



# School Meals Debt Policy

**Policy Owner:** Senior Leadership Team

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**Authorised:** R. Ewers

Chair of Governors

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Keep Hatch Primary School has adopted a strict “No Debt” policy relating to the school meal service. For the purpose of this policy and for readability we use the term parent to mean parent or guardian

If debts are incurred, unfortunately 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. Every parent will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents give this policy their full support.

If parents believe that their children may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals, please contact the school office on 0118 978 4859 for more details. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify. The school will help in every way with your application should this be required.

Free meal entitlement will only apply from the date the school receives the evidence and cannot be backdated.

Children will not be able to be provided with a school lunch unless it is paid for, except those that are entitled to free school meals. If a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance, the school may grant a debt allowance of up to one week’s worth of school meals; however, this debt must then be paid within the discretionary period, and future meals must be paid in advanced before any further meal is provided.

If a debt is not cleared, parents must provide a packed lunch. This will apply to debts that exist at the time this policy comes into force as well as to any new debts. In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, the school will phone the parent to ask them to come to school with the money or ask them to pay online, alternatively, the child(ren) will need to be taken home for the lunch hour.

If payment of the debt is not received within the agree timescale, the Headteacher reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against parents to recover the debt. Social services may also be informed that these parents are not carrying out the responsibility of care by not providing food for their children at lunchtime.

We hope that by implementing this debt policy we are able to help parents manage school dinner money better and at the same time ensure that all money that is for children’s learning is available.

**Process the school will be required to follow if debts are not cleared:**

1. If debts are not cleared, parents will receive a gentle reminder letter (See Appendix 1).
2. If the child(ren) continue to come to school without the debt being paid, someone will phone the parent to ask them to either bring money or pay online or bring sandwiches to school before lunchtime or arrange to take their child home at lunchtime.
3. If the parent does not comply with any of these options, they will received a final letter from the Headteacher (See Appendix 2)
4. If the parent consistently does not comply with any of these options, school will notify School Food Support who will initiate further action



## Appendix 1

Keep Hatch Primary School  
Ashridge Road  
Wokingham  
RG40 1PG

Dear Parent or Carer of XXX,

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child **XXX** Class: **XXX**

As at **01/01/2010** your account is showing a debt of **£-6.15**

The school ask you to arrange for this money to be paid into the online ParentPay account as soon as possible. Once the debt is cleared please ensure the account is always in credit.

You can check the account balance anytime by logging into your ParentPay account at [www.scopay.com](http://www.scopay.com). You can see how much money for meals have been taken and when.

The cost of a school meal is **£2.10** per day.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office. We thank you for your cooperation on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mrs C Appleby  
Headteacher



## Appendix 2

Keep Hatch Primary School  
Ashridge Road  
Wokingham  
RG40 1PG

Dear Parent or Carer of XXX,

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child **XXXX**, Class: **XXXX** despite a previous written reminder and a telephone call.

As at **01/01/2010** your account is showing a debt of **£-4.15** Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately.

You have 2 ways to pay:

1. In the secure online payment system ParentPay, using the login already provided, go to [www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com)  
NB THIS IS OUR PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD
2. Send in money to school in a marked envelope

No matter how you pay you can check the account balance anytime by logging into your ParentPau account at [www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com). You can see what meals have been taken and when. The cost of a school meal is **£2.10** per day - **£10.50** per week.

Since non-payment for school meals affects the quality of service we offer to the children, we need to ensure that all payments are up-to-date and I am afraid that if the debt is not cleared by the end of this week, it will not be possible to provide your child with a school meal. School would need to ask you to make your own arrangements for your child's lunch.

The Headteacher reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against parents to recover the debt. Social services may also be informed that these parents are not carrying out the responsibility of care by not providing food for their children at lunchtime.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office. We thank you for your cooperation on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mrs C Appleby  
Headteacher