



Courtney Primary School
Nurture, Inspire, Flourish.

School Payment Policy

Courtney Primary School

Date Reviewed: December 2019

Reviewed by: Tamsin Griffiths

Ratified: by Deborah Wood

Date: Dec 2019

Review Date: December 2022

Background

Courtney Primary School has adopted this policy to ensure that a consistent and fair approach to debt incurred by parents/carers. Debts may be incurred by parents/carers whose children have school meals, use the Breakfast, After School and Holiday Club or take music lessons. As the Local Education Authority is no longer accountable for the administration of dinner money debt, the responsibility now falls on the school to pursue instances of non-payment. As a result, the school budget will have to directly fund any outstanding debts that cannot be recovered thereby directly affecting the amount of money that is available to provide education to all pupils.

Provision of School Meals

The Schools Meals Service is no different to any other business in that meals have to be paid for by someone. Universal infant free school meals (UIFS) provides funding for all government funded schools to offer free school meals to pupils in Reception, Year 1, and Year 2.

For all other children, Free School Meals are available for parents who meet certain criteria including the receipt of state benefits. If any family think they qualify for Free School Meals, then an application needs to be submitted. Please contact the school office for further information. Free School Meals are a statutory right and it is important that all parents/carers who qualify take up their child's entitlement so that they can receive a school meal each day.

If a child's entitlement to free school meals expires or the parents/ carers personal circumstances change the parent/carer must provide a packed lunch or send payment in advance for a school dinner.

Cost of School Meals

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are currently entitled to a hot school dinner free of charge. School meals are available to children in Key Stage 2 at a cost of £2.20 per day or at no cost to those in receipt of Free School Meals entitlement.

School meals should be paid for in advance. Any revision to the school meal prices will be notified to parents/carers the term prior to the new charge taking effect.

Provision of Childcare, Music and other Services

The school offers Breakfast Club, After School Club, Holiday Club and Music tuition services. In addition the school may also offer other paid items such as optional school clothing, tickets for performances. These are entirely optional and parents/carers can choose to purchase. The cost of each service/item, will be set out clearly to parents prior to purchase. The school will give parents at least one term's notice of any rises in the cost of childcare and music services.

Payment for all items

Payments should be made via the school's online payment system in advance of the service being taken. Items can also be paid for by card over the telephone. Cash payments can be made either directly at the school office or by sending cash in an envelope via the child (Parents/carers are advised not to send in large amounts of cash via pupils).

Breakfast and Afterschool club can be paid for by a variety of Childcare Vouchers including Edenred and Fideliti. Payments can be set up by the office and all payments will be credited to the child's club account.

Management of Debts

To ensure that the School's budget is not adversely affected by the cost of debts, the Governors consider the fairest system to all families is to ask that services are paid for in advance. Particularly, pupils will not be permitted to attend music lessons or holiday club unless the school has evidence that these have been paid for.

Prompt action will be taken to address any debt issue at an early stage in order to prevent arrears amassing. Reminders are sent out weekly to parents/carers notifying them of the arrears. When the debt exceeds £40 for a child, or £50 for a family (whichever comes first), the parents/carers will be contacted by the SBM (telephone or email) informing them their child/children must have a packed lunch and they will be unable to use the school breakfast/afterschool clubs to prevent further arrears.

If the child is not provided with the requested packed lunch and the parent/carer cannot be contacted, the School will provide a basic meal of a sandwich, a piece of fruit and a drink only. If the child has not paid for Breakfast club they will not be permitted entry. If the parent/carer cannot be contacted and the child is due to go into Afterschool Club, they will be asked to sit in the school reception area.

Consequences of Non Payment for School Meals

If the debt exceeds £40 for a child, or £50 for a family, and/or action proves unsuccessful in securing the arrears, a formal letter will be sent home requesting payment and attendance at a meeting with the School Business Manager and Headteacher.

The school will work closely with parents/carers and staff in working out a form of payment plan to help resolve the situation.

The Headteacher reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to recover the debt. Social Services may also be informed that these parents/carers are not carrying out the responsibility of care by not providing food for their child at lunchtimes. It is not the responsibility of the school to provide lunch for pupils. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to provide a meal, either a school lunch or a packed lunch.

Monitoring Debts

At each meeting of the Resources Committee Meeting, the School Business Manager will provide Governors with details of the current position regards outstanding debts.

On rare occasions, the School may consider Write-offs of outstanding debt following consideration of details of the debt, reasons for no further action being taken by the Head Teacher and School Business Manager. The SBM and Headteacher will comply with their levels of authorisation for Write-offs.

Conclusion

We hope that by implementing this debt policy we are able to help parents/carers and the school manage payments effectively, reduce administration time and costs involved chasing debts and at the same time ensure that all school money is targeted for children's learning.

Appendix 1 Example – Letter 1



Headteacher: Mrs Deborah Wood

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Courtney Primary School , Courtney Road, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 9RD

Email: office@courtneyps.org.uk

www.courtneyprimaryschool.co.uk

Tel: 01454 866670

Parent or carer of (Pupil Name)
(Address Line 1) (Address Line 2)
(Address Line 3) (Post Code)
Date: XX/XX/XX

Dear xxx

Arrears relating to (Pupil Name)

I am writing regarding the current level of outstanding debt that is showing on your account. Despite previous correspondences and messages the debt for your child xx in Class xx is still outstanding. The School's records show the following arrears as at xx/xx/xx :

Payment Type £x in debt

Payment Type £x in debt

Total Owed £x.

I would ask that you please make arrangements to clear this debt immediately and take steps to ensure your account is kept in credit in the future. As you know, your child is already prevented from having a school meal or accessing paid service such as Afterschool club and music tuition. If these arrears are not cleared within 7 days we will be asking you to a meeting with myself and the School Business Manager to discuss these debts.

If you think you may qualify for Free School Meals, please contact the school office for further information. Remember that Free School Meals are a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify, your child will then receive a School meal each day. Additional information and an application form can be found on the South Gloucestershire website <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/advice-and-benefits/benefits/free-school-meals/> or from our School office.

Since the School has to fund all debts from its budget it is essential that all payments are up to date so that the quality of the service provided to all pupils is maintained. The School reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to recover the outstanding debt and to inform the local authority that your child is not being provided with a suitable meal at lunch time. If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately so that this matter can be resolved.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher