

School Meal Debt Policy
St Mary's Catholic Primary School



Reviewed: April 2026

Love, Listen and Learn

Mission Statement

St. Mary's school community follows the teachings of Jesus Christ, working together to develop the whole child, in a spiritual, moral, academic, physical, social and emotional way, within a caring and supportive environment.

Ethos

We recognise that there is a challenge in creating an enriching environment for all those involved at every level of school life. We take our lead and inspiration from Christ with regard to the Gospel values: the belief that all human beings are uniquely created and loved by God and worthy of respect. This challenge manifests itself in the way that we treat and value:

- Our relationships with each other and the wider community
- Our respect for one another
- Our welcome to and interest in all those who visit our school
- Discipline inspired by forgiveness, healing and reconciliation
- Our school environment

Through rising to this challenge, we aim to create an awareness of a sense of belonging to and being part of the life of St Mary's.

The Aims of our School

We will endeavour to create a Catholic Ethos in our school, which reflects the Gospel values, through the love, care and respect we show to each other, and to all who come to our school. We will teach the beliefs, traditions and practices of the Catholic Faith.

Through the prayer and worship in school we will try to be a living community of people celebrating their love for God and one another.

We believe the quality of the curriculum, with Religious Education at its core, is of prime importance and will focus on the development of the whole child. We will at all times try to make provision for children with special needs, so that all members of our school community achieve their potential.

We will help the children to develop an awareness of and respect for other religious and cultural backgrounds, as we believe this to be an essential preparation for adult life.

We believe that good communication between governors, staff, parents and children is important for the wellbeing of our school, and we will work in partnership with the wider community especially the home and parish in developing each child's potential.

The Aims for Each Child at St Mary's Catholic Primary School

- ◆ Whilst at St. Mary's School I will learn about being a Christian. I will experience the beliefs, traditions and practices of the Catholic Faith.
- ◆ I will achieve as much as I possibly can in each area of the National Curriculum.
- ◆ I will know how to learn and enjoy learning, and will view work in a positive and conscientious manner.
- ◆ I will co-operate and communicate with others effectively, independently and in a group, and try to win and lose graciously.
- ◆ I will tolerate and respect the religious beliefs, views and values of others, understand the need for good behaviour and moderate my behaviour accordingly. I will respect the belongings and property of others.
- ◆ If I have a problem I know I can find someone who will discuss it with me.
- ◆ I will try to learn from my mistakes and accept there is always room for improvement.
- ◆ I will share a sense of responsibility for my school, parish, local community and the wider environment.

SCHOOL MEAL DEBT POLICY FOR PARENTS

Please note that all primary pupils are currently not required to pay for their school meal.

As from May 2013 St. Mary's School has adopted a strict NO DEBT policy relating to the provision of school meals. This will in effect mean all money for school meals will be paid in advance, before the meal is taken. This is a standard policy which is used across schools.

If debts are incurred, then the School is liable for this debt and will mean money which should be spent on your child(ren)'s education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents. Every parent will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents give this policy their full support.

Parent/s must pay for school meals using the payment methods outlined below:

- Credit/Debit Cards Online using ParentPay
- Pay Point Cards (Ask in the office about Paypoint payments)

If parents believe that their children may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals then please contact the office for further information. The allowance for Free School Meals is a statutory entitlement and should be claimed if your child qualifies. In order to qualify, you will be required to complete an application form and provide any evidence which may be requested. Free school meal entitlement will only apply from the date the evidence has been received and the application has been approved. It cannot be backdated. The School will support parents with the application process.

Children will not be provided with a school lunch unless it is paid for before the meal is taken or the child is entitled to a free school meal.

If there is insufficient credit on a child's account and a packed lunch has not been provided, the School will contact the parent to ask them what arrangements they have made to provide their child with food. We appreciate a parent may genuinely forget to pay in advance or a packed lunch box maybe forgotten, in these circumstances the schools may grant a debt allowance of one meal.

If payment is not received and the account is £10 in debt, you will be contacted by the school office and given 2 days in which to pay off the debt and credit the account for school meals. If this doesn't happen the school will not provide your child with a dinner and it is the parent's/carer's responsibility to provide a packed lunch until the issue has been resolved. The school reserves the right to begin debt management proceedings against parents to recover

the debt as outlined in the schools Debt Recovery Policy. If you require further information regarding the School Meals Debt Policy please ask at the office.

As part of the school's duty of care, the LA Children's Services may also be informed that the parents are not carrying out the responsibility of care by not providing food for their children at lunchtime.

We appreciate your cooperation and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the School Office.