

# Thurlaston CE (Aided) Primary School



## Dinner Money Payment and Balances

December 2015

Signed .....

## **Dinner Money Payment and Balances**

The purpose of this policy is to protect the school monies and also to help parents manage the payment for school meals.

School Meals are provided by Leicestershire School Food Services. School collects the money on behalf of the service but receives no financial benefit from operating the service. The service may vary the menu at any time and school cannot be held responsible for changes to the menu. The service should inform parents of changes to the menu when possible. If children do not receive the exact meal expected payment will still be needed for the meal actually received.

All meals must be paid for and are either paid by the school in the case of Free School Meals and Universal Free School Meals or by parents. Any uncollected money from parents must be paid for out of the normal school budget and therefore procedures are put in place to prevent this happening.

Normally all meals should be paid for in advance and payment should be made at the beginning of each week on Mondays so that the money can be safely banked. Some parents choose to pay for ½ term or a whole term in advance. The vast majority of our parents pay for meals in advance.

Very occasionally a child may present at school without a packed lunch and school will endeavour to contact parents. Should parents not be available to provide a meal for the child, school will provide a meal and seek payment afterwards.

A very small number of parents fail to pay for meals and expect the children to be given meals. The following paragraphs detail the processes we will follow in these cases.

Should payment not be made this will be requested. Should a family accrue a negative balance of £30 a formal letter will be sent requesting payment. Prompt payment will be encouraged. The parents will also be informed of how to apply for Free School Meals at this point. Should a negative balance of £50 be reached, school will not be able to provide meals without payment for them in advance and will also need to request urgently that payment of the debt be made. Should payment not be forthcoming within 1 calendar month the LA will be requested to seek payment on behalf of the school through its legal department.

Accruing a large Dinner Money debt can put a family in more financial difficulty and therefore will not be allowed to happen. Should a family have received a letter regarding a debt of £50 or more, meals will not be supplied in the future without payment in advance.

At the end of each week any balance is carried forward to the next week. At the end of a term positive balances are carried forward to the next term. When

a child leaves school all positive balances are returned to the parents as soon as possible.

This is a standard letter

Date

Dear Name,

We have noticed that school dinners have been taken by your child/children and have not been paid for. You now owe the school £30 or more for meals and payment is requested immediately.

Should you be having difficulty in paying for the meals you may be entitled to Free School Meals. These cannot be back dated and are processed by School Food Services. Please find details of eligibility criteria and contact details enclosed. If you feel you could be entitled we recommend that you apply as soon as possible.

Your outstanding balance is ..... Please make payment by cash or cheque made payable to Leicestershire County Council ASAP.

Yours sincerely,

Gavin Beetham

This is a standard letter

Date

Dear Name,

We have noticed that school dinners have been taken by your child/children and have not been paid for. You now owe the school £50 or more for meals and payment is requested immediately.

We have already written to you when the outstanding amount was £30. You may not be aware that school will need to pay any debt should we not collect this money and that will have a detrimental effect on the education of the children in school.

Should you be having difficulty in paying for the meals you may be entitled to Free School Meals. These cannot be back dated and are processed by School Food Services. Please find details of eligibility criteria and contact details enclosed. If you feel you could be entitled we recommend that you apply as soon as possible.

Your outstanding balance is ..... Please make payment by cash or cheque made payable to Leicestershire County Council ASAP.

Unfortunately we cannot let your debt increase and your child/children will not be able to take any more meals unless payment is made in advance. The balance will also need paying as soon as possible and we can agree a schedule of payments to ease the financial burden.

If this is the second time that this level of debt has been reached we need to insist that payment in advance will always be required and meals will not be provided without prior payment.

Yours sincerely,

Gavin Beetham