete and send, immediately, 'Notification of School Meal Debt' form (Appendix 4)

Signed Date

Chair of Governors

This policy will be reviewed in 2015 or as required by legislation

October 2013

Appendix 1 – **Version of the Policy in letter form for the parents**

Appendix 2 – **Letter 1 to Debtors – Reminder**

Appendix 3 – **Letter 2 to Debtors – Final Reminder**

Appendix 4 – **Notification of School Meal Debt Form**

Appendix 1 – Version of the Policy in letter form for parents

Date

Dear Parents/Carers,

The Grange Trust has adopted a strict NO DEBT policy relating to the school meal service.

If debts are accrued, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means **that money which should be spent on children's education** is used to pay for debts incurred by parents. Every parent will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents give this policy their full support. **In the past, some dinner debts at the school have risen up above £70 on a regular basis. The school cannot sustain this.**

No parent would take their child to a café or restaurant and expect them to be given food without paying; *the same applies at the school.* If you believe your child might be entitled to Free School Meals and you have not yet claimed, please contact the school office for more details. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify. We will help you with your application if necessary.

If your child is not entitled to a Free School Meal and they are to have a school dinner, you must pay in advance for the meal by paying via Parentpay.

Children will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, except those that are entitled to Free School Meals. If a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance, the school may grant a debt allowance of 2 weeks meals. However, this debt must be paid as soon as possible and future meals must be paid for in advance before any meal is provided.

If the debt is not cleared, you must provide a packed lunch. In a case where a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, the school office will telephone you and ask you to pay the debt on Parentpay. Otherwise, you must provide a packed lunch before lunchtime.

If payment of the debt is not received by the next day, the Head Teacher reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against the parents to recover the debt. Social Services may also be informed that these parents are not carrying out their responsibility of care by not providing food for their children at lunchtime.

We hope that by implementing this School Meals Debt Policy we are able to **help parents manage their school dinner money better and, at the same time, ensure that all money that is for children's learning is available for the school to spend on the children.**

Although this letter may seem abrupt, we apologise for this, but we have to adhere to a change in Local Authority policy. We appreciate that the content of this letter does not apply to 99% of our parents who pay regularly in advance.

We hope you will support us in this matter. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

A full copy of the School Meals Debt Policy is available in school if you wish to view it.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. R. Colquhoun
Head Teacher

Appendix 2 – Example Letter 1 to Debtors (Reminder)

Date

Dear Parent/Carers,

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

As at our records show a debt of £

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately via Parentpay.

NOTE: All meals must be paid for in advance in accordance with our debt policy (copy enclosed). If you don't wish for your child(ren) to have a school meal, please provide him/her with a packed lunch.

The cost of a school meal is £1.85 - £9.25 per week.

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

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. R. Colquhoun
Head Teacher

Appendix 3 – Example Letter 2 to Debtors (Final Reminder)

Date

Dear Parent/Carers,

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child
in class despite a previous written reminder and a
telephone call.

As at our records show a debt of £

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately via Parentpay.

The cost of a school meal is £2.00 - £10.00 per week.

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

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 lunchtimes.

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

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. R. Colquhoun
Head Teacher

