

LUNCH MONEY DEBT RECOVERY PROCEDURE

GOVERNOR LEAD: Ms Janine Fox

Next Review Date: November 2020

This policy has been written to help our academy adopt a consistent approach to debt incurred by parents/carers whose children take school lunches. It provides clarity and consistency in managing the debt and will also help parents/carers clearly understand what is expected of them.

The Free School Meal system is there for parents/carers of children of all ages to claim if they are in receipt of certain benefits; information is available from the academy office or Gloucestershire County Council website.

The academy operates a cashless system which can be topped up via a web based Parent Pay service or at a local pay point outlet with a bar code. The academy anticipates that on occasion parents/carers may not pre-pay promptly for school meals and for that reason the following sets out procedures for dealing with debt consistently.

The academy wishes to avoid a situation which allows parents/carers to accrue large amounts of debt for school meals which they then find difficult to clear. The academy policy must balance the need for assuring the continued provision for food for all students with the need for all meals to be paid for. Students who have no money to pay for their meal will be allowed to have a meal that day on the condition that they provide enough funds to cover the debt the next day. Accounts will be monitored so that should this not happen a letter will be sent home to the parent/carer when the threshold of £5.00 worth of debt is reached.

It is very time consuming for the academy's finance staff to continually chase parents/carers for payment – by letter, phone call, text or in person. It is also highly embarrassing for all concerned and occasionally it can have a negative effect on our relationships with our parents/carers.

This policy will be implemented in four stages:

Stage 1

A student reaches the £5.00 debt threshold. If the student is not entitled to Free School Meals a letter will be sent to the parent/carer.

Stage 2

A student's debt is still outstanding after five days. At this stage the parent/carer will be contacted by text to ask them to either transfer the money online or by pay point.

Stage 3

If a parent/carer refuses to comply at this stage a letter will be sent by the Head Teacher and the Attendance & Welfare Officer will get involved to liaise with the parent/carer.

Stage 4

The student will be provided with a packed lunch on that day and will be expected to bring their own the next day. The school will raise an invoice to send to the parent/carer to clear the debt.