



# School Dinner Policy

Signed by headteacher: *A Hughes*

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# School Dinner Payment Policy

## 1. Policy Aims

- To outline the Schools procedures regarding the administration of school meals
- To work with parents and carers to provide a flexible approach to the lunchtime nutritional needs of the pupils.
- To ensure the smooth, efficient and cost effective operation of the school dinner internal process.
- To clarify the roles and responsibility of school staff, parents/careers and pupils.
- To stream-line the collection of school dinner money.

## 2. Overview

Bitterne Manor Primary School is responsible for the collection and reconciliation of all school dinner money income. Bitterne Manor Primary School is also responsible for all arrears and non-payments. Parents are responsible for providing a lunch for their child(ren), this may be in form of a:

- Paid Meal
- Universal Free School Meals (UFSM)
- Free School Meal Entitlement (FSM)
- Home Packed Lunch
- Home Dinner

Parents must pay for school meals in advance, unless their children have a FSM or UFSM. Applications for FSM can be made online by visiting the following website or providing the school office with the following details; Name, Date of Birth and National insurance number. Bitterne Manor Primary School has set clear procedures for the payment and collection of school meal income and any arrears that occur. Parents and staff can use Scopay for school dinner, trip payments and school uniforms.

## 3. Meal Arrangements

If a child forgets their packed lunch and is given a school meal, parent/carers must pay for that meal on the same day or following morning at the latest (except for children in receipt of Free School Meals or UFSM)

## 4. Payment procedure for school meals

- The cost of the School Meals is currently £3.20 or £16.00 per week, payable in advance-weekly, monthly or half termly basis.
- Parents/Carers are expected to make payments on Scopay for pupils' meals.
- The school will accept cash or cheque payments.
- Refunds will only be given if a child is leaving the school.

## 5. Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) - Reception, Year 1 and Year 2

From September 2014 all pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2 will be eligible for universal free school meals.

## 6. Free School Meals (FSM) – Year 3,4,5,6

Parents/Carers who are in receipt of certain benefits, may be entitled to Free School Meals. These include:

- Income support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed part of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit provided you are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs) that is £16,190 or below
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

If a child is eligible for FSM or UIFSM, but a parent/carer has not made a claim via the application, and a school meal is given, parents/carers must pay for that meal on the same day.

Parents/Carers must complete an application form for FSM if they want to claim a free school meal for their child(ren) Parents/Carers must list all and make a claim for all children that are eligible for a free school meal, Full details on how to check your eligibility can be found on the Southampton City Council website by visiting <https://apply.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/southampton>

Please be aware that all applications for Free School Meals are treated with the strictest confidence.

## 7. Debt policy

The school cannot tolerate debt amounting to more than one week's payment, as 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. If a parent repeatedly fails to provide a packed lunch, or sufficient monies to cover the cost of school meals, there may be a referral to Social Services as this has an effect on a pupil's welfare. We request that all parents give this policy their full support.

- As from December 2017 the school has adopted a strict **NO DEBT** policy relating to school meals
- 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. We will therefore act promptly to address such issues at an early stage, in order to prevent arrears of dinner monies from accumulating to a point beyond parent's means to settle.
- At the end of each week pupils owing over £16.00 will **NOT** be able to continue to have school lunches until the debt is cleared.
- If a debt is not cleared, parents/carers must either provide a packed lunch or take the child home for lunch. In such cases when a debt payment is not received, nor a packed lunch provided, the Headteacher/School Business Manager will telephone the parent or carer. If a reasonable arrangement to clear a debt cannot be made, the school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to secure payment.
- We hope that by implementing this debt policy we are able to help parents manage school dinner money better and ensure that all money that is for children's learning is available for that purpose
- The school will in exceptional circumstances postpone the refusal to provide meals where parents have advised the school of their financial situation and school is satisfied that the funding will be forthcoming.
- The school will work closely with parents in working out a form of payment plan to help resolve the situation if requested by the parent.