



Beresford Memorial CE (VA) First School

Dinner Money Policy 2018

Background

Beresford Memorial CE (VA) First School Debt Policy has been adopted to ensure a consistent and fair approach to debt incurred by parents/carers whose children take school dinners.

Provision of School Meals

Parents of pupils at Beresford have the choice of paying for a school lunch for their child or providing a healthy packed lunch. All school meals are prepared on the premises by Chartwells and meet the stringent guidelines laid down by the government regarding the provision of healthy school meals. We provide two choices of main course each day and work on a three week menu cycle which changes in October and April each year. Free School Meals are available to those who qualify. Further information on entitlement to Free School Meals may be obtained from the school office or online at <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/educationalawardsbenefits/FreeSchoolMeals/home.aspx>

If a child's entitlement to free school meals expires the parent/carer must provide a packed lunch or send payment in advance for a school dinner.

Cost of School Meals

School meals are available to children at a cost of £2.30 per day or at no cost to those in receipt of Free School Meals entitlement (proof to be provided by the parent/carer). School meals MUST be paid for in advance. Any revision to the price of meals will be notified to parents/carers at least half a term prior to the new charge taking effect.

Payment for School Meals

Please send payment by cash or cheque (payable to Staffordshire City Council) on a Monday morning in a sealed envelope clearly marked with your child's name, class and the amount enclosed. This payment should be handed by your child to their class teacher at morning registration or handed in directly at the School Office. Dinners may be paid on a weekly, half termly or termly basis. The school will ensure that all dinner money collected is banked in a timely manner in accordance with the School's Financial Regulations which are periodically inspected by audit.



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Management of School Meal Debt

To ensure that the school's budget is not adversely affected by the cost of School meal debt the Governors consider the fairest system to all families is to pursue a 'Zero Tolerance' approach. Although this may seem harsh to some parents it is important that the school budget is spent for the benefit of all our pupils and not a small number. If a child arrives at school without a packed lunch or payment, or if a child's entitlement to FSM has ceased, the school will text/telephone the parent/carer in the first instance to establish if alternative arrangements have been made. When a child has failed to produce dinner money the school may allow a meal to be provided where it is felt that this is a temporary situation e.g. lost or forgotten dinner money etc. If a child takes a school meal which has not been paid for, a text detailing how much is owed will be sent to the parent during the week requesting immediate payment to the school along with money for any other meals being taken during that week. Prompt action will be taken to address any debt issue at an early stage in order to prevent arrears amassing. If parents/carers make no attempt to contact or co-operate with the school then parents can expect no further assistance from the school.

If the debt exceeds £10 for a child or family a formal letter will be sent to the parent/carer informing them to provide their child/children with a packed lunch. If a child/children arrive at school without dinner money or a packed lunch the parent/carer will be contacted by the school office to bring in a packed lunch or full payment before 11:30am.

Monitoring and Recovery of School Meal Debts

At each meeting of the Governing Body Finance Committee, the Head teacher or Office Manager will provide Governors with details of any outstanding dinner debt over £10 per family and the current position with regard to such debt. The aim of the School's dinner money policy is to minimise the opportunity for debt balances to build up and incurring costly involvement of the school's solicitors. The school does however reserve the right to begin legal proceedings to recover outstanding school meal debt and inform the local authority that parents are failing to provide a child with a suitable meal at lunchtime. Where necessary the school will utilise the small claims court, in which case parents/carers will be liable for all costs incurred in addition to the original debt. Such measures will be taken even after a child no longer attends the school if they have left not having paid all money owed.



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