



Fingringhoe Church of England Voluntary Aided
Primary School

Debt Recovery Policy

Approved by Governors: 12th December 2023

Due for Review: December 2024

Debt Recovery Policy

The Governing Body has resolved to ensure that all children receive a meal at lunch time and have access to wraparound care whilst recognising that the school budget should not be used to pay for debts incurred by individual parents/carers.

Introduction

This policy relates to the collection of School Meal, Breakfast Club and After School Club (BAA) monies and the approach to be taken in the case of debts arising when parents/carers fail to pay. A copy of this policy is available on the school website.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for this. As a result, money which should be spent on all pupils' education in school is used to pay for debts incurred by individual parents/carers. The governing body see this as unacceptable and request that all parents/carers give this policy their full support.

General Principle

Ideally, school meals, Breakfast Club and BAA Club should be paid for in advance.

- School meals are available to pupils at the cost of £2.20 per meal, or at no cost for those in receipt of Free School Meals or are in Willow and Beech Classes and receive Universal Infant Free School Meals.
- Breakfast Club is available to all pupils at a cost of £5 per session.
- BAA Club is available to all pupils at the cost of £6 for the first session, £3 for the second session or £9 for the whole session from end of school until 5pm.

Payment for all should be made via ParentPay, the school's electronic payment system.

Parents will be advised of accruing debts as advised in this policy. If arrears are not paid, school lunches or wraparound sessions could be restricted.

Free School Meal Entitlement

If parent/guardians believe that their child(ren) may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals, they should contact the school office and complete the relevant form. As this allowance is a statutory right for qualifying pupils, it is important that parents/guardians make use of it. The school is only allowed to provide free school meals to pupils where this is officially approved and entitlement has been verified.

Procedure for Collection of Arrears

At Fingringhoe Primary School we do not insist that meals or wraparound care is paid for in advance. However, arrears cannot be allowed to accumulate. The Governing Body has therefore agreed the following policy where arrears arise.

1. Acceptable arrears are as follows, but it is requested that at the end of each week, these arrears are paid :
 - a. School Meals £11.00
 - b. Breakfast Club £20.00
 - c. BAA Club £42.00
2. An outstanding arrears message will be sent via email from the ParentPay system on a Friday to parents reaching the above limits.
3. Parent/carers will be informed in writing where the school meal arrears reach double the acceptable limit mentioned above and advised to make immediate payment (Appendix 1). Parents/carers will be informed in writing where arrears reach £30 for Breakfast Club and £50 for BAA Club and sessions will be cancelled until the debt is cleared (Appendix 2).
4. A final letter to parent/carers informing them that no school meal will be provided for their child(ren) if arrears reach the level of 3 times the above amount (Appendix 3).

Any parent/guardian experiencing financial difficulty may request additional time to pay the arrears by writing to the Finance Manager and this will be considered confidentially on an individual basis.

APPENDIX 1

Date

Gentle Reminder Letter
Child's Name

Dear

According to our records, as at today's date, there are outstanding arrears on your child's School Dinner account as follows:

School Dinner Account £X in arrears

Please can you log onto your ParentPay account and clear these arrears immediately.

If you have any queries regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards

Trudy Youngs
Finance Manager

APPENDIX 2

Date

Accumulated Unpaid Arrears
Child's Name

Dear

Following our email dated regarding your outstanding arrears, our records show that this has not been paid.

To date, the amount of arrears is £X for Breakfast Club/£X for BAA Club. Due to the level of debt we are unable to offer(child's name) a place in BAA/Breakfast Club until this is cleared. If you wish to discuss the situation, please telephone the school office to arrange an appointment.

Any parent/guardian experiencing financial difficulty may request additional time to pay the arrears by writing to the Finance Manager and this will be considered confidentially on an individual basis. A payment plan may be drawn up at this time that you are expected to adhere to.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Ms D. Parker & Mrs H. Coyle
Headteachers

APPENDIX 3

Date

Accumulated Unpaid Arrears
Child's Name

Dear

Following our email dated and our letter dated regarding your outstanding arrears, our records show that this has not been paid.

To date, the amount of arrears is £X for School Dinners. We now request that you either clear these arrears immediately, or that you attend a meeting to discuss the situation with the Finance Manager and the Headteacher. Please telephone the school office to arrange an appointment.

Until the debt is cleared, you must provide a packed lunch for your child(ren). In the case when payment is not received, nor a packed lunch provided, we will phone to ask you to either make payment immediately on ParentPay, or to come to the school with a packed lunch before midday.

Any parent/guardian experiencing financial difficulty may request additional time to pay the arrears by writing to the Finance Manager and this will be considered confidentially on an individual basis. A payment plan may be drawn up at this time that you are expected to adhere to.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Ms D. Parker & Mrs H. Coyle
Headteachers