

KINGS OAK PRIMARY LEARNING CENTRE

Debt Policy

Rationale

This policy has been compiled recognising the difficulties placed on school in balancing the social welfare of pupils with the responsibility of managing the School Budget.

Kings Oak Primary Learning Centre has adopted a strict NO DEBT policy relating to school meals and breakfast club. Money owed affects the school's overall budget and must be settled promptly.

Free School Meals

A child's entitlement to Free School Meals (FSM) is determined by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. Parents are informed of the decision to grant FSM by BMBC and when the entitlement is due for renewal, they contact parents directly. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that they apply for renewal of entitlement. BMBC *will not* backdate FSM payments and any debt incurred by late application for FSM renewal.

Debt recovery

Payment for school meals

- All school meals need to be paid for in advance.
- When a pupil has failed to produce dinner money the school may allow a meal to be provided where it is felt that this is an emergency situation, e.g. money lost on the way to school, minor domestic problem, etc. Details of this are recorded and a record is maintained. The parents will be contacted.
- Where a pupil continues to require meals and no payment is made, a phone call, text or letter will be sent informing parents that they must either clear the outstanding debt or provide a packed lunch for the child.
- If parents fail to provide either payment or a suitable meal, a referral can be made to Children's Services on the grounds of neglect.
- When a parent genuinely forgets to pay dinner money the school may grant a debt allowance of 1 meal. The school will contact the parents advising them of the situation and the amount outstanding. This debt must be cleared the next day and future meals must be paid for in advance before any meal is provided.
- If after letters have been sent home, the debt is still outstanding and a packed lunch is not provided, parents will be phoned to come to school with either the money, a packed lunch, or to take the child home for lunch.
- If the outstanding debt remains unpaid, the Governing Body will take Debt Recovery Action.
- Children's Services may be informed that parents are not carrying out their legal responsibility of duty of care by not providing food for their child at lunchtime.

Payment for breakfast club

- The cost of breakfast club needs to be paid in advance.
- When a parent genuinely forgets to pay for breakfast club the school will grant a debt allowance of 1 day.
- Any debt must be paid the following day or the child will not be allowed to use the breakfast club until the debt has been paid.

Costs of debt recovery

Where the school incurs material additional costs in recovering a debt then the Finance & Personnel Committee will decide whether to seek to recover such costs from the debtor. This decision and its basis will be recorded.

The debtor will be formally advised that they will be required to pay the additional costs incurred by the school in recovering the debt.

Reporting of outstanding debt levels

The Finance & Personnel Committee will review the level of outstanding debts every term to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debts is effective.

October 2018

Reviewed:

Next Review Date: October 2019