



SCHOOL MEALS PAYMENT POLICY

Introduction

This policy concerns the collection of payment for school meals and the approach to be taken in the cases of debts arising when parents/carers fail to pay for school meals.

General Principle

School meals must be paid for in advance. If a pupil is to have meals for the duration of the week monies must be received before the start of that week, or if the school is to accept pupils having an occasional meal, monies must be received on the day of the meal.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on all pupils' education in school is used to pay for debts incurred by individual parents/carers. The governing body see this as unacceptable and request that all parents/carers give this policy their full support.

Free School Meals Entitlement

Pupils will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, except those confirmed as entitled to free school meals. If parents/carers believe that their child may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals they should contact the County Council. As this allowance is a statutory right for qualifying pupils it is important that parents/carers make use of it.

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

Procedure for Collection of Arrears

It is accepted that on occasion arrears may arise for various reasons e.g. illness. However, arrears cannot be allowed to accumulate. The governing body has therefore agreed the following policy where arrears arise:

- A reminder will be sent home after one week of accumulated arrears.
- The parent/carer will be informed in writing when three weeks' arrears have accumulated and advised to make immediate payment.
- A final letter to the parent/carer informing them that no meals will be provided for their child(ren) if payment has not been received when four weeks' arrears have accumulated.
- No meals to be provided to pupils when arrears exceed four weeks and parents will be asked to provide a packed meal.
- Once the final letter deadline has expired the debt will be passed onto the debt recovery team at Lancashire County Council where legal proceeding may begin.