



The Wythenshawe Catholic Academy Trust

## DINNER MONEY POLICY

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St Paul's Catholic High School  
St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School  
St Anthony's Catholic Primary School  
SS John Fisher and Thomas More Catholic Primary School

Document Record	
Title	Dinner Money Policy
Date	November 2015
Supersedes	N/A
Purpose	To ensure a fair and consistent approach is taken in dealing with debts or arrears incurred by parents/carers whose children are provided with school dinners.
Author	Wythenshawe Catholic Academy Trust
Review	April 2017
Date considered by WCAT	March 2016
Date adopted by WCAT	14 March 2016
Date distributed	21 March 2016

Schools within the Wythenshawe Catholic Academy Trust:

- St Paul's Catholic High School
- St Anthony's Catholic Primary School
- St John Fisher and St Thomas More Catholic Primary School
- St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School

This policy will be published on the school's website and will be referred to in the school's brochure.

All parents/carers will be provided with a copy of this policy when their child joins the school.

Parents/carers will be reminded annually about this policy by means of the school's newsletter.

Parents of children in primary schools who will be due to join Key Stage 2 will be reminded during the transition period by letter.

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## **1. Introduction**

- i. The Wythenshawe Catholic Academy Trust (referred to hereafter as the Trust) has adopted this policy in order to provide clear information for both schools and parents/carers on the provision of school meals within its schools.
- ii. This policy provides clarity and consistency in the management of income and any arrears that may be incurred by parents. The policy is also designed to help parents/carers clearly understand what is expected of them.
- iii. The Trust is committed to addressing any issues promptly at an early stage in order to prevent arrears amassing. The Trust wishes to avoid a situation which allows parents/carers to accrue large amounts of debt for school meals which they will then find difficult to clear.
- iv. The Trust can only offer Free School Meals (FSM) to children whose parents/carers qualify for free school meal entitlement due to income or eligibility or children entitled to free school meals under the 'Universal Infant Free School Meals Scheme (UIFSM). Every other meal must be paid for.
- v. The Trust 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.
- vi. The Trust aims to avoid the education budget being used to service school meal parental debt.

## **2. Scope of the policy**

- i. This policy applies to all schools within the Trust, currently consisting of St Paul's Catholic High School, St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, St John Fisher and St Thomas More Catholic Primary School and St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School.
- ii. This policy applies to parents, carers and guardians of children attending schools within the Trust.

## **3. Provision of School Meals**

- i. School meals are available to all children currently 2015/16 at a cost of £2.20 per day or £11.00 per week, rising to £2.23 and £11.15, respectively in September 2017. Any revision to the school meal prices will be notified to parents/carers the term prior to the new changes taking effect.
- ii. Children in nursery classes and other year groups will not be charged for school meals if they are in receipt of Free School Meals entitlement (FSM).

- iii. Children in Key Stage 1 will not be charged for school meals if they are entitled to free school meals under the 'Universal Infant Free School Meals Scheme (UIFSM).
- iv. Parents/carers who do not want their child to have a school meal should provide a healthy packed lunch or arrange to take their child home for lunch.
- v. The school office must be given two weeks notification of any changes in meal arrangements. Children are required to keep to either school meals or a packed lunch for half a term.

#### **4. Universal Infant Free School Meals**

- i. From September 2014 the Children and Families Act 2014 introduced a Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme (UIFSM) for all children in Key Stage 1 (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2). This means that regardless of income or eligibility, children in those year groups will be entitled to have a free school meal made available to them.
- ii. If a child is in an infant class, parents and carers will still need to claim for free school meals if they qualify so that their child is counted for extra money for their school (the pupil premium). This means that the school also benefits for extra funding which is used to raise attainment of children and enables the school to provide many additional support mechanisms such as learning mentors and intervention and booster classes.
- iii. Children who qualify for free school meals could also be entitled to a substantial reduction in the cost of some residential visits and activities such as music tuition.

#### **5. Free School Meals**

- i. 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.
- ii. Families not affected by the universal infant free school meal scheme may be entitled to free school meals for their children if the parents/carers are in receipt of certain benefits:
  - Income support
  - Income based job seekers allowance
  - Income related employment and support allowance
  - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
  - The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
  - Child Tax Credit (provided you are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190). This income will apply until April 2016
  - Working Tax Credit run-on paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
  - Universal Credit

- iii. To apply for free school meals parents/carers who live in the City of Manchester (the area covered by Manchester City Council) whose child attends one of the schools in the Trust should contact Manchester City Council. Parents/carers who live outside the City of Manchester need to contact their local council.
- iv. Application forms to apply for free school meals are available from the school office. Please be aware that all applications for free school meals are treated with the strictest confidence.

#### **6. Payment for School Meals**

- i. School meals must be paid for in advance.
- ii. Parents/carers are expected to pay on Monday morning each week or may pay for longer periods up to a term in advance if more convenient.
- iii. Parents/carers may pay by cash in a labelled envelope (provided by the school upon request).
- iv. On line payments via SIMS Agora
- v. If children are absent, their dinner money will be credited for the following week.
- vi. Refunds may only be given, for credits at the end of a term, or if a child is leaving their school to attend another.
- vii. If a child forgets their packed lunch and is given a school meal, parents/carers must pay for that meal the following morning (excluding children who are in receipt of FSM or UIFSM).

#### **7. Policy for collection of outstanding money**

- i. As from January 2016 the Trust has adopted a strict 'no debt' policy relating to school meal arrears.
- ii. Each school within the Trust is ultimately responsible for the recovery of dinner money arrears or debts and pursue instances of non-payment through the appropriate means.
- iii. In cases where a payment is not received a note//call reminder will be sent to the parent/carer detailing how much is owed and requesting payment directly to the school within seven days.
- iv. If a child continues to have a school meal which has not been paid for, a letter will be sent to the parent/carer advising they must provide either a packed lunch or take the child home at lunchtime. The school will establish whether the child is entitled to free school meals, or if the parent/carer is experiencing hardship which affects their ability to pay. Under the circumstances the parent/carer may be invited to apply for free school meals or speak to the Headteacher in confidence.
- v. If a reasonable arrangement to clear a debt cannot be made, the school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to secure payment. If the parent/carer does not comply with any of the above

options then the Headteacher will be required to send a final letter advising of the need to bring legal proceedings to recover the debt.

- vi. In certain circumstances or in cases where the school has serious concerns, the Local Authority may be informed that parents/carers are not carrying out their responsibility of care by not providing food for their child at lunchtime.