

The Federation of  
Stoke Hill Schools



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# **Dinner Money and Extended Schools Arrears Policy**

Date agreed: Feb 2019.....

Term to be reviewed: .....Feb 2022.....

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## 1 Introduction:

This Policy has been compiled recognising the difficulties placed on headteachers in balancing the social welfare of pupils with the management of the County Council's money.

This school operates various services involving management and collection of monies such as Dinner Money and Extended School services in the form of Breakfast Club and After School Club on the premises during term time only on a daily basis.

## 2 Dinner Money Accounts (SHJS)

This school operates a prepaid dinner system and parents are to be encouraged to pay in advance for dinner money.

An account will be kept under the child's name where monies are paid online via Parentmail2 or physically to the office. Each time a child takes a meal, this will be recorded and the individual accounts updated daily. When the account is less than £15 in credit, a Parentmail email/text will automatically be triggered to notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) that this is the case. Parents who are not registered on Parentmail are sent a letter via the child.

- a. When card balances are in arrears by more than £10, letters will be sent weekly by the Business Manager until a limit of £20 debt is reached. The first letter will be sent via the child.
- b. If the debt is not paid, subsequent letters will be sent
  - i. Via the child for debts less than £20
  - ii. Via the post for debts of more than £20 but less than £40

The advice at this point is likely to be that the child cannot take further meals until the balance is paid and a packed lunch must be provided daily. However, the school may allow meals to continue to be provided where it is felt that this debt is a temporary situation e.g. minor domestic problem, etc

- c. Arrears of £40 or more will be reported to the Headteacher.
- d. The Business Manager will contact the parents verbally to ascertain the situation and chase money accordingly. *The school is of the opinion that no child should go without lunch because their account is not in credit.* The parent may also, at this stage, be signposted to the Federation Support Worker who may be able to help. Details should be recorded in writing in a book with all action taken recorded and maintained as a record.

- i. If, in the opinion of the Business Manager, it is unlikely that payment is forthcoming, this will be reported to the Headteacher for his consideration.
- ii. If, at the Headteacher's discretion, he feels that the situation merits it, a Final letter will be sent reminding the parent that their child should not order a school meal and that they will be contacted to bring in a packed lunch should the child not have one on any given day. The Final Reminder shall also state that the debt will be referred to Devon County Council which may affect their credit rating. If no payment has been received in full within 14 days of the date of the Final Reminder a Devon County Council invoice will be raised via a CT10 for the amount due provided the minimum arrears amount as per guidelines set is met. Generally, only longstanding debts where parental engagement has not been successful will be referred to Devon County Council provided the debt is in line with the minimum amount as per guidelines provided by them.

### **3 Extended School**

When a booking is taken in and recorded for any of the above services, the parent will be invoiced for the amount. The Invoice shall detail the sessions booked as well as the breakdown of the cost and the total amount to be paid. The Invoice shall also state the deadline of when the payment is to be made in full.

- a. If the full amount has not been paid by the deadline, a Reminder shall be sent out via the child notifying that payment is immediately due and to contact the Extended School Manager to discuss individual circumstances should it be difficult for the parent/guardian to make the said payment.
  - i. Arrears of £50 or more must be reported to the Headteacher immediately.
- b. Where a pupil continues to attend Club sessions and no payment is made, the Extended School Manager will contact the parents verbally to ascertain the situation and chase money accordingly. The advice at this point is likely to be that the child cannot attend further Club sessions until the balance is paid. However, the school may allow Club session attendances to continue to be provided where it is felt that this debt is a temporary situation and that there is a payment plan in place. The parent may also, at this stage, be signposted to the Federation Support Worker who may be able to help. Details should be recorded in writing in a book with all action taken recorded and maintained as a record.
  - i. If, in the opinion of the Extended School Manager, it is unlikely that payment is forthcoming or if the arrears reaches £50 or more, this will be reported to the Headteacher for his consideration.

- ii. If the debt proves unsuccessful, a Final Reminder will be sent notifying that the child will be excluded from attending the relevant club(s) and that the debt will be referred to Devon County Council
- iii. which may affect their credit rating. If no payment has been received in full within 14 days of the date of the Final Reminder a Devon County Council invoice will be raised via a CT10 for the amount due provided the minimum arrears amount as per guidelines set is met.
- iv. Where a cheque is returned by the bank, the senior administrator must be informed and he/she will chase a replacement payment.

**(Please also see addendum attached)**

**Chairman's Signature** .....

**Date of Governor's Approval** .....

**Date for Review** .....

## **Addendum**

Wording to appear in invoices and reminders are as follows:-

### **School Meals**

Reminder Letter

*If you are struggling to pay for your child's school meals, please contact us to make an arrangement. You may also qualify for free school meals if you receive certain benefits. Alternatively, our Federation Education Support Worker, Jo McCarthy may also be able to help.*

Final Reminder

*Please note: If payment is not received by the date stated above, the matter will be passed on to Devon County Council for recovery action to be commenced. This may affect your credit rating. If you are struggling to pay for your child's school meals, please contact us to make an arrangement. You may also qualify for free school meals if you receive certain benefits. Alternatively, our Federation Education Support Worker, Jo McCarthy may also be able to help.*

### **Extended Club**

Reminder Letter

*If you are struggling to pay, please contact us to make an arrangement. Alternatively, our Federation Education Support Worker, Jo McCarthy may also be able to help.*

Final Reminder

*If payment is not received by the date stated above, the matter will be passed on to Devon County Council for recovery action to be commenced. This may affect your credit rating. Your child will also be excluded from being allowed to attend breakfast club or after school club until the debt has been paid off or an arrangement has been reached. If you are struggling to pay, please contact us to make an arrangement. Alternatively, our Federation Education Support Worker, Jo McCarthy may also be able to help.*