



# School Meals Policy

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## Statement of intent

Marshlands School is responsible for the collection and reconciliation of all school dinner money and from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 liable for all arrears and non-payments.

If debts are incurred, 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. Every parent will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents give this policy their full support.

Signed by:

_____	Headteacher	Date: _____
_____	Chair of governors	Date: _____

## **1. Legal framework**

1.1. This policy will adhere to the relevant legislation and statutory guidance surrounding school payments and debt recovery, including the following:

- DfE (2014) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2015) 'Schemes for financing schools'
- DfE (2017) 'Governance handbook'

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

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

2.2. Parents must pay for school meals IN ADVANCE unless their child(ren) have a free school meal entitlement. School can advise how this can be applied for.

2.3. The school's finance committee:

- Will regularly review details of its debts and what recovery action is needed.
- Must be consulted if legal services are required for debt recovery.
- Will adhere to the privacy rights of pupils and their guardians in all cases.
- May decide to leave a case of debt recovery to the decision of headteacher.

2.4. The headteacher/business manager will ensure:

- Debt reminders are recorded and those records maintained for a period of seven years – dates and times of letters, phone calls, emails, conversations or any other correspondence.
- Instances of debt are judged on an individual basis, with consideration of the nature of the debt and the circumstances of the family involved.
- The privacy of the pupil and their family will be protected by all staff.
- The level of outstanding debt owed to the school can be determined at short notice.

### **3. Procedures for the payment and collection of school meals money and arrears**

- 3.1. School meal money should be sent into school on a Monday morning or paid via the SchoolMoney system online, for school meals for that current week. If paying direct to school by cash or cheque payments should be in a sealed envelope marked with the child's name 'Dinner Money' and the amount.
- 3.2. Reminders will be sent to parents who have not paid for school meals that week, by text and email from the SchoolMoney system.
- 3.3. If payment is not received a second text/email will be sent to chase any outstanding payments the following week.
- 3.4. If payment is still outstanding the third week a telephone call will be made to the parent.
- 3.5. Should arrears total four weeks the parents will be required to send packed lunches for their child(ren) until the debt is cleared.
- 3.6. In the event that a school dinner is expected when arrears stand at four weeks then parents will be contacted by the school receptionist and will be expected to bring a packed lunch to school.
- 3.7. In the event that the debt is not recovered and packed lunches are not provided from home, school reserves the right to request advice from the school governors, the Education Welfare Officer or in extreme cases Children's Services.
- 3.8. If your child is absent from school and meals have been paid for, these will be carried forward as credits and the following weeks payments will be adjusted accordingly.

### **4. Monitoring and review**

- 4.1. The school's School Meals Policy will come under review annually, and changes vis-à-vis any updated legislation will be made accordingly.