



Portway Junior School

# School Meal Debt Policy

**'This policy has been reviewed on ... and has been impact assessed in the light of all other school policies and the Equality Act 2010.'**

Headteacher: Emma Wilkinson & SLT

Reviewed: July 2023

## **School Meal Debt**

Portway Junior School Debt Policy has been adopted to ensure that a consistent and fair approach to debt incurred by parents/carers whose children take school dinners. The responsibility of ensuring school meal payments are made by parents lies with the School. As a result the school budget will have to directly fund any outstanding debts that cannot be recovered thereby directly affecting the amount of money that is available to provide education to all pupils.

The Schools Meals Service is no different to any other business in that meals have to be paid for by someone. Free School Meals are available for parents who meet certain criteria and anyone who may qualify for Free School Meals should contact the school office for further information. Free School Meals are a statutory right and it is important that all parents/carers who qualify take up their child's entitlement so that they can receive a School meal each day.

If a child's entitlement to free school meals expires or the parents/carers personal circumstances change the parent/carer must provide a packed lunch or send payment for a school dinner.

Parents will be informed of any price increase to school meals as soon as possible.

Our preferred method of payment is online using Arbor. If paying by cash payment should be handed to the school office.

To ensure that the School's budget is not adversely affected by the cost of School meal debt the Governors consider the fairest system to all families is to pursue a 'Zero Tolerance' approach. Balances will be reviewed weekly and parents/carers requested to settle debts. Although, this may seem harsh to some parents it is important that the school budget is spent for the benefit of all our pupils and not a small number.

When the debt exceeds £30 we will contact you and ask that the debt be settled immediately. If the debt is not settled then you will need to provide a lunch for your child/children as the school cannot provide free meals to children who are not entitled to them.