



Baines School

Nil Sine Labore

The Governors of Baines School

Collection of School Meals Money and School Meals Debt Policy

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Introduction

This policy concerns to the collection of school meals money and the approach to be taken in the case of debts arising when parents/carers fail to pay for school meals. Parents/carers will be sent a copy of this policy when their children start at the school.

General Principle

School meals must be paid for in advance. Money should be uploaded to ParentPay and there should be enough funds in the school lunch section to cover the cost of the food that is to be purchased.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for this. As a result money which should be spent on all students' education in school is used to pay for debts incurred by individual parents / carers. The governing body see this as unacceptable and request that all parents / carers give this policy their full support. This would be an inappropriate use of public funding and schools are not permitted to use funding this way.

Free School Meals Entitlement

Students will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, or if the student is confirmed as entitled to free school meals. If parents/carers believe that their child(ren) may qualify for entitlement to free school meals they should contact the County Council. As this allowance is a statutory right for qualifying students it is important that parents/carers make use of it. Here is a link to the appropriate form for free school meals;

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/schools/free-school-meals/>

<https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Education-and-schools/School-meals/Free-school-meals.aspx>

The school is only allowed to provide free school meals to students where this is officially approved and the school has been informed by the Local Authority and the free school meal allowance can be used at lunch time only.

Procedure for Collection of Arrears

It is accepted that on occasion arrears may arise for various reasons eg students or parents / carers have forgotten to upload money to ParentPay. However, arrears cannot be allowed to accumulate. The governing body has therefore agreed the following policy where arrears arise. If there is not enough money to purchase food, then students will not be able to purchase food at breaktime. They will be able to purchase a sandwich at lunchtime so that they do not go hungry. The cost of the sandwich will be added to the debt. After stage 3, students will no longer be permitted to receive food from school, and will need to bring a packed lunch.

1. A reminder letter will be sent home after ONE week of accumulated arrears.
2. The parent / carer will be informed in writing when three weeks' arrears have accumulated and advised to make immediate payment.

3. A final letter to the parent / carer informing them that no meals will be provided for their child(ren) if payment has not been received when four weeks' arrears have accumulated.

No meals to be provided to students when arrears exceed four weeks.

Once the final letter deadline has expired the debt will be passed onto a debt recovery team where legal proceeding may begin.

RELATED POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the schools' debt management policy.