

**School Meals Payment Policy**

**Payment of Dinner Money**

**The Governors expect that dinner money should be paid in advance of meals being taken; this means that £14.75 should be paid on a Monday for the coming week.**

Money owed to school has an impact on the budget and may affect the resources we can provide to all children. We trust that parents/carers understand this and will make every effort to avoid owing the school money. The school will take all reasonable measures to collect debts as part of its management of public funds. The school's dinner money policy will observe the relevant financial regulations and guidance set out in the Scheme for Financing Schools and any other legal requirements, including Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council Audit.

Dinner money costs for the academic year 2023/24 will be £2.95 per day (£14.75 per week). Dinner money may be paid in cash or via the TMBC portal:-

<http://public.tameside.gov.uk/forms/f1005PaySchoolMeals559.asp>

If you believe you may be entitled to Free School Meals, please contact the school office and they can run a simple check to confirm your eligibility.

**Debt Recovery Procedures**

Where payment from the parent/carer has not been received in advance, the following process will be applied:

***First 'overdue payment' reminder***

If payment has not been received by the *Friday* of that week, then parents/carers will receive a First 'Overdue Payment' Reminder via email. This email will state that £14.75 is owed and should be paid immediately.

***Second 'overdue payment' reminder***

If money owed is not forthcoming a further reminder will be made via telephone call on the following Friday (Second 'Overdue Payment') stating the current overdue balance. A second email reminder may also be sent.

***Third 'overdue payment' reminder***

If payment has not been received by the Friday of the third week and a packed lunch has not been provided by the parent/carer, this will mean that there is three weeks outstanding money.

A **third and final reminder** will be made via telephone call on the Friday of the third week (Final 'Overdue Payment') if money owed is still not received. A final reminder will also be sent via email. If payment is not received by the following Monday, you will need to provide your child with a packed lunch.

**Failure to respond to reminders / settle a debt**

If there is no response to the third 'overdue payment' reminder and no engagement with the school office staff, the debtor will be invited to meet the School Business Manager and in some cases a member of the Governing Body to discuss how the debt will be settled. Please be aware that failure to pay for school meals or communicate with school could result in legal action being taken against you.

**Reporting of outstanding debt levels**

The School Business Manager/Head teacher will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is regularly monitored. Suitable records will be maintained to detail individual debts and the total value of debt to the school in order that it can be determined at any time and reported to the Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee will review the level of outstanding debts every term to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debts is effective.

**If people are unable to pay**

The school will carry out a sensitive approach to debt recovery. If you feel you have any special circumstances and need to discuss these with school, please make an appointment to speak to the School Business Manager/Headteacher, so that debts don't mount up and arrangements can be made to pay money owing as soon as possible.

**Policy written:** January 2024

**Review Date:** September 2024