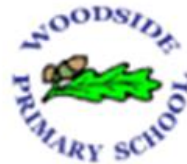




Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL

Steam Mills and Woodside Primary School



Debt Policy

March 2023

STEAM MILLS AND WOODSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

School Debt Policy

Date: March 2023

Review Date: March 2024

Approved by Governors:

Signed: _____ (Chair)

Steam Mills Primary School has adopted a strict **NO DEBT** policy relating to services that the school provides, such as lunches, nursery fees, Breakfast Club and After School Care which all must be paid in **advance** via your ParentPay account. We recommend where possible for parents to keep their child's accounts in credit and monitor them regularly to ensure there is no debt.

Whilst we understand that financial circumstances fluctuate, we are increasingly finding that we are accommodating parents who use these services on credit. If you were using an external provider, such as a restaurant or activity club this would not be an option.

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. Every parent will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents give this policy their full support.

At times we understand that parent's genuinely forget to book and pay in advance for a school meal. In such cases the school may grant a debt allowance of **1 meal** as an emergency. However this debt must be paid immediately.

If parents believe that their children may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals please contact the office for more details. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify. The school will also receive income in the form of Pupil Premium to help with your child's education and this money can also be used to help fund school trips and other activities.

We hope that by implementing this debt policy we are able to help parents manage their school finances better and at the same time ensure that all money that is for children's learning is available for that purpose.

The below protocol will be followed with regard to any outstanding debt on ParentPay, primarily for Nursery Fees, Paid for Clubs, Breakfast Club and After school Club. School Lunches are on the ParentPay, payment on booking system which eliminates that risk of debt.

Level 1

Indicator : A child's account goes into debt for over a week

1. Is this booking/charge correct?
2. Is there a possibility that ParentPay system has not processed payments for some reason?
3. Does this parent normally pay on time, is this just a one off?

Action 1 : Send a 'Gentle debt reminder' Appendix 1

Level 2

Indicator: The item remains unpaid.

1. Is there a possibility that ParentPay system has not processed payments for some reason?
2. Has this parent made contact?

Action 2: Personal contact – the School Business Manager will phone the parent to ask them to either pay online or pay at a Paypoint. A written record is to be kept of the phone call in Appendix 2.

Level 3

Indicator: The parent does not comply with these payment options and debt remains unpaid.

1. Has this parent made contact?

Action 3: send Strong debt letter offering a payment plan– Appendix 3

Level 4

Indicator: The parent consistently does not comply with any of these options.

1. Has this parent made contact?

Action 4: bring in outside agencies – LEA to advise, possibly small claims court and advise Governors

Appendix 1

XXXXXXXXXX School

Parent or carer of

Address 1

Address 2

Address 3

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Our records show that you have not paid **XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX** for your child **XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX**.
As at **00/00/0000** your account is showing a debt of £-????.

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately. Once the debt is cleared please ensure the account is always in credit.

You have 2 ways to pay:

1. In the secure online payment system ParentPay, using the login already provided, go to www.parentpay.com NB THIS IS OUR PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD Your username and password are:
Username: **XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX** Password: **XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX**
2. Paypoint – school can provide the necessary barcode for this.

No matter how you pay you can check the account balance anytime by logging into your ParentPay account at www.parentpay.com.

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

Yours sincerely

School Business Manager

Appendix 2

[illegible]

Appendix 3

XXXXXXXXXX School

Parent or carer of

Address 1

Address 2

Address 3

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Our records show that you have not paid **XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX** for your child **XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX**.
As at **00/00/0000** your account is showing a debt of £-????.

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately. Once the debt is cleared please ensure the account is always in credit.

You have 2 ways to pay:

1. In the secure online payment system ParentPay, using the login already provided, go to www.parentpay.com NB THIS IS OUR PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD Your username and password are:
Username: **XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX** Password: **XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX**
2. Paypoint – school can provide the necessary barcode for this.

No matter how you pay you can check the account balance anytime by logging into your ParentPay account at www.parentpay.com.

Please contact the school office to discuss the implementation of a payment plan where we can agree on a schedule of smaller payments to assist you in clearing the outstanding amount. The school reserves the right to begin legal proceeding to recover the debt if we do not hear from you.

Yours sincerely

Federated Governing Body of Steam Mills Primary and Woodside Primary Schools

