



Clanfield Church of England Primary School

NO DEBT POLICY

Approved by:	Chair of Governors	Date: January 2020
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Last reviewed:	January 2020
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Next review:	January 2022
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Purpose

As from 1st January 2020 Clanfield Church of England Primary School has adopted a NO DEBT policy. This policy encompasses school meals and the school's Extended Services wraparound childcare provision (Breakfast and ASC clubs).

The school meals and Extended Services provision are no different to any other business and should be paid for in advance. Parents should be able to relate to the situation that they cannot take their child to a restaurant or make a booking at a nursery/child-minding service or book for one of the external clubs without paying, the same applies to school services.

If debts are incurred, then the school has to pay for them and must account for them in their monthly budget monitoring reports. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is redirected and used to pay for debts. We therefore respectfully request that all parents, carers and staff give this policy their full support.

The Free School Meal (FSM) system is available for parents who are in receipt of certain state benefits. If a parent thinks they may qualify for FSM entitlement, they should contact the school office for further details. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that parents use it if they qualify. Their child will then have a right to a meal each day.

It is very time consuming for the office staff to continually chase for dinner money – by letter, phone call or in person. It is also highly embarrassing for all concerned and occasionally it can have a negative effect on our relationships with staff and families.

The Governors believe that a 'zero-tolerance' approach is the fairest system. We understand that it may seem a very hard stance as there has been a culture of debt tolerance. However, going forward, we are sure that all parents/carers and staff will support the school and ensure all the school budget is spent for the benefit of all our pupils.

We will ensure that parents are aware of this policy by:

- A letter to parents (appendix 1)
- Reminders in our newsletter
- The school website
- A copy of the policy in our induction pack when staff/children join the school

Payment for School Meals

Parents/carers and staff must pay **in advance** for school lunch. As we are a small school and do not have a large storage area, the meals are ordered in three-weekly batches. Payment can be made via your child's SchoolMoney account (school's online cashless banking system)

Miss Castle, Admin Assistant, sends regular Eduspot text prompts to remind parents of the next closing date.

No-one will be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, except children 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 by the following morning and future meals must be paid in advance before any further 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, the School Office will phone the parent/carer to ask them to come to school with the money or packed lunch before lunchtime.

If payment of any debt is not received, the Co-Headteacher's reserve the right to begin legal proceedings through through County Council Legal Services 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 lunchtimes. It is **not** the responsibility of the school to provide lunch for pupils. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to provide a meal, either a school lunch or a packed lunch.

Payment for Breakfast Club and ASC

From 1st January 2020 the SchoolMoney payment booking system will be live. Parents are able to log into their child's account in the usual manner and add the required booking to their basket. This basket will not be confirmed until payment has been made.

For parents who use one of our registered childcare voucher schemes, they should ensure that their top up payment is made to their provider and their provider will send the payment confirmation to the SchoolMoney team. If you are using this system, please ensure you email Miss Castle

confirmation of the dates you are paying for so we can verify them with the SchoolMoney Team and manually add them on the parents' behalf.

Payment can be made via your child's SchoolMoney account (school's online cashless banking system), through the **Tax Free Childcare Scheme** details of which can be found on the [Gov.uk website](#) or via one of our registered Childcare providers as follows;

1. Coop
2. Computershare
3. Edenred
4. Kiddivouchers
5. Sodexo

Receipts will be given for any cash or cheque payments. Refunds will not be made for children who have not shown to After Schools Club. Cancellations must be made within 48 hours or no refund will be given and the fee is non-transferable.

Conclusion

We hope that by implementing this debt policy we are able to help parents/carers and staff manage their school debts effectively, reduce administration time and costs involved chasing dinner money debts and at the same time ensure that school budgets are used correctly for the education of its pupils.

Monitoring and Review

This Policy will be reviewed every 2 years or earlier if necessary.

Appendix 1- Initial letter to parents on introduction of policy

Date

Dear Parents/Carers

Re: No Debt Policy

We are writing to inform all families that as from 14th February 2020 Clanfield Church of England Primary School will be implementing a **NO DEBT policy** relating to school meals and Extended Service Club fees. This is to ensure that the school budget is used for the benefit of all our pupils and efficient running of the school. Please read the attached policy for a fuller explanation of this.

The school budget has to be used to clear debt incurred by parents ordering meals for their child or use of the Extended Service Club and not paying for these services. As a consequence, money, which should be spent on children's education, is being used to fund unpaid meals and provide childcare. We are certain that you would agree this is unfair and unacceptable.

Monday 24th February 2020 the SchoolMoney online booking system will be live for the following:

- School meal orders
- Extended Service Breakfast Club bookings
- Extended Service ASC bookings

All bookings **must be paid for in advance**. Parents are able to log into their child's account in the usual manner and add the required booking to their basket. This basket will not be confirmed until payment has been made.

For parents who use one of our registered childcare voucher schemes, they should ensure that their top up payment is made to their provider and their provider will send the payment confirmation to the SchoolMoney team. If you are using this system, please ensure you email Miss Castle confirmation of the dates you are paying for so we can verify them with the SchoolMoney Team and manually add them on the parents' behalf.

Payment can be made via your child's SchoolMoney account (school's online cashless banking system), through the **Tax Free Childcare Scheme** details of which can be found on the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website or via one of our registered Childcare providers as follows;

1. Coop
2. Computershare
3. Edenred
4. Kiddivouchers
5. Sodexo

Receipts will be given for any cash or cheque payments. Refunds will not be made for children who have not shown to After Schools Club. Cancellations must be made within 48 hours or no refund will be given and the fee is non-transferable.

Children will not be provided with a school lunch unless it is paid for, except those that are entitled to Free School Meals. If you think you are entitled to Free School Meals,

please ask at the school office for a form or to check your eligibility. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify.

If a parent/carer forgets to pay in advance for their child(ren)'s school meals, the school will contact you and grant a one-off debt allowance of one meal. However, this debt **must** be paid the next morning at the latest and further meals for the week paid in advance. If this debt is not cleared, then you must provide your child with a packed lunch until all outstanding debts have been paid. Parents who ignore this will be contacted in the morning and asked to bring in sandwiches or the outstanding payment.

We would also like to highlight that should your child go home *after* 10.00am and you have ordered a school meal, this meal may have to be paid for as the food will have been cooked. If payment of debt is not received, the Headteacher may decide to bring legal proceedings to recover the debt. Social Services may be informed if parents/carers are not providing food for their child at lunchtime.

Similarly, payment for Extended Service Club bookings will need to be received at the time of making the booking.

We are certain that by implementing this debt policy, we can help parents/carers manage school dinner money better and, at the same time, ensure that the school budget is used directly for our pupil's education.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher