



# AMINGTON HEATH PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

## School Meals Debt Policy

### Aims

We aim to:

- Educate our pupils to become independent learners;
- Provide a stimulating, challenging and caring environment;
- Share an enriched curriculum which ensures continuity, progression and opportunities for all our pupils;
- Engage pupils actively in all stages of the learning process;
- Work with families to prepare pupils for life within our village and the wider community;
- Motivate and inspire our pupils to realise their full potential;
- Ensure the safety and enjoyment in learning of all our pupils.

These aims are achieved through all school policies and schemes of work. It is realised through effective working partnerships between staff, pupils, parents, governors, other schools, the Local Authority and the wider community.

Due to a change in Local Authority Policy, Amington Heath Primary School and Nursery has adopted a strict NO DEBT policy relating to the school meal service.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means **that money which should be spent on children's education** is used to pay for debts incurred by parents. Every parent will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents give this policy their full support.

**No parent would take their child to a café or restaurant and expect them to be given food without paying;** the same applies at school. If parents believe their child might be entitled to Free School Meals, please contact the school office for more details. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that parents use it if they qualify. We will help parents with their application if necessary.

Parents must pay in advance for the school meal by paying money to their account on ParentPay or by sending in cash to the school office. It is important to remember that ParentPay is not a credit facility and therefore should not be treated as such. Money must be available on a child's account in order for a meal to be taken. Office staff are to check the account balance on ParentPay when adding dinners. If the account is in arrears, then a phone call is to be made to request payment immediately.

Children will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, except those that are entitled to Free School Meals. If a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance, the school may grant a debt allowance of 1 meal per child in your family. However, this debt must be paid by the following day and future meals must be paid for in advance before any meal is provided.

If the debt is not cleared, parents must either provide a packed lunch or take the child home for lunch. In a case where a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, the school office will telephone the parents and ask them to come to the school with the money. Otherwise, they must provide sandwiches before lunchtime or arrange to take their child home for lunch.

If payment of the debt is not received by the next day, the Head teacher reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against the parents to recover the debt. Childrens' Social Care (Social Services) may also be informed that these parents are not carrying out their responsibility of care by not providing food for their children at lunchtime.

We hope that by implementing this School Meals Debt Policy we are able to **help parents manage their school dinner money better and, at the same time, ensure that all money that is for children's learning is available for the school to spend on the children.**

### Debt Policy Implementation Flowchart

#### Key information:

1. All parents are provided with a copy of the debt policy when their child joins the school (Appendix 1).
2. All school lunches must be paid in advance.
3. No child should be sent to school with no money in their account and expect to be given a meal.
4. Parents who do not want their child to have a school lunch should provide a healthy packed lunch or arrange to take them home for lunch.

#### Level 1

Indicator: A child's record shows a debt

*Check 1: is this a FSM child? Are dates correct?*

*Check 2: is there a possibility that payments have not been recorded correctly?*

*Check 3: does the parent normally pay on time? Is this just a one off?*

**Action 1 – Send 'debt reminder' text message**

#### Level 2

Indicator: A child comes to school, again, without the debt paid or a packed lunch

*Check 1: is this a FSM child? Are dates correct?*

*Check 2: is there a possibility that payments have not been recorded correctly?*

*Check 3: has this parent made contact?*

**Action 2 – Personal Contact**

*Office staff will telephone the parent to ask them to bring in the money owed or bring sandwiches to school before lunchtime or arrange to take their child home at lunchtime.*

#### Level 3

Indicator: The parent does not comply with any of these options

*Check 1: is this a FSM child? Are dates correct?*

*Check 2: is there a possibility that payments have not been recorded correctly?*

*Check 3: has this parent made contact?*

**Action 3 – Send Final Reminder Letter 2 (Appendix 3)**

#### Level 4

Indicator: The parent consistently does not comply with any of these options

*Check 1: is this a FSM child? Are dates correct?*

*Check 2: is there a possibility that payments have not been recorded correctly?*

*Check 3: has this parent made contact?*

**Action 4 – Notify School Food Support Service**

Agreed & adopted by The Governing Body of Amington Heath Primary School Primary School and Nursery

Signed..... Date .....

Chair of Governors