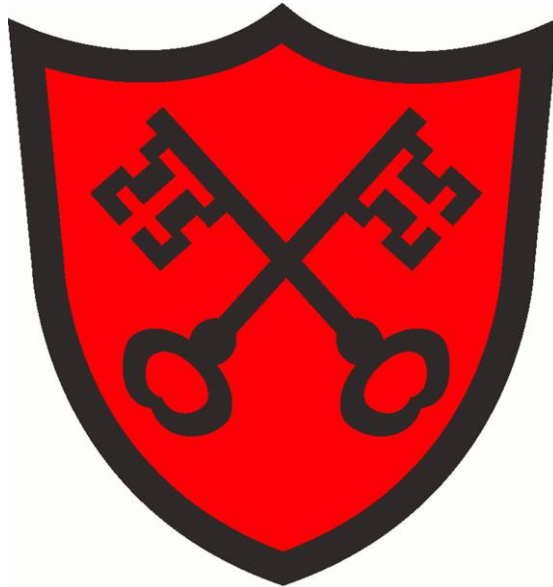


# **ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**



**Christ Be Our Light**

## **DINNER DEBT POLICY**

**This Policy was adopted by the Governing Body in Autumn 2012**

**This Policy will be reviewed in Autumn 2013**

# ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## DINNER MONEY DEBT POLICY

### Introduction

The responsibility of ensuring school meal payments are made by parents lies with the School. In addition, Cambridgeshire County Council cannot and will not sustain any debts outstanding. Therefore, a policy is required to ensure school meal debts are kept to a minimum. In writing this policy, the Governors of St Alban's Catholic Primary School wish to implement one that ensures meals are paid for, whilst aiding Parents/Carers during financial difficulties and ensuring children still receive a meal at lunchtime.

### Procedures

School meals must be paid for in advance of meals being taken. All meals for the period being paid for must be paid in advance online or to the office if access to a computer is not possible.

Meals may be paid for on a weekly, half termly or termly basis. If parents choose to pay either half termly or termly and a debt arises at the end of that period it will be the parent's responsibility to provide the office with information as to where the error occurs.

Children should know which lunch option they will have each day. If choosing school meals their lunch account must be in credit.

When a child is leaving it is imperative for the school office to check the balance of the child's account and refund any credit balance and obtain any debt outstanding.

If a pupil has a school meal every day it will be assumed that on promotion days they will take that meal. Parents will need to advise the school office if that is not the case. If a pupil does not have meals every day the parents will need to logon and pay the school meal via their WisePay account.

When adults are invited to lunch meals must be booked and paid for in cash. (There will be occasions when the school will cover the costs but parents will be informed in advance). No meals will be provided after this date.

If you think that your child may be eligible to receive free school meals, please contact the following service for further advice and guidance: Education Welfare Benefits Service, Telephone: (01480) 372307, Email: [ewb.fsm@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:ewb.fsm@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

### Debt procedures

In collecting any outstanding debts, a step-by-step process will be followed. The time lapse between the steps will normally be 5 School days. However, this may vary depending on factors such as the level of debt and the time period within a term. The next step will be implemented if the debt has not been repaid or any contact made with the School.

WEEK 1: Each Friday debts will be reviewed and a "debt letter one" will be sent either via email or a telephone call from the HT or office (Appendix A)

WEEK 2: For those debts which received "letter one" the previous week and have not been cleared and still have debts over £20, "debt letter two" will be sent via email or a telephone call from the HT or office. This letter requests that the child is provided with a packed lunch until the debt is cleared, the School Office will ensure this is adhered to – if the child arrives at School without a packed lunch the parent/carer will be telephoned but the school will offer to provide a school meal. (Appendix B)

WEEK 3: For those debts which received "letter two" the previous week have not been cleared and still have debts over £20, the school will contact the parent by telephone to arrange an appointment.

WEEK 4: For debts over £20, which received "letter two" and the appointment was not made or there was an unsatisfactory outcome the School Governors will need to make a decision on how to deal with this debt.

We acknowledge that on occasion, families have financial difficulties and in these proven circumstances, the school will work hard with the family to agree a solution which is not to the detriment of the child.

In the event of a child leaving St Alban's Catholic Primary School with an outstanding debt, the Governing Body will need to consider whether to write off this debt or pursue payment by other means including making a claim in the Small Claims Court.

## Appendix A

Date :

Dear Parent/Carer

**Re: School Meal Payments for.....**

**Dinner Money Rate: Daily £2.00/Weekly £10.00**

According to our records ..... has been taking school meals recently. It appears that we have not received sufficient money to cover this cost.

The outstanding balance on..... was £..... I would be grateful if payment could be sent in by ....., including monies for the forthcoming week/half term/term if this is relevant. Thank you.

This is a standardised letter that we send out, whenever dinner money is owed. I would be grateful if you could arrange for prompt payment of this outstanding debt since the school is unable to provide credit for school meals.

Due to the ever increasing debts owing for children's dinners, I must remind all parents that it is imperative that payment for meals is made promptly to the school, in advance of meals being taken. If payment is not received there is a possibility that the school may not provide lunch for your child/children as the school may be liable for any debt that arises. Schools cannot provide free meals to children who are not entitled to them.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Joseph McCrossan  
Head Teacher

## Appendix B

Date :

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Re: School Meals**

I am writing to advise you that there is an outstanding balance of ..... on ..... dinner money account. It is the policy of Cambridgeshire County Council that the School does not pay for dinners on behalf of the children. As a result of this, I need to advise you that the school will be unable to provide a dinner for ..... until this debt is cleared. A weekly payment plan to pay the debt would be acceptable, i.e. £1 per week, and I would appreciate your co-operation in setting this plan up.

Please ensure..... is provided with a packed lunch until this debt is cleared and school dinners can re-commence.

Thank you for your assistance. If you wish to discuss this further, then please do not hesitate to contact me. I enclose a copy of the school's Dinner Money Debt Policy and procedures for your information.

Yours sincerely,

Joseph McCrossan  
Head Teacher

Enc. Debt policy and procedures

## Appendix C

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer,

### **Re: School Meals**

You will recall that I wrote to you a few days ago regarding the outstanding balance on ..... dinner money account to the value of £..... As you know, it is the policy of Cambridgeshire County Council that the School does not pay for dinners on behalf of the children. I am disappointed that you have not been able to start a weekly payment plan as suggested in my previous letter, and would request that you telephone the office to make an appointment to see me to discuss this further.

Thank you for your assistance. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Joseph McCrossan  
Head Teacher

## Appendix D

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer,

### **Re: School Meals**

I am disappointed you have been unable to contact me to make arrangements to recover the outstanding debt of ..... In line with the school's Dinner Money Debt Policy and procedures, a copy of which was sent to you with a previous letter, I have no option but to refer this outstanding debt to the school Governors.

The School Governors will consider the situation and will contact you in due course over the action they will take, which could include making a claim in the small claims court.

Yours sincerely

Joseph McCrossan  
Head Teacher