



St Mary's C of E (VA) Primary School

Working together
in an inclusive Christian environment
to allow every pupil to shine brighter and brighter.

St Mary's is an inclusive school where we believe that all people are of equal value, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, ability or sexual identity. We recognise and respect differences.

Dinner Money Policy

This policy is GDPR compliant.

Date of issue: June 2017

Last reviewed/adopted: February 2026 (Resources Committee)

Next review date: Spring 2027

Signed: _____

Date: _____

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a legal duty on all state-funded schools in England, to offer a free school lunch to all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 from September 2014.

St Mary's CofE Primary School is responsible for the collection and reconciliation of all school dinner money for children in Years 3 to 6.

Parents are responsible for providing a lunch for their child(ren) in Years 3 to 6, this may be in the form of a paid meal, application of a free meal entitlement or a packed lunch from home.

Parents that pay for school meals must do so via ARBOR and ensure that their child's meal balance remains in credit. Families in receipt of certain benefits may be entitled to free school meals (FSM) and application forms are available from the school office.

St Mary's has a clear set of procedures for the payment and collection of school meal money and any arrears that occur.

Meal Arrangements

- Pupils may choose either a school meal or a home packed lunch each day.

Meal Charges

- The revision of charges for school meals will take place as and when Herts Catering Limited (HCL) advise it. Wherever possible parents will be notified of any increase during the term prior to the new charge.
- The school will generally adopt the pricing recommended by the local authority, but will try to keep costs down to a minimum.

Meal Payments

- All parents must ensure that their child's dinner money balance remains in credit.
- Payments can be made via the Arbor system.
- A full dinner money statement is available on the Arbor system detailing meals taken and payments made.
- If a child is absent from school and meals have been paid for, these will be carried forward as credits. If credits continue to the end of term they will be carried over to the following term, unless the child is leaving the school, whereupon they will either be transferred to any sibling or a refund issued.
- Dinner money balances are reviewed on a weekly basis. Any debit balances that exceed £10 are identified and parents are sent a reminder email.
- If the debt is not settled within one week then parents will be required to provide home packed lunches for their child(ren) until the debt is cleared.
- Debts will be carried over between terms and remain with the child across the years in school to allow the maximum time for arrears to be recovered. Only in the case of exceptional circumstances will debts be 'written off'.
- In the event that the debt is not recovered and packed lunches are not provided from home, school reserves the right to request advice and assistance from the Education Welfare Officers or in extreme cases Children's Services.
- If no money is received by the due date the debt will be passed to the small claims court. This will incur a £25.00 fee which will also be added to the arrears.

Where there is a genuine difficulty with payment, please inform the school. The school will do its best to assist.