



# St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

## School Meal Debt Policy

Reviewed: April 2025

Review by: Resources Committee

*Next date of review: April 2026*



## ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

### 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.