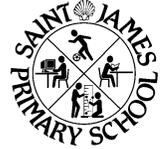


# **St James Church of England Primary School**

## **Dinner Money Debt Policy**



### **Introduction**

St James CofE School has a strict 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 the children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents/carers. Every parent/carer will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents/carers give this policy their full support.

No parent/carer would take their child to a restaurant and expect them to be given food without paying; the same applies at school.

### **Free School Meals**

If parents/carers believe that their children may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals please contact the school office for more details. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify. We will help you all we can with your application.

### **Payment For School Meals**

Parents/Carers must pay in advance for school meals by sending cash or a cheque (made payable to Birmingham City Council) in an envelope marked with your child's name, amount enclosed and the days school meals are to be taken. Meals should be paid for weekly on a Monday, or half termly or termly in advance.

### **When Payment For School Meals Has Not Been Received**

We cannot allow dinner money debts to accumulate above two weeks and therefore expect that parents owing more than this provide a packed lunch or collect their child for the lunch time break. If the weekly payment for school meals is not received by Friday of that week a letter will be sent to the parent/carer. If debt payment is not received by Friday of the second week of non-payment, the school will write to the parent/carer to inform them that meals will be suspended on Monday of the third week and that they must provide a packed lunch or collect their child for the lunch-time break.

### **Consequences Of Non Payment For School Meals**

If payment of the debt is not received within seven days, the Head Teacher reserves the right to refer the debt to a debt collection service. If legal action becomes necessary, collection charges will be added to the total amount of the debt.

The school will not allow a child in its care to go without a meal at lunchtime. Children whose parents/carers have debts over two weeks old will be provided with a sandwich, fruit and water. However, it is not the responsibility of the School to provide lunch for pupils. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to provide a meal: either buying a school lunch or sending a packed lunch from home. The school does however have a duty to safeguard children in its care; if parents/carers do not fulfil this duty of care, this may be viewed as a safeguarding matter, in which case, the school may contact the Children's Advice and Support Services (CASS) for advice.

### **Conclusion**

We hope that by implementing this Debt Policy:

- we are able to ensure parents/carers manage school dinner money effectively;
- we reduce the administration time and costs involved chasing dinner money debts,
- and at the same time ensure that all monies for children's learning is available for that purpose.