



# Collection of School Meals Money and School Meals Debt Policy

Policy Tracker – Responsibility for monitoring this policy: HR & Estates/DFO Reviewed annually			
Date of review	Reviewed By:	Role	Date Approved by the FAR
23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2024	Rachel Dean/Lisa Garfield	HR & Estates DFO	N/A

## **Introduction**

This policy relates to the collection of school meals money and the approach to be taken in the cases of debts arising when parents/carers fail to pay for school meals. Parents/carers will be advised a copy of this policy is on the school website.

## **General Principle**

School meals must be paid for in advance. If a pupil is to have meals monies must be received and ordered via Parentmail by midnight on the day before the meal. In order to assist with the efficient ordering and planning of school meals, please pay for meals in advance, on a weekly, monthly or termly basis via our online payment system (Parentmail).

If debts are incurred, this ends up detrimental to the school budget in the long run. This means that money which would otherwise be spent on all pupils' education in school is used to pay for debts incurred by individual parents / carers. Hales Valley Trust see this as unfair on the children's outcomes and therefore request that all parents / carers give this policy their full support.

## **Free School Meals Entitlement**

Pupils will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, except those confirmed as entitled to free school meals. If parents/carers believe that their child(children) may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals they should contact Dudley Council on 01384 814 988 or visit <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/benefits/free-school-meals/>. As this allowance is a statutory right for qualifying pupils it is important that parents/carers do make use of it. The school is only allowed to provide free school meals to pupils where this is officially approved and informed in writing by the Local Authority.

If you receive any of the following support payments your child may be entitled to Free School Meals:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers 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 you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit Run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit

The Trust encourages parents/carers to apply. Should you need any assistance on this then please contact the school office and this will be treated in confidence.