

St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School



School Meals Debt Policy

Adopted - October 2018
Review date - October 2019

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'We listen, learn and grow with Jesus'

Mission Statement

At St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School we strive for fullness of life for everyone. Through education and prayer, we listen, learn and grow with Jesus.

Introduction

As from October 2018 St Elizabeth's School has adopted a strict NO DEBT policy relating to the school meal service. This includes break sale items e.g. toast / milk.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents.

Free School Meals

Children whose parents are in receipt of the following support payments will be eligible for free school meals for their child. Parents must apply for this separately using the link <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>. School will support with the application process if required.

Free school meals are available to children of families who are in receipt of:

- Child Tax Credit but do not receive Working Tax Credit with an annual income of less than £16,190
- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance
- The Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit
- Support under part VI of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- In receipt of the 4 week run of working tax credit (where someone has become unemployed or reduced their hours so is no longer entitled to working tax credit) or
- Universal credit (provided you have an annual net household income of no more than £7,400 as assessed by most recent earnings over 3 periods).

Universal Free School Meals and Free Milk Under 5s

The government are currently running a scheme which provides free school meals to all children within the Reception Class, Year One and Year Two. Parents who have children within these class groups are not required to pay for a school meal.

Children who are under the age of 5 are also entitled to receive free milk every day. Once a child reaches the age of 5, parents have the option to pay to continue to receive milk via ParentPay.

Payment for toast and milk at morning break is optional - but must be done so no later than 8am each Monday (or first day at the start of a term). Toast and Milk lists are printed once a week only, therefore any late payments will not appear until the following Monday.

Payment for School Meals

Parents must pay in advance for school meals, toast and milk using the secure website ParentPay or via a local retail store offering the PayPoint facility (a PayPoint card can be requested via the School Office).

The current cost of school meals, toast and milk is available to view upon ParentPay or upon the schools website www.saintelizabeths.co.uk.

Children will not be provided with a school meal, toast or milk unless it is paid for, except those that are entitled to either Free School Meals or Free Milk for children under 5 years old. 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 next day and future meals must be paid in advance before any meal is provided.

Factors of Consideration

The Governing Body of the school recognise that consideration will be given to:

- Children that are eligible for Free School Meals;
- Whether there has been a system delay or breakdown to the ParentPay service;
- Whether or not special consideration is to be given to hardship cases and how this is to be determined.

Procedure for Managing Debt

If the debt is not cleared by the end of the week the debt is incurred, going forwards parents must either provide a packed lunch or take the child home for lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, the School Office will send a letter via email to the parent to ask for immediate payment.

If payment of the debt is not received by the next day, the School Office will telephone parents to request immediate payment and send a further letter via email.

Where the parents account still remains in debt, parents will be invited into school to attend a meeting with a member of staff responsible for finance, or in extreme cases, with a member of the schools governing body.

The headteacher reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against parents to recover the debt. Social Services may also be informed to ensure the duty of care to provide food is being met by parents.

Summary

We hope that by implementing this debt policy we are able to help parents manage school dinner money and at the same time ensure that all school money is available to support children's learning.

If you would like to speak with St Elizabeth's School about this policy, please contact the School Office.