



# Steam Mills Primary School

## **Policy and Procedure: School Debt**

# STEAM MILLS PRIMARY SCHOOL

## School Debt Policy

**Date: Spring 2018**

**Review Date: Spring 2019**

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.

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.

No parent would take their child to McDonalds and expect them to be given food without paying; the same applies at school. 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. We will help you all we can with your application.

Children will not be provided with a school lunch unless it is paid for, except those that are entitled to free school meals. If a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance, the school may grant a debt allowance of 1 meal. However this debt must be paid next day and future meals must be paid in advance before any meal is provided.

If the debt is not cleared for lunches, parents must either provide a packed lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, The Office Manager will phone the parent to ask them to come to school with packed lunch before lunch time. If the debt is not cleared for other services, then unfortunately you will be unable to use these services until the debt is cleared.

If payment of the debt is not received by the next day, the Head teacher reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against parents to recover the debt. Social services may also be informed that these parents are not carrying out the responsibility of care by not providing food for their children at lunchtime.

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

The below protocol will be followed with regard to any outstanding debt for lunches on ParentPay.

### **Level 1**

Indicator : A child's account goes into debt

1. Is this a FSM child, are the dates correct?
2. Is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?
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: A child comes to school again without the debt being paid or a packed lunch.

1. Is this a FSM child, are dates correct?
2. Is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?
3. Has this parent made contact?

**Action 2: Personal contact** – someone will phone the parent to ask them to either pay online, at a pay point or as a last resort bring the money into school. The child will need to bring in a packed lunch until the debt is cleared. A written record is to be kept of the phone call in Appendix 2.

### **Level 3**

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

1. Is this a FSM child, are the dates correct?
2. Is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?
3. Has this parent made contact?

**Action 3: send Strong debt letter** – Appendix 3

### **Level 4**

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

1. Is this a FSM child, are dates correct?
2. Is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?
3. Has this parent made contact?

**Action 4: bring in outside agencies** – LEA to advise, small claims court, social services.

## Appendix 1

Steam Mills Primary School

Parent or carer of

Address 1

Address 2

Address 3

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child **xxxxxxx**. 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 3 ways to pay:

1. In the secure online payment system ParentPay, using the login already provided, go to [www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com) NB THIS IS OUR PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD Your username and password are:  
Username: xxxxxx Password: yyyyyyy
2. Paypoint – pay in instalments
3. Send in money to school in a marked envelope

No matter how you pay you can check the account balance anytime by logging into your ParentPay account at [www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com). You can see what meals have been taken and when.

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

Yours sincerely

Office Manager

## Appendix 2

[illegible]

## Appendix 3

Steam Mills Primary School

Parent or carer of

Address 1

Address 2

Address 3

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child **xxxxxxx**. 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 3 ways to pay:

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Username: xxxxxx Password: yyyyyyy
2. Paypoint – pay in instalments
3. Send in money to school in a marked envelope

No matter how you pay you can check the account balance anytime by logging into your ParentPay account at [www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com). You can see what meals have been taken and when.

Since non-payment for school meals affects the quality of service we offer to the children, we need to ensure that all payments are up-to-date and I am afraid that if the debt is not cleared by the end of this week it will not be possible to provide your child with a school meal. You will need to make your own arrangements for your child's lunch.

The school reserves the right to begin legal proceeding to recover the debt and to inform social services of our concerns that you are not providing a meal for your child at lunch time.

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

Yours sincerely

Governors Body of Steam Mills Primary

## Appendix 4

1<sup>st</sup> late payment letter

**NAME**

I enclose a copy of your invoice/s which is/are overdue for payment.  
The total amount outstanding is £0.00.

If you feel there is a discrepancy on the invoice or you have mislaid your log in details please contact me as soon as possible by telephoning 01594 822567 otherwise I look forward to receiving your payment by return.

Please make payments via ParentPay.

Yours sincerely

Office Manager

**Appendix 5**

2<sup>nd</sup> late payment letter

**NAME**

Overdue Amount £0.00

Despite my previous reminder the above debt is still outstanding and no payment plan has been agreed. Please note that unless some payment is received by date 10 days I will have no alternative but to consider whether the nursery can continue to offer a place to your child(ren).

If this debt remains unpaid it will be passed to our legal department at Shire Hall, Gloucester.

**Please make cheques payable via ParentPay**

Yours sincerely

Governing Body of Steam Mills Primary