

Wilburton CE Primary School

Dinner Money and School Fees Debt Policy

Written: May 2019
Last Reviewed: June 2025
Next Review: June 2026

1.0 Introduction

The responsibility of ensuring school meal payments, and fees payable for non-funded pre-school hours and additional provision (e.g. paid-for musical instrument lessons and trips outside the normal school curriculum) are made by parents lies with the school and the school is liable for any debts outstanding. Therefore, a policy is required to ensure debts are kept to a minimum. In writing this policy, the Governors of Wilburton CE Primary School wish to implement one that ensures meals and provision are paid for, whilst being sympathetic to Parents/Carers during financial difficulties and ensuring children still receive a meal at lunchtime and are not excluded from enrichment and activities.

2.0 Procedures

Meals:

School meals should be paid for within one week of meals being taken. All meals for the period being paid for must be paid via the school's chosen online payment system, or cash/cheque at the school office.

Meals can be paid for on a weekly, half termly or termly basis. If parents choose to pay either half termly or termly and a debt arises at the end of the period it will be the parent's responsibility to work with the school office to locate where the error occurs.

When a child is leaving the school office shall check the balance of the child's account and make good attempts to refund any credit balances and obtain any debt outstanding.

If you think that your child may be eligible to receive free school meals, please refer to the following website www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals.

Musical Instrument Lessons:

Invoices for paid-for music lessons are sent termly, but once signed up, parents are responsible for paying for the full year, even if their child stops lessons part of the way through. Payments must be made within 4 weeks of the start of the term. If payment is not made, then the school will meet with the parent and the pupils' lessons may be paused or stopped, if no agreement on payment can be made and enacted.

School Trips

The vast majority of school trips are part of the curriculum, and as such, parents are asked for a voluntary contribution to cover the costs. Occasionally, there may be a trip which is offered as an 'extra', i.e. an additional event but not directly tied to the curriculum. For these trips we will ask parents to pay an amount to offset the cost to the school. Where payment is not given, we may offer a reduced or staged payment arrangement. However, if no payment is received at all, and no exceptional circumstances apply, then the child will not be able to attend the trip.

Pre-School Costs

If your child attends additional hours at pre-school that are not funded, you will be invoiced each term for the amount owed. If payment is not received by the end of the term, the additional hours cannot be continued into the following term.

3.0 Debt procedures

If payment(s) are not made, then the following process will be followed:

Step 1: The School Office will send an email to the parents/carers (see Appendix A), when the debt has exceeded £10. This email provides details of the debt, and reminds parents to pay promptly. If there is no response, the parent will receive another reminder email a week later.

Step 2: If the debt has not been cleared after a further week, the Office will send a letter from the Headteacher to request payment (see Appendix B), outlining the consequences of not paying (see Section 2).

Step 3: If payment is not made or a satisfactory solution is not agreed, the debt will be referred to the governing body, who will make a decision on how to deal with this debt, including but not limited to a claim in the Small Claims Court.

We acknowledge that on occasion, families have financial difficulties and in these proven circumstances, the school will work hard with the family to agree a solution which is not to the detriment of the child. In the event of a child leaving Wilburton CE Primary School with an outstanding debt, the Governing Body will need to consider pursuing payment by other means, including but not limited to making a claim in the Small Claims Court.

