



School Debt Policy

November 2019



Mission:

Our mission is to provide an outstanding education for our children enabling each child to be the very best they can be. We strive to develop children's aspirations, self-belief and self-esteem in a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment through consistently high quality learning opportunities.

CAW Qualities:

Collaboration
Aspiration
Resilience
Effort
Excellence
Respect

As from 18th November 2019, City Academy Whitehawk will adopt a strict no debt policy in relation to school meals.

Please note this policy does not apply to children in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 as the government funds free school meals. This policy does also not apply to children in other year groups who are eligible for free school meals unless there is a pre-existing school dinner debt.

The school is not obliged to provide a school dinner where payment is not forthcoming or where authorisation for free school meals has not been received.

As a school we will act promptly to address issues at an early stage, in order to prevent arrears of dinner monies accumulating to a point beyond parents' means to settle. The school will, in exceptional circumstances, postpone the refusal to provide meals if parents/carers have advised us of their financial circumstances and the school is satisfied the money owed will be forthcoming.

Parents/carers must pay in advance for their children's school lunch using Parent Pay. Please be aware that Parent Pay is not a credit service.

Your child may run the risk of not being provided with a school lunch (except those provided with a free school meal) unless it is paid for in advance. In the event of a parent/carer genuinely forgetting to pay in advance, the school may grant a debt allowance of one meal. This meal must be settled the next day.

If the debt is not cleared, parents/carers must provide their child with a packed lunch. In the event a debt payment is not received, nor is a packed lunch provided, the school will contact the parent/carer to either request immediate payment for a school lunch or to send in a packed lunch. If we become concerned that a child is regularly missing meals or is sent into school without food or lunch payment, we may need to inform Children's Services.

City Academy Whitehawk will work closely with parents/carers to arrange a payment plan to help resolve the situation if requested by the parent/carer. However, where no attempt is made to clear the debt, the school will follow the procedure of this policy.

We hope that by implementing this policy, we are able to help parents/carers to effectively manage their children's school dinner money.

School Debt Policy Procedure

Key Information

- All parents/carers should be provided with a copy of the School Debt Policy at implementation or when their child starts at the school.
- All school lunches must be paid for in advance, unless previously agreed with the school. No family should expect to send their child to school for a school lunch if there has not been advanced payment for that meal.
- Parents/carers who do not want their child to have a school lunch must provide a healthy packed lunch.
- This procedure does not apply to children who are eligible for free school meals.
- If a family has a school meal debt and then become eligible for free school meals, the school will provide lunches from the date of eligibility. Please note free school meal eligibility will not back-date claims and any prior debt will remain and need to be repaid.

Procedure

LEVEL 1 INDICATOR: A child's account goes into debt beyond £2.15.

LEVEL 1 ACTION: Parent/carer will receive a text/e.mail/phonecall to pay into Parent Pay by 11am the next day or to make contact with the school to discuss financial circumstances.

LEVEL 2 INDICATOR: A parent/carer sends their child to school for a school lunch with a debt of over £10.

LEVEL 2 ACTION: Before lunchtime, a call will be made to the parent/carer to request either immediate payment or a packed lunch to be sent in. A debt letter will also be sent to the parent/carer. If no payment is forthcoming, no further lunches will be provided to the child until either the debt is repaid or repayment has been commenced in line with a shared agreement between the school and the parent/carer.

LEVEL 3 INDICATOR: The parent/carer does not comply with the above procedure and a debt remains.

LEVEL 3 ACTION: The parent/carer will be invited to a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.