Hillside Primary School

No Debt Policy

Next review date: September 2027

As from 1st January 2023, Hillside Primary School adopted a clear **NO DEBT** Policy relating to school meal services and Extended Services (Breakfast Club & Extra Curricular Clubs) If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for debts outstanding. We request that all parents/carers and staff give this policy their full support.

The Free School Meal (FSM) system is available for parents who are in receipt of certain state benefits. If a parent thinks they may qualify for FSM entitlement, they should visit the school website https://www.hillsideprimary.org.uk/school-meals/ or contact the school office for further details. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that parents use it if they qualify. Their child will then have a right to a meal each day.

It is very time consuming for the office staff to continually chase outstanding monies – by message, letter, phone call or in person. The Governing Body of Hillside Primary School believe that a 'zero-tolerance' approach is the fairest system. We understand that it may seem a very hard stance as there has historically been a culture of debt tolerance. However, moving forward, we are sure that all parents/carers and staff will support the school and ensure all the school budget is spent for the benefit of all our pupils.

We will ensure that parents are aware of this policy by:

- An email to parents
- Information on Dojo

It is the expectation that Parents/carers and staff pay in advance for school lunches via Arbor. Monies owed/ debts will be monitored weekly. Where payment has not been received in advance or 'at the point of sale' the following will be provided:

Payment for School Meals/ Breakfast Club services

Stage 1- Reminder email

Checks will be made on a Monday morning and if there are any monies still owing, an email will be sent to remind parents/carers to pay the amount outstanding and clear the debt.

Stage 2- Second reminder- formal letter

If monies are still owed, this second reminder will be sent on the Thursday in the form of a letter. The letter will outline that unless the debt is settled by the Sunday evening of this week, services (i.e. hot school meal/ Breakfast Club) will no longer be able to be accessed until the debt is cleared. In this instance parents/carers must arrange alternative childcare / provide a packed lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, the School Office will phone the parent/carer to ask them to either clear the debt or come to school with packed lunch before lunchtime. It is not the responsibility of the school to provide lunch for pupils. It is the responsibility of the parent / carer to provide a meal, either a school lunch or a packed lunch.

Extra-Curricular Clubs and others

Once your child has been allocated a place on a particular club, the charge will be on Arbor and payment must be made before the club starts. If payment is not made, then your child will lose their place and it will be re-allocated.

Conclusion

We hope that by implementing this debt policy we are able to help parents/carers manage their school debts effectively, reduce administration time and costs involved chasing dinner money debts and at the same time ensure that school budgets are used correctly for the education of its pupils.

We do appreciate that at times parents/ carers may find themselves, in periods of financial difficulty. Hillside Primary school is caring, understanding and will always be available to listen and support wherever this is possible. This, however, requires communication and this can be achieved via our various communication channels: Phone, email, face-to-face.

We thank you in anticipation of your support.