





Debt Policy

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Policy Review Date:	September 2024	Headteacher Debra Bailey	Signed 	Insert Date 20/09/21
Ratified by Governing Body:				
Sue Welford (Chair of Governors)		Insert Signature 	Insert Date 20/09/21	

Rushey Mead Primary School adopts a strict NO DEBT policy. This policy aims to help the school to adopt a consistent approach to debt with a view to eliminating it completely. It provides clarity and consistency in managing debt and will also help to clearly understand what is expected. The school requests that all parents/carers and staff give this policy their full support.

The services provided by the school, such as school meals and breakfast club services are no different to those provided by any other business and that these services must be paid for. Unpaid debts put the school in a position of subsidising parents/carers with funding that is intended for all pupils.

The Governing Body of Rushey Mead Primary School believes that zero tolerance is the fairest approach to safeguard school funds for the benefit of all pupils. The school can only offer free school meals to those pupils whose parents qualify for this entitlement. Every other meal and service, for which there is a charge, must be paid for. The online payment system 'SchoolComms' is in use for all services offered by the school to make payment easier.

Parents who are experiencing difficulty in paying for a chargeable service offered by the school should inform the school office immediately. In most circumstances, a payment plan can be agreed to help parents clear their debt.

Policy Implementation

All chargeable services provided must be paid for. If parents/carers decide to take advantage of any chargeable services offered by the school, these should be paid electronically using SchoolComms. The school will accept cash or cheque payments from parents/carers only in exceptional circumstances. When a charge has been applied to a parent/carer's Schoolcomms' account, they will be notified via a text message.

Free School Meals

If parents/carers believe that their child qualifies for an entitlement to free school meals, please contact the school office for more details. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you apply for it if you qualify. To be eligible for free school meals, you must be in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income Related Job Seeker's Allowance or Income Related Employment Support Allowance
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 Child Tax Credit – without Working Tax Credit

Paid School Meals

If parents/carers would like their child to have school meals, changes to the child's meal arrangement can only be made at the beginning of each half term/term. Parents/carers should speak to a member of the admin team if they wish to make a change to their child's meal arrangements by the end of the half term/term. We respectfully ask parents/carers to pay for their child's school meals on a weekly basis. If a payment has not been made, the school will adopt the following process:

Process:

1. Parent/carer to receive a message when a charge is issued.
2. Parent/carer to receive a text message/email when the payment is available to make online.
3. Parent/carer to receive another text message one week later if this payment has not been made.
4. If this still remains unpaid, the parent/carer will receive a telephone call.

5. If payment is still not made, Rushey Mead Primary School will make a claim via the Small Claims Court, which will incur an additional £35 charge to the parent/carer. Further charges will be applied if the debt remains unpaid.

If a parent/carer has an unpaid balance for school meals for more than 10 days, they must provide a packed lunch for their child until the debt is paid.

Late Collection of Children

Rushey Mead Primary School does not run an after-school club. Therefore, if you are late collecting your child, you will be charged. Please see the Charging Policy for more details.

Process:

1. The parent/carer will receive a message/letter when a charge is issued.
2. The parent/carer will receive a text message/email when the payment is available to make online.
3. The parent/carer will receive another text one week later if this payment has not been made.
4. If this still remains unpaid, the parent/carer will receive a telephone call.
5. The parent/carer will receive a final letter to request payment, if payment has not been made.
6. If payment is still not made, Rushey Mead Primary School will make a claim via the Small Claims Court, which will incur an additional £35 charge to the parent/carer. Further charges will be applied if the debt remains unpaid.

We hope that, by implementing this policy, the school is able to help parents/carers manage payments more effectively and, at the same time, ensure that funds allocated for pupils' learning are available for every pupil. If a parent/carer has any concerns in relation to this policy, please do not hesitate to contact the Headteacher.