



Grove School

Debt Policy

Mission statement:

“Enjoy, learn, achieve”

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Grove Primary School **Debt Policy**

Introduction

From 1st January 2015, Grove School will implement a strict debt policy relating to the school meal service.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that the money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents/carers. Every parent/carer will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents/carers give this policy their full attention.

Free School Meals

If parents/carers believe that their children may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals please contact the school office for more details. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify. We will continue to assist you with your application and you can also check on line using the following link: www.link2ict.org/FSM

Payment for School Meals

All payment for school meals must be made via a secure online system called ParentPay. Those parents wishing to pay cash should contact the school office to request the option of paying via PayPoint for dinner money.

Meals must be paid for in advance on a Monday. Payments can be weekly, half termly or termly.

When Payment for School Meals Has Not Been Received

We will not allow dinner money to accumulate above one week and therefore expect that parents owing more than this to provide a packed lunch for their child.

Week One

If the balance on Parentpay is a negative balance up to £11.75 parents will receive a text message to request a dinner money payment is made. The payment is to show in the Parentpay account by Monday morning.

If the weekly payment is not displayed on ParentPay on Monday, parents will be required to provide a packed lunch for their child until the debt has been cleared on Parentpay.

Week Two

If the debt is not cleared by Friday of the second week of non-payment, the school will telephone the parent/carer to inform them that the school meal will continue to be suspended. This will be followed up by letter 1 (Appendix 1) at the start of the third week for parents who have not paid the debt.

If payment is not received in school at the start of the fourth week, school will send out letter 2 (appendix 2) and will consider a referral to Dukes, a debt collection company to commence the recovery of the debt.

Half Termly Debt Procedures

At the end of each half term, parents who have a dinner money debt will be requested by letter to clear the debt by the start of the new half term. If payment for the outstanding dinner money is not received, a daily packed lunch must be provided at the start of the new half term until the debt is cleared.

Consequences of Non Payment for School Meals

If payment of dinner money is not received, school will decide whether to refer the dinner money debt to a debt collection company.

Conclusion

We hope that by implementing this debt policy:

- We are able to ensure parents/carers manage payments effectively
- We reduce the administration time and costs involved chasing debts
- We ensure that all monies for children's learning are available for that purpose.

Monitoring and Recovery of Debts

At each meeting of the Governing Body/Finance Committee, the Head Teacher will provide Governors with details of any outstanding dinner money and the current position with regard to such debt. The aim of the school's debt policy is to minimise the opportunity for debt balances to build up and school to incur expensive debt recovery costs. The school does however, reserve the right to begin legal proceedings to recover outstanding debts

End of Academic Year Procedures for Leavers

Parents will be informed of current meal balances during the summer term to encourage them to manage the balances before the end of term.

School Leavers with Credit Balances

Where credit exists against a leaving child account, the credit will transfer onto a sibling account.

Where there is no sibling, the balance will be refunded back to the card that made the payment or via a manual process.

School Leavers with Debt Balances

Where debt exists against a leaving child, a barcoded letter will inform parents of this with payment requested before the end of the summer term.

If no payment is received, the debt will transfer onto a sibling account and parents will be informed of this by letter.

Appendix 1

Parent/Carer of

Further to the Parentpay text message, our records show that you have not yet made a dinner money payment for your child.

Our records show a debt of £

This payment must be made immediately via the ParentPay website using your secure username and password. Alternatively payment can be made at a local PayPoint outlet using a barcoded letter or payment card.

The cost of a school meal is £2.35 per day/£11.75 per week.

If payment is not forthcoming, then the school will be unable to continue providing school dinners for your child, and you will need to provide a packed lunch until the debt is cleared.

May I finally remind you that payments must be made via ParentPay by Monday or, if paying for the whole term, on the first day back after the school holiday.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs K. O'Mahoney
Financial Administrator

Appendix 2

Parent/Carer of

Despite previous correspondence, our records show that you have still not made a dinner money payment for your child.

As at our records show a debt of £

Please arrange for a payment to be made by

Since non-payment for school meals affects the quality of service we offer to the children we need to ensure that all payments are up to date. Unfortunately, if payment is not forthcoming, then the school will be unable to continue providing school dinners for your child, and you will need to make your own arrangements for your child's lunch until the debt is cleared.

The school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to recover the debt. School will consider a referral to a debt collection company to commence the debt collection process.

The school also reserves the right to inform social services of our concerns that you are not providing a meal for your child at lunchtime.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately. I have attached a statement for your records.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs K. O'Mahoney
Financial Administrator

