



WALTON ON THE NAZE PRIMARY SCHOOL

BAD DEBTS POLICY

Choose your dream and chase it!

Review date	Spring 2020
Approved date	Spring 2019
Responsible committee	Finance Committee

Bad Debt Policy

As from 1st April 2019, Walton on the Naze Primary School has adopted a clear NO DEBT policy relating to school meal services and Extended Services (Breakfast/After School Clubs).

The school meals and Breakfast Club service is no different to any other business and meals have to be paid for. Parents/carers should be able to relate to the situation that they cannot take their child to a restaurant e.g. McDonald's and expect a meal without paying; the same applies at school.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for debts incurred. We request that all parents/carers and staff give this policy their full support.

The Free School Meal (FSM) system is available for parents who are in receipt of certain state benefits. If a parent thinks they may qualify for FSM entitlement, they should contact the school office for further details or contact the Essex School Meals Services via their website:

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/Pupil-Parent-Support/Pages/Healthy-Living-School-Meals.aspx>

This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that parents use it if they qualify. Their child will then have a right to a meal each day.

It is very time consuming for the office staff to continually chase for dinner money - by text, letter, phone call or in person. It is also highly embarrassing for all concerned and occasionally it can have a negative effect on our relationships with staff and families.

The Governing Board of Walton on the Naze Primary School believes that a 'zero-tolerance' approach is the fairest system. We understand that it may seem a very hard stance as there has been a culture of debt tolerance. However, going forward, we are sure that all parents/carers and staff will support the school and ensure all the school budget is spent for the benefit of all our pupils.

We will ensure that parents are aware of this policy by:

- A letter to parents (appendix 1)
- Reminders in our newsletter
- The school website
- A copy of the policy in our induction pack when staff/children join the school

Payment for School Meals

Parents/carers and staff must pay in advance or on the day for school dinner by sending in cash or cheque (made payable to Walton on the Naze Primary School) in a marked envelope.

Payment for Breakfast Club must be made during the first week back after a half term.

No-one will be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, except students that are entitled to free school meals. If a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance or on the day, the school may grant a debt allowance of one meal. However this debt must be paid by the following morning and future meals must be paid in advance before any further meal is provided.

If a debt is not cleared, parents/carers must provide a packed lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, the School Office will phone the parent/carer to ask them to come to school with the money before dinnertime, a packed lunch or asked to take them home to give them their dinner.

If Payment Has Not Been Made - If a child or a member of staff has taken a meal which has not been paid for, the parents/carers or the member of staff will be sent a reminder text detailing how much is owed. If no payment is received, a letter will be sent (Appendix 2).

If payment is still not received a further letter will be sent detailing the consequences of non-payment and a final date by which payment must be made (Appendix 3).

The school will work closely with parents/carers and staff in working out a form of payment plan to help resolve the situation.

Payment for Breakfast Club Parents will be sent a text during the first week back informing them of the amount they need to pay for the half term. Payment must be made within one week of the text being sent out and can be paid in cash or cheque, in a marked sealed envelope. Refunds cannot be issued if a child is ill or does not attend on a day they are due to attend breakfast club, as staffing arrangements will have been made in advance and costs will still be incurred. Your place will only be secure provided you continue to make payments in advance for each half term. Failure to pay for the place (including cheque payments returned as unpaid) will result in your child's place being forfeited. You must give a full week's written notice if you no longer require the service. The fee includes the cost of food; however there is no discount for those children who choose not to have breakfast.

Consequences of Non Payment for School Dinners

If payment of the debt is not received, the Headteacher reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to recover the debt. Social Care may also be informed that these parents/carers are not carrying out the responsibility of care by not providing food for their child at dinnertimes. It is **not** the responsibility of the school to provide dinner for pupils. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to provide a meal, either a school dinner or a packed lunch.

Conclusion

We hope that by implementing this debt policy we are able to help parents/carers and staff manage their school debts effectively, reduce administration time and costs involved chasing dinner money debts and at the same time ensure that school budgets are used correctly for the education of its pupils.