



## Debt Policy

Date	Review Date	Head Teacher	Chair of Governors
May 2024	May 2025		

### Objective

To significantly reduce the level of school debt regarding school meals, breakfast club, after school club and any other charging activity.

### Key Principles

- To take prompt action to ensure that school debts do not build up.
- To have a clear threshold beyond which debts will not be allowed to increase.
- To ensure that parents are made aware of the policy.
- To ensure a fair and consistent approach to dealing with late payments
- To prevent parents or carers incurring large debts.

The school has no facility to carry debts. If debts are incurred then the school has to use its budget to pay for them. This means that money, which should be spent on children's education, is used to pay for debts incurred.

To book and pay for breakfast club and after school club, swimming and trips please login to your Arbor online account.

School dinners are booked and paid for via Dolce/School Grid who manage the provision and payment of school meals on the school's behalf.

***All school meals, clubs, trips, swimming, extended day and breakfast club must be booked and paid for in advance.***

### School Meals

Parents who do not want their child to have a school lunch should provide a healthy packed lunch.

Children will not be given a school lunch unless it is paid for, except those who are entitled to free school meals.

School Grid will send payment arrears text/emails direct to parents.

In the instance of a debt payment not being received and a packed lunch not being provided, a member of the Administration Team will phone the parent or carer to ask them to pay for the lunch via School Grid or come to the school with a packed lunch. If payment of the debt is still not received and a packed lunch is not provided, then the Headteacher reserves the right to inform the appropriate services that parents or carers are not providing food for their children at lunchtime.

### *Free School Meals*

If a parent or carer believes that their child may be entitled to free school meals then additional information on this statutory right can be obtained by calling the office.

Only eligible pupils will qualify and the school will be happy to assist parents and carers with completing the necessary online application form if required.

If a parent or carer is notified by Kent County Council that their child is no longer eligible for Free School Meals, then they are required to notify the school immediately to prevent incurring a school meal debt.

### **Extended Day / Breakfast Club**

Where the debt relates to other payment items, such as breakfast club and extended day, provision of a place for your child(ren) will be withdrawn.

### **Swimming / Trips**

These items must be paid for in advance. However, if parents/carers are unable to pay for these items, or there is financial hardship, they should write to Mrs Stone (confidentially) on receipt of the activity notification.

### **Extra-Curricular Clubs**

These items must be paid for in advance.

This policy intends to provide clear guidelines to assist parents and carers by providing greater clarity regarding the payment of school money and school money debt. It is hoped that this will help the school to maximise the amount of money available to spend on children's learning.

### **Establishing a Debt Policy**

The current policy will be available on the school website or from the school office.

All parents will be provided with a copy of this policy in the School Information Pack when their child first joins the school.

### **The Procedure**

The debt report will be reviewed weekly by the School Business Manager and the Office Manager.

Individual messages will be sent to all parent/carers whose child/ren show an outstanding balance on Breakfast Club/Extended Day/trips/swimming requesting immediate payment.

If payment has still not been received a letter will be sent advising that the school will no longer be able to:

- Provide a school meal;
- Provide a place at Breakfast Club;
- Provide a place at Extended Day.

If money has still not been received to clear the debt parents/carers will be contacted by phone requesting they provide a packed lunch or advising we are unable to accommodate their child/ren at Breakfast Club/Extended Day until the debt has been cleared.

**Should the above actions fail to clear the debt the school may initiate proceedings to recover the debt from a small claims court.**