



School Meals Pay Policy

May 2025



School Meals Pay Policy

Written on:	15 th February 2022
Reviewed on:	7 th May 2025
Next review:	May 2026
Staff Responsibility	Mrs Nicola Smith
Governor responsibility	Stephen Reynolds

Aims of the document

- To outline the school policy regarding school dinners;
- To ensure the smooth, efficient and cost-effective operation of school dinners.
- To present the operational procedure for obtaining school lunches.
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff, parents and children.

Reasons for a no debt policy?

As from September 2013, Teagues Bridge Primary School has adopted a clear 'No debt' policy relating to the school meal service. 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 incurred by parents. Every parent will agree that this is unacceptable, and we request that all parents give this policy their full support.

School Meals Payment

Parent/s/Carer's must pay in advance for any school meal by using ParentPay – cashless system online (further details can be obtained from the office). Children will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, except those 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 the 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. If the parent is unable to be contacted or refuses to provide a packed lunch, then a child protection referral may be made on the grounds of neglect.

A message will be sent if your account becomes in debt by 1 meal. This must then be paid immediately.

In the event of insufficient funds being available the parent/carer should contact the school immediately and arrange to bring a packed lunch no later than 11.30am. If a child arrives at school without a lunch, the parents will be telephoned and asked to make alternative arrangements.

If payment of the debt is not received, the head teacher reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against the parent to recover the debt. Social services may also be informed that these parents are not carrying out the responsibility of care by not providing food for their children at lunch time.

In cases of genuine financial hardship, the school can make arrangement for a short term staged payment plan (however this should never be necessary as accounts should not exceed a debt of £2.90).

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

If you have any concerns, please don't hesitate to contact the school office.

To enable the school dinner service to be efficiently planned, the School requires advance notice if your child has any dietary requirements.

Free School Meals

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 receive a free school meal under the Government's Universal Infant Free School Meal scheme.

Some children may qualify for income based Free School Meals, please see the advice and guidance on to how to apply, using the link below:

https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20028/school_meals/9/free_school_meals

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to complete the necessary documentation required for free school meals. This prevents parents/carer's falling into unnecessary arrears.