

Oak Meadow Primary School

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Arrears Policy

From tiny acorns mighty oaks grow.

Approval Date:	May 2018
Signature:	
Date for Review:	May 2021

This policy has been compiled recognising the difficulties placed on Oak Meadow Primary school in balancing the social welfare of pupils with the responsibility of managing the School Budget. Therefore, the school has adopted a strict 'no arrears' policy relating to the payment of school meals, Breakfast Club, Funsters and extra-curricular activities. Money owed affects the school's overall budget and must be settled promptly.

Chargeable School Meals

The cost of a school dinner is currently £2.10 (£1.20 for flexible charged meals) and is payable in advance. Parents/carers are expected to pay on a Monday each week or may be paid for a half-term in advance if more convenient.

Parents/carers may pay by cash in a labelled envelope or by cheque payable to 'Wolverhampton City Council'.

If children are absent, their dinner money is credited for the following week.

If a child forgets their packed lunch and is given a school meal, parents/carers must pay for the meal either when collecting the child on the same day or the following morning.

Free School Meals

A child's entitlement to Free School Meals (FSM) is determined by the School Meals Section at Wolverhampton City Council - dependent upon circumstances. From 1st April 2018 any Free School Meal claim is protected until 2022.

Recovery of Arrears

Payment for school meals:

- All school meals must be paid for in advance.
- When a pupil has failed to produce dinner money, a meal may be provided where it is felt that it is an emergency situation, e.g. money lost on the way to school, a minor domestic problem, e.t.c. Details of this are recorded and a record is maintained. Parents/carers will be contacted requesting payment for the meal provided.
- Where a pupil continues to require meals and no payment is made, contact is made to the pupil's parent/carer via a letter, phone call or text informing them that they must either clear the outstanding arrears or provide a packed lunch for the child.
- If parents/carers fail to provide either payment or a suitable packed lunch, a referral can be made to Children's Services on the grounds of neglect.
- When a parent/carer genuinely forgets to pay dinner money, the school may grant an arrears allowance of one meal. The school will contact the parents/carers advising them of the situation and the amount outstanding. The arrears must be cleared the next day and future meals must be paid for in advance before any further meal is provided.
- In the case when, after contact has been made and arrears are still outstanding and a packed lunch is not provided, parents/carers will be phoned to come to school with the money immediately and provide a packed lunch or take the child home for lunch.
- If the outstanding arrears remain unpaid, the Governing Board will take Debt Recovery Action to recover this. A final letter will be sent to the parents/carers informing them that the school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to secure payment. Parents/carers must also be aware that further school meals for their children must be paid for at least a week in advance.
- Children's Services may be informed that parents/carers are not carrying out their legal responsibility of duty of care by not providing food for their child at lunchtime.

Administration

If payments are made by cheque, they should be made payable to Wolverhampton City Council and on the back of the cheque, the child's name and class must be written.

We hope that by implementing this arrears policy, we are able to help parents/carers manage the cost of school dinner money in a responsible way and ensure that all public money, devolved for children's learning, is available for that purpose.

Breakfast Club / Funsters' Charges

All fees for our child care must be paid in advance or on a daily basis. Fees may be paid in the following ways:

- By cash or cheque at the School Office - making cheques payable to 'Oak Meadow Primary School'.
- Via Employer Childcare Voucher Schemes.

Setting of Childcare Fees

The fees charged for childcare cover the costs of caring for children either prior to the commencement of the school day (7.45a.m. – 8.45a.m.), or after the school day (3.15p.m. – 5.45p.m.). The fees set also cover such things as staff salaries, heating, lighting and educational / play equipment.

Both the Breakfast Club and after-school facility, Funsters, are non-profit making and any surpluses made will be reinvested back in to the facility for the benefit of the children accessing them.

Changes to Child Care Fees:

Child care fees are reviewed annually; parents/carers will be informed of any revision with at least one month's notice.

Encountering Difficulties with Payment of Fees

If difficulties are encountered with the payment of child care fees, parents/carers are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Business Manager at Oak Meadow Primary School as soon as possible once a payment is in arrears – with personal arrangements being agreed for the payment of arrears in manageable instalments.

Childcare Fee Arrears

If child care fees are not paid, the following action will be taken:

1. If fees are outstanding for more than 30 days, the Business Manager will contact the parent/carer by letter to advise them of the outstanding fee/s. Parents/carers will be asked to make payment within 7 working days, or to discuss the matter further with the School Business Manager.
2. If the matter is discussed further and an alternative payment plan devised, the Business Manager will make weekly checks to ensure that the payment plan is being adhered to and regular payments are being made.
3. If, within 7 days, a scheduled payment has not been made or there has been no contact giving an explanation for the non-payment, the Business Manager will send a second and final reminder giving 10 working days' notice of termination of the available place within the childcare facility.
4. If, at the end of the 10-day notice period, the outstanding fees have still not been paid, the child's/ children's (ren)'s place(s) will be withdrawn and the arrears referred to the Legal Department at Wolverhampton City Council.
5. Re-admission to the childcare facility once outstanding fees have been paid, shall be subject to regular payment of fees with the insistence of advance payment.

This policy will be reviewed as and when guidelines or childcare facilities change.