



Debt Management **Policy**

Canon Burrows C of E Primary School
January 2021

Introduction

The governing body has overall responsibility for the financial management of the school. To enable the governing body to discharge its responsibility effectively and efficiently, certain aspects of the day-to-day financial management and control are delegated to the Headteacher, Senior Management Team members and the School Business Manager.

Key Information

- All parents will be provided with a copy of this debt collection policy when their child joins the school.
- This policy is available on the school website.
- All school lunches must be paid for in advance unless an agreed arrangement is made with the school office, Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
- Parents who do not want their child/ren to have a school lunch should provide a healthy packed lunch instead.
- If a parent wishes their child/ren to change from school meals to packed lunches or vice versa, they must provide the school office with at least half a term's notice. In the event of an emergency, please speak to the school office firstly about one-off meals.
- Taking meals without paying for them deprives all children of learning materials that cannot then be bought.
- Payment of school meals should be made regularly via www.tameside.gov.uk. School meals are payable in advance. Meal prices are updated on the school website, www.canonburrows.co.uk . If you do not have access to the internet please contact the school office to discuss this.

Free School Meals Eligibility

To get free school meals;

- Your child/ren must **live** in Tameside, even if s/he/they go to school in another area, and be aged up to 16, or over 16 and attending full-time at a school with a sixth form; or, attend nursery part-time, providing their session crosses lunchtime (they attend mid-morning to mid-afternoon). It is up to the school to decide whether a nursery child's hours of attendance make them eligible.
- You must be responsible for that child, for example, receiving Child Benefit for them.
- You must also be on a low income and/or get certain income-based benefits, such as Universal Credit, or a run-on payment of an income-based benefit.
- If your child lives in another Local Authority, e.g., Oldham, you must apply to that authority.

If in doubt please contact the school office for a Free School Meal application form.

Food Allergies

Parents and carers are responsible for informing school with regard to food allergies. If your child has an allergy to certain foods we need to be aware of this so that we can notify the teaching and support staff, school kitchen, midday staff, breakfast club and afterschool club staff. We will need proof from your GP or a hospital consultant of any allergies your child may have. If you have any concerns about your child regarding lunches please discuss this with us.

Handling arrears of school meal payments

Canon Burrows does not allow for dinner money to go into arrears unless an agreed arrangement has been made. Remember taking meals without paying for them deprives children of much needed learning materials. If your child/ren's dinner money, breakfast club payments, after school club payments or other payments due to school go into arrears, the following procedures apply.

We understand that parents and carers sometimes get into financial difficulties and are not able to pay for services at the usual time. If you are in this position, it is always best that you contact the school and discuss the matter as soon as possible. The School will discuss with repayment arrangements to help people experiencing financial difficulty.

Step 1

If your child's account goes into debt, this is what the school checks before contacting you:

- Is this a Free School Meal (FSM) child?
- Are dates correct?
- Are the SchoolComms records correct, with absences correctly marked?
- Does this person normally pay on time?

Action 1: Gentle debt reminder

A text message reminder will be sent to you to outline that you have an outstanding debt and how much is owed.

Step 2

If your child's account remains in debt after the letter, this is what the school checks before contacting you again:

- Is this a FSM child?
- Are dates correct?
- Are the SchoolComms records correct, with absences correctly marked?
- Has this parent/carer made contact?

Action 2: Personal contact

The school will telephone and/or write to you asking you to either make a payment or provide a packed lunch from home from a specified date. If the payment is in respect of breakfast club, after school clubs or other services, provision of a place for you child may be removed going forward.

Step 3

If you do not comply with the above, you will be responsible for providing your child/ren with a Packed Lunch where the debt is in respect of school meals. If you do not provide a packed lunch you will receive a phone call asking you to take your child home for lunch or to drop off a packed lunch for them for that day.

This is what the school will check before contacting you:

- Has this parent made contact with anyone at the school about anything at all?

Action 3: Debt letter

A letter will be sent asking you to settle the debt with a warning that we may pass this on to a debt collection agency.

Step 4

If you do not comply with the above, the school will have to involve outside agencies. This is what the school checks before contacting you:

- Has this parent made contact with anyone at the school about this or any other matter?

Action 4: Involve outside agencies

- The matter will be referred to a debt collection agency if no positive arrangement has been agreed.
- The details are brought to the attention of the Governing Body (Chair of Governors initially).
- The Governing Body may consider referring the matter to Children's Services if the matter of providing a meal for your child is not being fully addressed by you.

Date policy adopted by governors:/...../.....

Date of review of policy/...../.....