



**St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School**

Headteacher: Miss V Maher

# **School Meals Payment Policy**

## **2023**

<b>Date of Policy</b>	<b>Signed</b>	<b>Position</b>
2022	Veronica Maher	Headteacher
<b>Monitoring</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Date</b>
Reviewed	Resources Committee	May 2022
To be ratified	Full Governing Body	
<b>Uploaded to website</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Date</b>
N/A		
This policy will be reviewed <b>at least every two years</b> by the full Governing Body		
Date of next review : 2024		

**Current Situation regarding Free School Meals for all Primary School children:**

The Mayor is funding universal free school meal provision in London primary schools for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 academic years.

# SCHOOL MEALS NO-DEBT POLICY

## 1. MISSION STATEMENT

St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School undertakes to reflect the Gospel Values and the teachings of Christ in a positive Catholic environment.

Christ recognised the value and dignity of each person and His ministry was one of forgiveness. St. Philomena's Catholic Primary School embodies this spirit and these values in educating the whole person, that is in the areas of spiritual, cultural, moral, mental, social and physical developments in reaching out to the parish community and to a wider society.

### Introduction

As from 1st September 2014, St Philomena's Catholic Primary School will adopt a clear **NO DEBT** policy relating to school meal service.

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

No parent/carer would take their child to a restaurant and expect them to be given food without paying; the same applies at school.

### Free School Meals

If parents/carers believe that their child may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals please apply directly online through the London borough of Bromley website. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify.

### Payment for School Meals

Parents/carers must pay for one month's meals, in advance, by using our online payment system.

Payment **must** be paid on the first school day of each month. Alternatively, payment may be made half-termly or termly, in advance.

Children will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, except those that are entitled to free school meals. If a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance, the school may grant a debt allowance of one meal. However, this debt must be paid immediately and future meals must be paid in advance before any meal is provided.

If a debt is not cleared, parents/carers must provide a packed lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, school will phone the parent/carer to ask them to come to school with the money, otherwise they must provide sandwiches before lunchtime.

If a child has forgotten their packed lunch, a school meal will not be available unless it has been paid for in the morning. If the parent has not sent in payment for a hot dinner, they will be called and asked to bring a packed lunch to school before lunchtime. It will be possible for parents to pay for one or more meals, on account, at the beginning of each school year so that this eventuality is covered.

### **If Payment Has Not Been Made**

If your child has taken a meal which has not been paid for you will be sent a reminder detailing how much you owe (Appendix 1).

If payment is not received one week after the debt is incurred, a further letter will be sent detailing the consequences of non-payment and a final date by which payment must be made (Appendix 2).

The school will work closely with parents/carers in working out a form of payment plan to help resolve the situation.

### **Consequences of Non Payment For School Meals**

If any debt remains unpaid one week after it has been incurred, parents must provide a packed lunch for their child and school meals will not be provided.

If payment of the debt is not received, the Head Teacher reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against parents/carers to recover the debt. Social Services may also be informed that these parents/carers are not carrying out the responsibility of care by not providing food for their child at lunchtime. It is not the responsibility of the School to provide lunch for pupils. It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to provide a meal, either a school lunch or a packed lunch.

### **Conclusion**

We hope that by implementing this debt policy we are able to help parents manage school dinner money effectively, reduce the administration time and costs involved chasing dinner money debts and at the same time ensure that all money for children's learning is available.



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### APPENDIX ONE

#### Letter sent as soon as debt is incurred:

Parent/Carer of .....

Further to our telephone call today, 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**. Please pay online. The cost of a school meal is £2.81 per day/£14.05 per week.

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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, monthly in advance, on the first school day of each month or, if paying for the whole term or half-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

Veronica Maher  
Head Teacher



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### APPENDIX 2

#### Letter sent if debt unpaid one week after debt is incurred:

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 ..... The cost of a school meal is £2.81 per day/£14.05 per week. **If payment is not received by the school by this date, school meals will not be available for your child and you will need to send in a packed lunch for them each day.**

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 and 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.

Yours sincerely

Veronica Maher  
Head Teacher