

## Badgerbrook Primary School School Meals Payment Policy



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Badgerbrook Primary School has adopted the Leicestershire Traded Service's no debt policy relating to the school meal service.

This policy has been written to help our school adopt a consistent approach to debt incurred by parents whose children take school meals. It provides clarity and consistency in managing debt and outlines clearly what is expected of parents.

## **Rationale**

The school meals service is no different from any other business and meals taken must be paid for. The Free School Meals system supports parents who need financial assistance.

Currently, through the Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) scheme the school is reimbursed for the cost of meals for all Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils so no payment is required for pupils in Years 1, 2 and Foundation. School meals can be ordered daily.

School meals for pupils in Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 & 6) can be ordered daily and should be paid for in advance or on the day they are taken. Payments must be made through ParentPay and can be for individual meals or block payments in advance.

Parents of pupils in Year 3 and above who believe that their child may qualify for entitlement to free school meals (FSM) should contact the school office for more details or access the appropriate page on the Leicestershire County Council website:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/social-care-and-supporting-families/free-school-meals>

The Free School Meals allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify.

## **Key information**

- All parents will be provided of a copy of the debt policy when their child joins the school
- All school meals must be paid for in advance (apart from those eligible for UIFSM or FSM)
- Parents of Key Stage 2 children should not expect their child to be given a meal if there is no money in their ParentPay account
- Parents who don't want their child to have a school meal should provide a healthy packed lunch
- The Headteacher reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against parents to recover the debt.

## **Debt policy implementation**

The ParentPay dinner money system highlights debt immediately. It is very time consuming for staff have to chase parents for payment. It is also highly embarrassing for all concerned and occasionally it can have a negative effect on our relationships with families.

The following information explains what steps will be taken if debts are incurred:

- If a parent incurs debts for unpaid dinner money the school will send an email reminder via ParentPay to the parent during the week. The email will ask parents to pay the debt as soon as possible.
- If parents do not pay the debt and/or the debt continues to rise a further text message will be sent.
- If the debt remains unpaid parents will be contacted by phone to agree payment details.
- If the debt still remains unpaid a final reminder letter will be emailed – this will include a reminder that failure to bring the ParentPay account up to date could result in the child being denied a meal and that the school will begin proceedings against the parent to recover the debt.
- If there is no response to this email the Headteacher or a senior member of staff will phone parents to request that they provide a packed lunch from home until the account is in credit.

### **Free School Meals eligibility**

Where parents are in receipt of the following support payments they are likely to be entitled to a free school lunch entitlement. The criteria as at 31.3.19 is as follows:

- Income Support;
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit provided the parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, assessed by the Inland Revenue, that does not exceed £16,190
- Working Tax Credit 'run on' – the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit