



Dinner Money Debt Policy

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Whitehall Road, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE8 4LH Telephone: 0191 4334095,
Head Teacher: Mr C Wisby B.Ed (Hons) NPQH, Deputy Head Teacher: Mrs L Crossan B.A. (Hons)

Caedmon Primary School website address: www.caedmonprimary.org
School e-mail address: caedmoncommunityprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk



Caedmon Community Primary School

Debt Recovery Policy

Aims

In the event of persistent non-payment of debts. Caedmon Community Primary School will actively pursue the collection of monies owed to it. If debts have been incurred by parents or carers of pupils, the parent/carers are jointly and severally liable for any charges. However, the school will consider all parents/carers situations and circumstances on an individual basis and will always look at the needs of the child and aim to act fairly and equally.

The Governing Body will:

- Consider the arrangements for debt recovery
- In the case of pupils, recommend the maximum level of debt which any family would be able to incur
- Approve the school undertaking legal action
- Include in the minutes of the Governing Body their approval to pursue any outstanding debt
- Ensure that anonymity of any families involved is always preserved

The Governing Body delegates these responsibilities to the Finance and Staffing Committee. The Governing Body delegates the day-to-day decision making to the Head Teacher.

Caedmon Community Primary School will:

- In the case of our families do not pass onto the debtor any costs incurred in pursuing the outstanding debt
- Give the debtor appropriate notification and time to pay the outstanding charge
- Send the debtor as a minimum a final statement which states that this is the final notice and that further action will be taken

The School Business Manager and Administration Officer will ensure that:

- All invoices outstanding are accurately recorded and maintained
- There is documentary evidence of all the steps undertaken by the school to recover the debt. This includes recording the dates that invoices and statements were distributed and/or phone calls and letters that have been sent to debtors
- The Governor finance & staffing committee will be informed of any debt which exceeds £200
- For all outstanding debts a final statement is issued to all persons liable for the debt

The Governing Body delegates authority:

- To the Head Teacher to waive or reduce the debt, where it is believed that the debtor is experiencing financial hardship up to a maximum amount of £200.

The Head Teacher may write off a debt when all reasonable avenues to recover the debt have been exhausted and where it is not cost effective to pursue the debt through legal action.

Any action relating to an outstanding debt or the waiving/reducing of a debt should be dealt with confidentially between the debtor and the Head Teacher.

Activities which are funded through **Voluntary Contributions** fall outside of the debt recovery policy.

Appendix 1 describes procedure for **School Meals** payments and debt recovery.

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Appendix 1 – School Meal Payment and Debt Recovery Procedures

Except for those children who are entitled to free school meals (FSM) **and** for whom the school has received notification of FSM entitlement, children will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for in advance.

Daily Procedures

Cypad meal manager is used in the classroom for children to select either a school meal or home packed lunch. Parentpay is used as an online payment tool for parents to pay for school lunches. The school office also accepts cash payments which are then recorded in parentpay manually. Cash payments are banked once a month. A weekly debt report to identify those children for whom sufficient payment have not been received is printed whereupon all parents/carers (except for those parents who pay termly/half termly) will be contacted to remind them that meals need to be paid for in advance either weekly or half termly.

Level 1

If the debt is not cleared by the following Monday lunchtime, the Administration Officer contacts the relevant parent/carers requesting payment by the end of the week.

Level 2

If the debt is not cleared at the end of week 3 and has reached over £30, the Business Manager will be informed, and they will contact the parent to discuss and request payment asap.

Level 3

If the debt reaches £50, the Head Teacher will be informed. A letter will be sent out to parents inviting them to meet with the Head Teacher (See Appendix 1).

At the meeting the Head Teacher will discuss when and how the debt will be cleared. A payment agreement will be put in place and signed. The Head Teacher will also make clear the debt will result in a further meeting with a School Governor and if necessary legal proceedings against the parent/carer to recover the debt. Following the meeting, a letter is sent out to the parent/carer to confirm the outcome.

Level 4

If the payment agreement is not adhered to the parent/carer receives a letter inviting them to a meeting with a School Governor (See appendix 2).

The School Governor will discuss with the parent when and how the debt will be cleared. The Governor will also reiterate that failure to clear the debt could result in Legal Proceedings against the parent/carer to recover the debt. Following the meeting, a letter is sent out to the parent/carer to confirm the outcome.

Level 5

Refer to Legal Services



APPENDIX 1

Dear Parent/Carers

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for (child's names) and as at (date) you owed £xx.xx)

All meals must be paid for in advance in accordance with our debt policy (copy enclosed). If you do not wish for your child to have school meal, please notify the school and either provide him/her with a packed lunch or arrange to take your child home for lunch.

Please arrange for the money you owe to be paid immediately into the school office. The cost of a school meal is £2.50 a day or £12.50 per week. If you do not, a meeting has been arranged for you to meet the Head Teacher on (time and date). I should point out that failure to clear the debt could result in legal proceeding being taken out against you.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears. Please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely

School Business Manager

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APPENDIX 2

Dear Parents/Carers

Our records show that you have not yet paid dinner money for (child's name). Our records show that as at (date) you owed £xx.xx

You are therefore invited to a meeting with (name of school governor) on (time and date).

I should point out that failure to clear the debt could result in legal proceedings being taken out against you.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely

School Business Manager

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