

# Park Primary School

## Debt Policy

Reviewed	Approved by	Approval date	Review cycle	Next review
March 2025	FGB	19.03.2025	Every 2 years	March 2027

### Introduction

This policy concerns the collection of school meals and wrap around care money and the approach to be taken in the cases of debts arising when parents/carers fail to pay for school meals and before/after school child care.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on all pupils' education in school is used to pay for debts incurred by individual parents and carers.

The governing body see this as unacceptable and request that all parents and carers give this policy their full support.

A copy of this policy is on the school website or a paper copy can be obtained via the school office.

### Wrap Around Care (Breakfast and After School Club)

Places for breakfast club and after school club should be booked by parents/carers in advance, up until the day before, using their Arbor accounts.

Accounts need to be in credit in order for a booking to be made.

Same day bookings for after school club can be made via the school office if there are spaces available and payment should be made within 24 hours. The school reserves the right to refuse to book a place if there are existing arrears.

If you are unable to book a place on either club, this would mean the club is full and there are no spaces available.

### School Meals

Children in Years R, 1 and 2 are entitled to a free school meal under the Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) scheme.

Children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 must pay for meals unless they are registered as being entitled to Free School Meals (see below).

School meals should be paid for in advance via parents and carers Arbor accounts.

If a pupil is to have meals for the duration of the week payment should be made before the start of that week or in exceptional circumstances if the pupil is having an occasional meal, payment must be received on the day of the meal.

### Free School Meals

If parents and carers believe that their child(children) may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals (FSM) they should make an online enquiry at [Free school meals | Education and learning | Hampshire County Council](#).

The school is only able to provide free school meals to pupils where this is officially approved and informed in writing by the Local Authority using the online checker in the link above.

Any meals taken before eligibility for FSM is confirmed, will need to be paid for by parents and carers.

#### Procedure for Collection of Arrears

It is accepted that on occasion small arrears may arise, however, arrears cannot be allowed to accumulate.

The governing body has therefore agreed the following policy where arrears arise:

- 1) Text or in-app message – end of each week  
Messages sent weekly updating parents about any outstanding balances so that these can be paid.
- 2) Reminder letter 1 – after 1 week  
If the balance is not settled after 1 week – a reminder letter will be sent via email and a paper copy sent home with the child.  
Parents will be informed of their balance and advised to make immediate payment.
- 3) Reminder letter 2 – after 2 weeks  
If balance is not settled after 2 weeks – a reminder letter will be sent via email and a paper copy sent home with the child.
- 4) Final warning – after 3 weeks Final warnings will be sent via email and a paper copy sent home with the child.
- 5) Parents informed of school meals and wrap around care stoppage and referral to school governors if not paid within one week of final warning

If a conclusion cannot be made, the debt may be passed onto the debt recovery team at Hampshire County Council where legal proceeding may begin.

#### Discontinue of School Meals

School meals will be discontinued for students if their outstanding debt is not settled within one week of receiving the final warning, or if the balance exceeds £20.00. In such cases, parents and guardians will be required to provide a packed lunch for their child until the debt is cleared.

#### Financial difficulties

The school encourages families to address any financial concerns promptly to avoid disruption to students' meal provision and ensure they continue to receive nutritious meals during the school day.

Parents should make the school aware via the school office to arrange a meeting to discuss support and to set up a payment plan.