

# TICKHILL ESTFELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

## SCHOOL MEALS DEBT POLICY

**Adopted by the Governors of Tickhill Estfeld Primary School**

### Aims

- To outline the school's procedures regarding school meal debts
- To work with parents 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

### Payments

School meals are available to pupils at a cost of £2.20 per day or at no cost to those in receipt of a free meal entitlement. The payment for meals is required in advance on a weekly, monthly or half-termly basis. The payment can be made by cash or cheque.

- Please send money in to school on a Monday, or the first day of the school week
- Payments must be in a sealed envelope or wallet/purse with the name of your child, class and the amount enclosed and handed in to the class teacher
- In the case of absence, please send payment on the first day back at school
- Cheques must be made payable to **DMBC**. If your cheque is returned unpaid you will be charged the relevant banking fee
- Should a child arrive at school without payment or a packed lunch, the School will send a text in the first instance to establish if alternative arrangements have been made
- If a child's entitlement to free school dinners has expired, the parent/carer 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, the parent or carer will be sent a text message detailing how much is outstanding. On receiving this message, we would expect payment to be made as soon as possible.

If payment is not received by Friday of the same week, School will telephone the parent or carer to discuss this. A letter may be sent detailing the consequences of non-payment and a final date by which payment must be made.

If the matter remains unresolved, the parent or carer will be sent a final letter requesting payment and detailing the school's next course of action. We may take this matter to small claims court which could effect on a parent or carers credit score.

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 or carers.

If a parent or carer repeatedly fails 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 effect 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 means to settle.

The school will in **exceptional circumstances** postpone the refusal to provide meals where parents have advised the school of their financial situation and school is satisfied that the funding will be forthcoming. In this situation, a meeting must take place with the parent or carer, Headteacher and School Business Manager.

The school will work closely with parents and carers in working out a form of payment plan to help resolve the situation if requested by the parent.

Information regarding free school meals is available from the School Office.

POLICY AGREED BY HEADTEACHER AND GOVERNORS OF TICKHILL ESTFELD  
PRIMARY SCHOOL ON

DATE: September 2017

REVIEW DATE: September 2020