




# Heathfield Primary School

## Payment for School Meals Policy (Cashless System)

Chair of Governors	Z. Jiva	
Headteacher	<del>M.D. Head</del>	
Policy written by	Sarah Walsh, School Business Manager	
Date approved by governors	02.03.20	
Date of next review		
Committee Responsible	Resources	

## Aims

Our school meals policy aims to:

- Outline Heathfield Primary School's procedures regarding school meals;
- Ensure a smooth, efficient and cost-effective operation of the school meal provision;
- Offer a fair and equitable process for payment of school meals;
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of school staff and parents;
- Ensure we adopt a consistent and fair approach to debt incurred by parents/carers whose children take school dinners.

## School Meal Procedure

- School meals are available to all pupils in Nursery and KS2 at a cost of **£1.70 per day**.
- Payment for school meals must be made **in advance**.
- Payment should be made as follows:
  - On the first day of the half-term for the full half-term ahead;
  - In weekly instalments on the Monday of each week.
- Parents may pay online via ParentPay.
- For access to the ParentPay system, please contact the school office.
- The price for school dinners for the forthcoming half-term will be issued in writing to all parents in advance (usually in the week before the start of a half-term) to facilitate prompt payment.
- Changes to the price for school dinners will be communicated via the School Newsletter, text message and ParentPay.
- If children are absent their dinner money will remain as a credit on their account.
- Refunds will only be given for credits if a child is leaving this school and there is no other siblings at school.
- If a child forgets their packed lunch a school meal will be provided; this will be charged for and should be paid for on the following day.
- The office must be given a minimum of one week's notification of any changes in meal arrangements.

## Statutory Free School Meals

- Parents/Carers who are in receipt of certain benefits, may be entitled to Statutory Free School Meals. The School Office are available to assist parents in an application for Free School Meals.
- Children who have a packed lunch but who are entitled to Free School meals must notify the school office if changing from one to another.
- All applications for Free School Meals are treated with the strictest confidence.

## Universal Infant Free School Meals

- All parents of children in Reception, Year One and Year Two (Key Stage 1) are currently entitled to Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) funded by the Government. However, if you are in receipt of certain benefits your child may also be entitled to additional funding. Please speak to a member of staff in the school office to allow school to apply for this funding.
- Parents may choose to provide a packed lunch instead of claiming a UIFSM at their own expense, we request that you notify the office if this is your choice.
- Parents of children who have a packed lunch but who are entitled to Universal Free School meals should notify the school office if changing from one to another.

## Responsibility of the School

It is the responsibility of the School to ensure:

- That parents are notified in advance of the cost for school meals for the following half-term;
- That parents/carers are reminded weekly when dinner money has not been received to minimise arrears accumulating.

### **Responsibility of Parents/Carers**

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure the following:

- Their child is provided with a packed lunch or a school meal;
- School meals are paid for in advance or evidence of entitlement to Free School Meals is provided to the School Office;
- Requests for dinner money arrears are responded to to prevent further arrears accumulating.

### **Debt Policy**

- Heathfield Primary School operates a strict no debt policy regarding school meals.
- If your child has taken school meals for which payment has not been received, parents will be notified and payment requested by text message on a weekly basis. Payment must be made immediately via ParentPay.
- If payment is not received by the date requested, a letter will be sent requesting payment.
- Heathfield Primary School reserves the right to withdraw school meals for pupils if payment is not received after 2 weeks.
- Within letters requesting payment of school meal arrears, the option of arranging a confidential payment plan will be offered.
- If payment remains unresolved, a letter will be issued detailing the school's next course of action.
- If a reasonable arrangement to clear a debt cannot be made, or a payment plan is not adhered to, a final letter will be issued informing parents/carers that the debt has been referred to Bolton Council's debt recovery team.
- The school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to secure payment.
- Where school meals remain unpaid and a packed lunch is not provided, the Headteacher, as designated Child Protection Officer, may refer the case to Social Services to inform them that parents/carers are failing to carry out their responsibility of care by not providing food for their child at lunchtime.

The school cannot accept arrears amounting to more than one week's payment. These debts are not written off by the Local Authority and therefore the school must pay them out of the school budget. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents.

We hope that by implementing this debt policy we are able to help parents manage school meal payments, and ensure that all money allocated to the school for our pupils learning is available for that purpose.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every year, or earlier if considered necessary.

