



School Meals Payment Policy

Updated September 2020

This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Resources Committee or, in the event of a change in legislation, earlier.

Introduction

At St Michael's C of E Primary School, families can choose whether their children have a school meal, bring in a packed lunch or go home for lunch. The government's Universal Infant Free School Meals initiative provides free lunches for all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. School meals for children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 must be paid for.

Some children will be eligible for **Free School Meals**. (See Appendix A for more information).

Payment

School meals must be paid for in advance of meals being taken. All meals should be paid for using ParentMail. In exceptional circumstances meals can be paid for by cash or cheque, which should be taken to the school office and handed directly to a member of staff there. Parents can choose how far in advance they pay for school meals. Refunds will be given in the event of a child leaving the school in credit.

Non-Payment

St Michael's C of E Primary School does not offer a credit facility and the school cannot allow debt amounting to more than two weeks school meals payment (currently £23.00 a child) to accrue. This is to aid parents who may be facing financial difficulties as well ensuring that funds that should be spent on children's education are not used to pay for debts incurred by parents.

If a school meal debt of £23.00 a child is owing, the child will be required to bring a packed lunch from home until the debt is paid and payment has been made in advance for any future school meal.

Provision of food for a child without payment or packed lunch

If a child arrives at school without a packed lunch or payment for a school meal, the school will contact home in the first instance to establish if alternative arrangements have been made.

If a school meal needs to be given because no packed lunch is provided, you will be required to pay for this.

The Head Teacher will use their discretion if it is necessary to provide lunch for children of families with unpaid school meal debt and for whom no packed lunch is provided.

Non-payment of school meals procedure

- ParentMail updates parents daily, requesting payment, if the school meals balance is in arrears, this is your opportunity to clear the debt
- If payment is not received, or no satisfactory explanation or solution is provided, then the school will send further communication about the consequences of non-payment and a final

date by which payment must be made. No more school meals will be provided for your child at this stage

- The outstanding debt will be brought to the attention of the school governors
- The school will work closely with parents in working out a payment plan to help resolve the situation if requested by the parent.
- If a solution is not forthcoming after four weeks, the school will take legal measures to recover the debt.

The school will, in exceptional circumstances, postpone the debt recovery process where parents have advised the school of their financial situation and school is satisfied that the payment will be forthcoming.

APPENDIX A

Free School Meals and Pupil Premium Funding

Dear Parents,

We would like to make you aware of the **Free School Meals** scheme that operates in our school. All eligible children are able to have a free school lunch and they also attract additional **Pupil Premium funding** (currently £1,345 a year for each child). This is paid to schools to help raise attainment and ensure that children have the support they need to reach their potential. We currently use Pupil Premium funding for specialist teaching for individual children and to provide them with additional opportunities. This funding continues to be paid for five years even after a child has ceased to be eligible for free school meals.

Your children may be eligible for free school meals and Pupil Premium funding if you are in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit – your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for the 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)

If you think you might qualify, please speak to Judith in the school office. She will ask you for your full name, your National Insurance number and your date of birth, which will allow her to check your child’s eligibility.

Children will continue to be eligible for free school meals until they finish the phase of schooling (primary or secondary) they’re in on 31 March 2022.

Yours sincerely

Rosalind Owen
Head Teacher