

Appendix 1 –

School Dinner Money Debt Protocol for Parents / Carers

As from the 3rd July 2017 the Highlees and Eyescroft School Federation has adopted a strict NO DEBT policy relating to the school meal service.

It should be recognised that any unrecovered debts will have to be directly funded from the school budget thereby affecting the amount of money that is available to provide education for pupils. Every parent / carer will agree this is unacceptable and we request that all parents / carers give this protocol their full support.

As the school operates a cashless payment system, parents can pay in advance for school meals using our ParentPay system. If you experience difficulties using this, our staff will only be too happy to give you a demonstration of how it works and help you with your log on.

Our current price for school meals are £2.30 per day or £11.50 per week. If there is a change to the cost of school dinners you will be notified at least one month in advance.

If a child has paid for a meal and is then absent from school, the credit will be carried forward for future meals, unless otherwise advised by the parent / carer.

Children will not be provided with a school lunch unless it is paid for, except those in receipt of free school meals or universal school meals. However, if a parent / carer genuinely forgets to pay in advance the school MAY grant a debt allowance of 1 meal. However, this debt must be paid the next day. If the debt is not cleared and future debts are incurred you may be asked to attend a meeting with the Finance Manager, School Business Manager or Head of school.

There have been occasions when there is more than one day's dinner money outstanding for a meal and we have been unable to contact parents to ask them to either pay or send in a packed lunch. **On these occasions the children will be given basic food and you will be asked to attend a meeting at the school.**

The school also reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against parents to recover the debt.

If a parent / carer believe that their child may be entitled to free school meals they should complete a Free School Meal Application Form and give it into the school office along with proof of their national insurance number. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify. If you are in receipt of free school meals and your circumstances change it is your duty to inform the school so that eligibility can be checked.

Free school meals must not be confused with Universal Free Meals which entitles every child in Key Stage 1 to a free meal regardless of having a free school meal entitlement. Even if your child is getting meals through the Universal Free Meals scheme, we strongly encourage you to apply for Free School Meals (if you think you are entitled) as it gives you other benefits e.g. your child will receive free milk throughout Primary School and the school receives extra funding which will directly benefit your child.

We hope that by introducing this debt protocol that we are able to help parents / carers manage school dinner money better and at the same time ensure that all the school's budget is available to provide education for pupils.

If you have any concerns regarding this protocol or your ability to pay for school dinners please make an appointment with the Head of School.