



# WILLIAM LEVICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

## SCHOOL MEALS DEBT RECOVERY POLICY

### Policy Statement

The William Levick Primary School Debt Recovery Policy has been adopted to ensure a consistent and fair approach to debt incurred by parents/carers whose children take school dinners. The Governors have decided to adopt a 'zero tolerance' approach.

Parents who meet certain criteria may qualify for Free School Meals. 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. Information on the entitlement to free school meals can be obtained by contacting the school office.

If a child's entitlement to free school meals expires or the parents/carers personal circumstances change the parent/carer must provide a packed lunch or send payment in advance for a school dinner.

### Payment for School Meals

Payment for school meals must be made in advance. Children are requested to keep to the specified number of days for which payment has been made. Payment can be made using our online payment system, ParentPay, or by using a Paypoint card. When parents/carers log onto ParentPay they can easily see the balance of their account. The school office will no longer accept payments by cash or cheque unless prior permission has been sought by the headteacher. Parentpay provides a facility which you can subscribe to which will remind you if your balance becomes low. We encourage you to use this facility.

### Management of School Meal Debts

If a child arrives at school without a packed lunch or payment, or if a child's entitlement to free school dinners has ceased, the school will contact the parent/carer in the first instance to establish if alternative arrangements have been made.

If a child takes a school meal which has not been paid for, a note detailing how much is owed will be sent to the parent/carer requesting immediate payment. **In these circumstances only** we will accept a cash payment in a named envelope.

Where a child continues to take unpaid meals, the school may try to establish if the child is entitled to free school meals, or if the parent/carer is experiencing hardship which affects their ability to pay. Under these circumstances the parent/carer should be invited to apply for free school meals or speak confidentially to the headteacher.

If any debt exceeds £20, and/or action proves unsuccessful in securing dinner money arrears, the School will inform our Safeguarding Team and formally write to the parent/carer, explaining that the School is not obliged to provide a school dinner where advance payment is not forthcoming or where authorisation for free school dinners has not been received.

**Monitoring and Recovery of School Meal Debts**

The Head Teacher may provide Governors with details of any outstanding dinner money debt and the current position with regard to such debt. The aim of the school's dinner money policy is to minimise the opportunity for debt balances to build up and incurring costly referral to outside professionals. The School may refer any unpaid debts to Derbyshire County Council and reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to recover outstanding school meal debts as well as inform the local authority that a child is not being provided with a suitable meal at lunch time.

This policy has been agreed and adopted by the governing body:

Date: July 2017

Headteacher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Governor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: July 2021