

# ASHGATE CROFT SCHOOL

## SCHOOL MEALS POLICY

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Approved by Resources Committee: 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017

Minute No.: 47.3/17 (R)

### **Aims**

To outline the school's procedures regarding school meals;

- To work with parents/carers to provide a flexible approach to the lunchtime nutritional needs of our pupils
- To ensure the smooth, efficient and cost effective operation of the school dinner system
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of school staff, parents/carers and pupils
- To present a workable, fair mechanism for the collection of school dinner money.

### **Policy**

School meals are available to pupils at a cost of £2.00 per day for primary pupils and £2.35 per day for secondary pupils, or at no cost to those in receipt of a free meal entitlement.

To enable the service to be efficiently planned the School requires advance notice of your child's requirements. (Two week notice is required to change arrangements).

### **Paying for school meals.**

The payment for meals is required in advance on a weekly, monthly or half-termly basis. Please send money in to school on a Monday, or the first day of the school week. Payments must be in a sealed envelope with the name of your child, class and the amount enclosed. In the case of absence, please send payment on the first day back at school. Return of money due to absence will be credited off the following week's payment.

Cheques to be made payable to *Derbyshire County Council*. If your cheque is returned unpaid you will be charged the relevant banking fee. You may also be charged an administration fee representing 5% of the value of the cheque.

Should a child arrive at school without payment or a packed lunch, the School will telephone home in the first instance to establish if alternative arrangements have been made.

If a child's entitlement to free school dinners has expired, we will be notified by the Local Authority and will inform parents/carers as soon as we can. Parents/carers must provide a packed lunch or send payment for school meals in a sealed envelope.

### **If payment has not been made**

If your child has taken a school meal which has not been paid for you will be sent on Tuesday a reminder detailing how much you owe (Appendix 1). Payment must be made immediately and can be sent in with your child or paid directly to school. If payment is not received by Friday a further letter will be sent detailing the consequences of non payment and a final date by which payment must be made (Appendix 2)

If the matter remains unresolved, you will be sent a 3rd and final letter requesting payment and detailing the school's next course of action. (Appendix 3)

The school cannot tolerate debt amounting to more than one week's payment; as if debts are incurred then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents/carers. If parents/carers repeatedly fail to provide a packed lunch, or sufficient monies to cover the cost of school meals, there may be a referral to Social Care as this has an affect on a pupil's welfare.

The school is not obliged to provide a school dinner where payment is not forthcoming or where authorisation for free school meals has not been received, and some schools are known not to provide a meal in these circumstances. We will therefore act promptly to address such issues at an early stage, in order to prevent arrears of dinner monies from accumulating to a point beyond parents/carers means to settle.

The school will in exceptional circumstances postpone the refusal to provide meals where parents/carers have advised the school of their financial situation and school is satisfied that the funding will be forthcoming.

The school will work closely with parents/carers in working out a form of payment plan to help resolve the situation if requested by the parents/carers. However, where no attempt is made to clear the debt the school will follow the Derbyshire County Council debt management procedures.

Parents/carers may be eligible to claim free school meals. It's easy to apply and you now can apply on-line by visiting [www.derbyshire.gov.uk/quidsin](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/quidsin) . Alternatively, you can ask at school and they will provide you with an application form to complete. Using the contact details on the outside of the menu leaflet simply request a free school meal application form to be posted out to you. On return of the completed form, parents/carers will be contacted to advise on eligibility.

## APPENDIX 1 - 1st Reminder

Parent(s) / carer(s),

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child..... Class:  
..... As at .../...../2015 your account is showing a debt of £.....

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately. Once the debt is cleared please ensure the account is always in credit. Please send in money to school in a marked envelope.

- **The cost of a school meal for Primary pupils is £2.00 per day - £10.00 per week.**
- **The cost of a school meal for Middle and Upper pupils is £2.35 per day - £11.75 per week.**

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

## APPENDIX 2 - 2nd Reminder

Parent(s) / carer(s),

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child..... Class:  
..... despite a previous written reminder, as at...../.../2015 your account is showing a debt of £.....

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately. Please send the money into school in a marked envelope.

- **The cost of a school meal for Primary pupils is £2.00 per day - £10.00 per week.**
- **The cost of a school meal for Middle and Upper pupils is £2.35 per day - £11.75 per week.**

Since non-payment for school meals affects the quality of service we offer to the children, we need to ensure that all payments are up-to-date and I am afraid that if the debt is not cleared by the end of this week it will not be possible to provide your child with a school meal. You will then need to make your own arrangements for your child's lunch.

The school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to recover the debt and to inform social services of our concerns that you are not providing a meal for your child at lunch time if dinners continue to be ordered without the debt being cleared.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

**Appendix 3 - 3rd and final reminder**

Parent(s)/carer(s),

Our records show that despite previous reminders you have not paid dinner money for your child ..... Class: ..... as at ...../...../2015 your account is showing a debt of £.....

**In accordance with our school meal's policy, your child will not be provided with school dinners as of ..... until the debt is settled.**

Please ensure you have made sufficient provision for your child's lunch as is your legal responsibility. Once the debt has been cleared your child is welcome to resume school meals with payment in advance.

Please contact school to discuss your outstanding debt, failure to do so will result in the activation of the school's debt management recovery procedure.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher