

Rakegate Primary School



Arrears Policy

INTRODUCTION

It is recognised that our school face certain difficulties when collecting money, particularly dinner money and therefore the following guidelines are adopted by our school to keep arrears to a minimum.

RECOVERY PROCEDURE

The Director for Customer & Shared Services has advised that it is uneconomical to pursue outstanding debts in respect of small amounts of money – currently below £75, through the normal invoicing system.

It is necessary therefore, for our school to pursue these smaller amounts ourselves and the Headteacher should make appropriate arrangements with parents/carers to ensure that arrears are cleared on a regular basis using the following guidelines.

Where free meals have been provided for a period of five days and no notification of entitlement has been received, procedures to recover payment, using the suggested documentation detailed below, should begin:-

- 1: Day 5:- Letter as at Annex A to be sent to parent/carer.
- 2: Day 10:- Letter as at Annex B to be sent to parent/carer
- 3: Day 15:- Letter as at Annex C to be sent to parent/carer
- 4: If arrears continue to accrue to more than £75 (current amount), letter as at Annex D to be sent to The Director for Customer and Shared Services – Financial Services.

Entitlement to free school meals should be pursued by the school on the 5th day, by means of a letter to the parents/carers advising that confirmation of entitlement has not been received. Refer to Annex A for recommended format.

If there is no response to this letter, payment for school meals arrears should be pursued by the school on 8th day, by means of a letter to the parents/carers requesting payment. Refer to Annex B for recommended format.

If immediate payment is not received a further letter should be sent to the parents/carers on the 10th day. Refer to Annex C for recommended format.

This procedure should ensure that there is no further increase to the existing arrears as parents/carers should have made alternative arrangements for their child(ren) at lunchtime. If, however, this is not the case, the school will provide crisps, fruit and a drink of milk for the individual.

The school will continue to pursue any increasing debts.

If arrears are allowed to accrue and reach £75 details should be forwarded to The Director for Customer and Shared Services - Financial Services, for the appropriate action to be taken. Refer

to Annex D for recommended format.

An official invoice will be raised for all debts over £75. A charge per invoice – currently £10 will be levied against the school. This is necessary to offset costs incurred by the Council when raising Sundry Debtor Invoices. No invoices will be raised for amounts of less than £75.

Breakfast and After School Club

When possible, breakfast and after school club costs should be paid on the day which the children use the club. In the case of children using most days then this can be paid at the end of a week.

Once a debt becomes more than £50, children will not be accepted into the club until the payment is made.

Approved: 22nd September 2023

Signed: _____ Chair of Governors

Signed: _____ Headteacher

ANNEX A

ADMINISTRATION OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS
DAY 5 LETTER TO PARENT/CARER

Child's Name: _____ Date: _____

Class: _____

Dear Parent/Carer

We have not been able to verify that your child is entitled to free school meals.

Could you please contact the City Council Pupil and Student Services Team, Children & Young People (Telephone number 551462) as they have no record of you applying for free meals?

Please note that if verification of your entitlement is not received you will be charged for any meals that your child has received at £2.50 per meal.

Yours sincerely

S. Horton
Headteacher

ANNEX B

DAY 10 LETTER TO PARENT/GUARDIAN/CARER

Child's Name: _____ Date: _____

Class: _____

Dear Parent/Carer

We wrote to you recently regarding your child's entitlement to free meals.

Please note we do not appear to have received any payment for school meals taken as listed below.

Week Ending:	Number Of Meals:	Price Per Meal:	Total Amount Due:
		£ p	£ p

Could you arrange to send in payment of £-.- immediately? If you are unable to make payment, please contact me at school as soon as possible to discuss the matter as we will not be able to continue to provide a school meal for your son/daughter next week.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Horton
Headteacher

ANNEX C

ADMINISTRATION OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS
RECOMMENDED STANDARD FORMAT FOR DAY 15
LETTER TO PARENT/CARER

Child's Name: _____ Date: _____

Class: _____

Dear Parent/Carer

Please note that I do not appear to have received any payments for meals taken as listed below.

Week Ending:	Number Of Meals:	Price Per Meal:	Total Amount Due:
		£ p	£ p

I should be grateful if you would send in the above outstanding balance immediately. If you are unable to make payment, please contact me at school as soon as possible to discuss the matter.

Unless the balance of £ -- is paid by Monday --/-- it will be your responsibility to make alternative lunchtime arrangements for _____ by way of a packed lunch or other means. If there was any doubt as to whether or not this was happening I may have to refer your case to The Director for Children & Young People for further investigation.

In addition, if payment is not made by the above date, I will have no option but to arrange for an official invoice to be issued to you by the City Council who will pursue the debt through its procedures.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Horton
Headteacher

ANNEX D

PROGRESSION OF SCHOOL MEAL ARREARS

**RECOMMENDED STANDARD FORMAT FOR
REFERRAL TO CITY COUNCIL**

Our Ref: _____

Date: _____

For the attention of Jane Williams – Customer and Shared Services – Financial Services

Director for Customer and Shared Services
Financial Services
Civic Centre
St Peters Square
Wolverhampton
WV1 1RL

Dear

Could you please arrange collection of outstanding dinner money arrears?

I have written to the child's/children's parents/carers but, as of the above date these arrears still remain unpaid.

Pupil Name	Full Name, Address and Contact Telephone/Mobile Number Of Parent/Guardian	Period of outstanding meals (From – To)	Amount Due £ p

I acknowledge a charge (currently £10) per invoice raised in excess of £75 will be charged against my budget share.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Horton
Headteacher