



Debt Recovery Policy

Adopted:	June 2020
Next Review Date:	June 2022
Review Frequency:	Every 2 Years
Reviewed by:	Finance and Premises Committee

Brook House Junior School Policy for Debt Recovery

Policy Statement

The Brook House Junior School Debt Recovery Policy has been adopted to ensure there is a consistent and fair approach to debt incurred by parents/carers whose children take school dinners. It provides clarity and consistency in managing the debt and will also help parents clearly understand what is expected of them. As the Local Authority is no longer accountable for the administration of dinner money debt the responsibility now falls on the school to pursue instances of non-payment.

Free School Meals is a system for parents of children of **all** ages to claim if they are in receipt of certain benefits. Free School Meals are a statutory right and it is important that all parents/carers who qualify take up their child's entitlement so that they can receive a school meal each day. Information on the entitlement to free school meals and an application form can be found on the Sheffield City Council Website: <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/education/information-for-parentscarers/at-school/school-meals/free-school-meals>.

Payment for School Meals

The school wishes to avoid a situation which allows parents to accrue large amounts of debt for school meals, which can then be difficult to clear. It is very time consuming for the office staff to continually chase parents for payment by letter and phone call. It is also very embarrassing for all concerned and can occasionally have a negative effect on our relationships with families.

Management of School Meal Debts

If a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance, the school may grant a debt allowance of a **maximum** of 5 meals (£10.00). However, this debt must be cleared and the account topped up as soon as possible. If the debt is not cleared, parents must provide a packed lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, the school office will contact the parent by phone or text and ask them to clear the outstanding balance or provide a packed lunch before lunchtime.

Where a child continues to take unpaid meals, the School may try to establish if the child is entitled to free school meals, or if the parent/carer is experiencing hardship which affects their ability to pay. Under these circumstances the parent/carer should be invited to apply for free school meals.

Monitoring and Recovery of School Meal Debts

The Headteacher may provide Governors with details of any outstanding dinner money debt and the current position with regard to such debt. The aim of the School's dinner money policy is to minimise the opportunity for debt balances to build up. The School may refer any unpaid debts to Sheffield City Council debt collection service and reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to recover outstanding school meal debts and inform the Local Authority that a child is not being provided with a suitable meal at lunch time.

By implementing this debt policy we are aiming to help parents manage school dinner money better and to ensure that money given to the school for educational purposes is spent in the correct way.