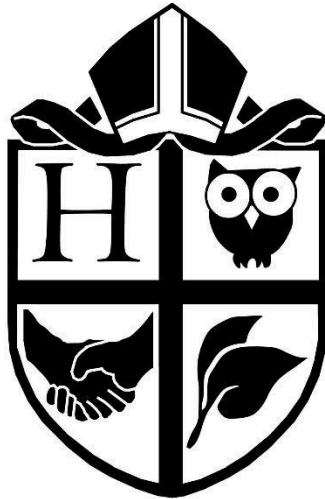




Dinner Money Arrears Policy

Hayward's Primary School



Written by:	School Policy	Signed:
Approved by Governors:	April 2024	
Next review due by:	Summer 2025	

DINNER MONEY ARREARS & DEBT RECOVERY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Schools must balance the social welfare of pupils with the management of public funds. Debts incurred by parents/carers result in money intended for children's education being deferred to clear debt. Our school community agrees that this is unacceptable and we ask parents/carers to give this policy their full support.

Hayward's School will take all practicable measures to collect debt as part of its management of public funds. Debtors will be actively pursued for the collection of monies owed.

STANDARD PROCEDURE:

- In general, payment for all goods and services will be collected in advance or at point of sale. This will be made clear to parents/carers with final dates for advance payment made known – e.g. school trips. In some situations, these payments may be broken down over time and in rare cases, following communication with the Headteacher, a payment plan may be established which goes on beyond the date of the event taking place.
- In conjunction with our school meal provider, Fresha, we ask that all meals be ordered and paid for in advance through the School Gateway (SchoolComms). This helps provide the kitchen staff with information prior to the school day and reduces food waste. Staff in school, then confirm the choice on the morning and this request is sent through to the kitchen.
- We appreciate that there may be an exceptional circumstance when your child needs to have a school lunch prior to payment – in these cases the school expects payment for this on the next working day.
- The preferred payment method is via the School Gateway (SchoolComms) online payment system, but we can accept cash in advance or on the day of purchase.

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN IN EYFS and KEY STAGE ONE AND THOSE IN RECEIPT OF PARTICULAR BENEFITS

- Parents/carers are reminded regularly about payment through newsletters and ParentMail text messages. All children in Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 2 are automatically entitled to receive Free School Meals under the government's Universal Free School Meal offer. However, all parents/carers who are in receipt of certain benefits are encouraged to apply for 'Pupil Premium' funding when they enrol their child in school, as this can help attract additional funding into school to support learning and will mean that child qualifies for Free School Meals through into Year 3 and beyond. To access information about applying for Free School Meals, parents should visit:
<https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/school-meals>

Parents are encouraged to apply via the Devon Citizens Portal or alternatively, call the Education Helpline on 0345 1551019.

DEALING WITH ARREARS:

- Should parents/carers allow their dinner money to go into arrears, then a letter will be sent at the end of that week asking for payment before any further school meals are taken. The letter shows payments received and payments made (see appendix 1). A parentmail will also be sent asking for parents to clear the debt as soon as possible. It will also direct parents to the previous letter (see appendix 2)
- Should this debt not be cleared in a timely fashion (by the end of the following week) then a further letter and parentmail (see appendix 3) will be sent out.
- Debts reaching in excess of £10 will result in a further parentmail being sent, requesting that payment is made by the following Monday and also asking for packed lunches to be provided until the debt is cleared. If parents are struggling with the debt, they are asked to contact the school office to arrange an appointment where a payment plan can be established. If necessary, and if no progress is made, this will be followed up by a direct telephone conversation with the Headteacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- A debt reaching £50 will trigger a letter from the Chair of Governors, reminding parents/carers that failure to pay the outstanding balance will result in the matter being passed onto Devon County Council (DCC) debt recovery.

- If no response is received from the letter sent from the Chair of Governors, and the arrears remain, the matter will be referred to DCC debt recovery, who will follow up with necessary action to recover the arrears.
- Should the arrears reach this stage (DCC debt recovery), any payments for future residential visits for the relevant child/children will be required to be paid in full in advance of the child attending the trip and will not be open to the privilege of payments by instalments.
- Ongoing claims may be pursued through the Small Claims Court.

APPENDIX ONE

(insert child's name) Year: * Class: **

Date: 28 April 22 Hayward's Primary School

Dear Parent/Carer

According to our records there is an outstanding amount of **£4.40** on your child's school dinner account. The report below details how this amount is calculated. Payments for school meals must be made in **advance** to ensure that we cater for the right number of children.

Transaction Details

Date	Trans Type	Payment Type	Amount (£)	Meal Type	Chargeable	Spent (£)	Balance (£)
29/03/2022	Meals Consumed			Lunch	Yes	2.40	7.20
30/03/2022	Meals Consumed			Lunch	Yes	2.40	4.80
31/03/2022	Meals Consumed			Lunch	Yes	2.40	2.40
17/04/2022	Meals Consumed			Lunch	Yes	2.40	0.00
17/04/2022	Payment	SCPAYMENT	10.00				10.00
19/04/2022	Meals Consumed			Lunch	Yes	2.40	7.60
20/04/2022	Meals Consumed			Lunch	Yes	2.40	5.20
21/04/2022	Meals Consumed			Lunch	Yes	2.40	2.80
26/04/2022	Meals Consumed			Lunch	Yes	2.40	0.40
27/04/2022	Meals Consumed			Lunch	Yes	2.40	-2.00
28/04/2022	Meals Consumed			Lunch	Yes	2.40	-4.40

APPENDIX TWO

Dear Parent/Carer,

Your child will be coming home with a letter, regarding an outstanding balance on their school dinner account.

We would ask that this outstanding balance is cleared as soon as possible.

Please remember, all school meals must be booked and paid for in advance.

Many Thanks

Andy Smith

Headteacher

APPENDIX THREE

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are writing with regard to outstanding dinner arrears totalling £10.40 for (insert child's name).

Please can you ensure that the outstanding amount plus payment for any meals due to be taken next week, are settled before 8am on Monday.

Please ensure that you provide a packed lunch for your child until we have received payment.

If you have any difficulty meeting these payments, please inform the office immediately.

Many thanks,

Andy Smith

Headteacher