

# Parkside Primary Academy

## School Meals Debt Policy & Procedure

### Introduction

As from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013, Parkside Primary Academy has adopted a clear NO DEBT policy relating to the school meal service. The school meals service is no different to any other business and meals have to be paid for. Parents/carers should be able to relate to the situation in that, they cannot take their child to a restaurant e.g. McDonald's and expect a meal without paying; the same applies at school.

If debts are incurred, then it is the school that has to find a way to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents, or that school meal prices have to be increased. Every parent will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents give this policy their full support.

### Free School Meals

If parents believe that their children may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals please contact the office for more details. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify. We will help you all we can with your application.

### Payment for School Meals

Parent/carers must pay in advance for the school meal by paying in cash at the School Office or by credit/debit card on-line via the School Gateway ([www.schoolgateway.com](http://www.schoolgateway.com)). Children will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, except those that are entitled to free school meals. If a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance, the school may grant a debt allowance of 1 meal. However this debt must be paid next day and future meals must be paid in advance before any meal is provided.

If the debt is not cleared, parents must either provide a packed lunch or take the child home for lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, the Administration Officer will phone the parent to ask them to come to school with the money. Otherwise they must provide sandwiches before lunch time or arrange to take their child home for lunch.

### If payment has not been made

If your child has taken a meal which has not been paid for you will be sent a reminder detailing how much you owe. No further meals will be provided by school until the debt has been cleared.

### Consequences of non-payment of school meals

If payment of the debt is not received by the next day, Pioneer Academies Community Trust reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against parents to recover the debt. Social Care may also be informed that these parents are not carrying out the responsibility of care by not providing food for their children at lunchtime. **It is the duty and responsibility of parents to pay for in advance or provide a meal for their child, it is not the responsibility of the school to provide lunch for pupils, unless they are entitled to a Free School Meal.** For persistent debt which is not cleared, the child's name will be removed from the lunch register and they will be unable to order school meals.

### Conclusion

We hope that by implementing this debt policy we are able to help parents manage school dinner money better and at the same time ensure that all money that is for children's learning is correctly used to support their education.

