



Debt Recovery Procedure

Policy lead:	Head teacher
Link Governor:	Chair of governors
Date of last review:	November 2018
Date for next review:	November 2020

Widewell Debt Recovery Procedure has been written to help our school adopt a consistent approach to debt incurred by parents whose children take any of the following:

- School Meals
The Free School Meals system is there for parents of children of all ages to claim if they are in receipt of certain benefits; information is available from the school office or Plymouth City Council's website. All pupils in the Foundation Class and Key Stage 1 are entitled to receive Universal Infant Free School Meals. Therefore, this policy only relates to pupils in Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6) whose parents pay for school meals.
- Nursery – chargeable sessions
- School Trips/Residential
- Music Lessons
- Breakfast and/or After School Care Club

The policy provides clarity and consistency in managing the debt and will also help parents clearly understand what is expected of them.

Widewell Primary Academy wishes to avoid a situation which allows parents to accrue large amounts of debt for any of the above which they then find difficult to clear. School is no different than any other business and as such must be paid for in advance. It is very time consuming for the office staff to continually chase parents for payment – by letter, phone call or in person. It is also highly embarrassing for all concerned and occasionally it can have a negative effect on relationships with families. Therefore the Local Governing Board feel that a system that works best is a 'zero tolerance' approach.

This system will become easy to maintain once parents realise schools can only offer free meals to children whose parents qualify for Pupil Premium or UIFSM entitlement. Every other meal or chargeable provision must be paid for. ParentPay, our online cash collection system highlights debt immediately so keeping track is easy.

The School will make parents aware of this policy in the following ways:

- A letter to parents
- Reminders on newsletter
- The school website
- Within the terms and conditions contained on registration forms for childcare provisions

This will ensure that all parents get the same message in a consistent way. This will be done on a regular basis. All parents will be provided with a copy of the policy when their child joins the school.

KEY INFORMATION

1. All parents are provided with a copy of the debt policy when their child joins the school
2. School Lunches
 - a. All school lunches must be paid for in advance
 - b. No child should be sent to school without money in their account and expect to be given a meal
 - c. Where a debt has accrued, after two days parents will be asked to provide packed lunches from home until the debt has been cleared.
 - d. Parents who do not want their child to have a school meal should provide a healthy packed lunch
3. School Trips
 - a. All School trips must be paid for in advance. Failure to contribute towards the valuable learning experience will result in children not being permitted to attend.
4. Nursery, Breakfast and After School Care Club
 - a. All sessions must be paid for in advance
 - b. No child should be brought to a session without booking and paying for the session in advance
5. Any outstanding debt will result in any funded school activity being removed for your child e.g. free after school activity clubs
6. Any outstanding debts will also result in childcare provisions such as breakfast and afterschool club or nursery places being removed.

DEBT ACTION TIMELINE

	School Meals – Action	All Other
Day 1 – Debt remains unpaid	Text reminder sent to parents to remind them of policy. Request to clear and apply a credit amount.	Text reminder sent to parents to remind them of policy. Request to clear and apply a credit amount.
Day 2 – Debt remains unpaid	Text reminder to parent to ask them to pay online. Request for packed lunch for following day to be provided until debt cleared.	Text reminder to parent to ask them to pay online.
Day 3 – Debt remains unpaid	Phone call to parent to ensure a packed lunch is provided until debt is cleared. If necessary provide only a school packed lunch.	Phone call to parent to remind them of debt policy and inform them if payment not received, provision will be removed for the child.
Day 4 – Debt remains unpaid	Headteacher informed as well as Educational Welfare Officer for support, if necessary. Continue to refuse further school meals until the debt has been cleared / as long as the child is being provided with a home packed lunch. Only provide a school packed lunch if none is provided from home.	Repeat Day 3 if required.
Day 5 – Debt remains unpaid	A meeting to be arranged with the Headteacher to consider action, including referral to the Board of Trustees and possible engagement of a solicitor. Continue to refuse further school meals until the debt has been cleared / as long as the child is being provided with a home packed lunch. Only provide a school packed lunch if none is provided from home.	Headteacher informed as well as Education Welfare officer for support, if necessary. Inform parent that provision has been removed until debt has been settled.