



ALL SOULS'
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Debt Policy

Reviewed: January 2023
Next Review Date: January 2026

'Individually, we are wonderfully made. Together, we are God's masterpiece.'

Each member of the All Souls' family supports each other to flourish as happy, confident, respectful and resilient lifelong learners, valuing and celebrating the diverse community we share.

By working together, trusting in God and living out our Christian Values, everyone will reach their full potential and realise their dreams.

Background

The All Souls' CEP School Debt Policy has been adopted to ensure that a consistent and fair approach to debt incurred by parents/carers whose children take School Meals or attend Breakfast Club or Club Oyster is managed. As the Local Authority (LA) are not accountable for the administration of School Meals or Breakfast Club debt, the responsibility falls on the school to pursue instances of non-payment. 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. Our school vision supports the policy, ensuring that we are treating all parents/carers fairly and are helping all to flourish by ensuring debt does not occur to an unmanageable level.

Provision of School Meals and Breakfast Club

The School Meals Service and Breakfast Club is no different to any other business in that meals must be paid for **in advance** by parents. For School Dinners, Free School Meals are available for parents who meet certain criteria including the receipt of certain benefits. 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. Information on the entitlement to free school meals can be found at: <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/kent/>

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 in advance for a School Meal.

Please note: Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) are funded by the Government for pupils in Reception Class, Year 1 and Year 2.

Cost of School Meals and Breakfast Club

School Meals are available to children at a cost of £2.40 per child, per day or at no cost to those in receipt of Free School Meals/UIFSM entitlement. School Meals **must**

be paid for in advance. Any revision to the School Meal prices will be notified to parents/carers the term prior to the new charge taking effect. Breakfast Club is £2 per child, per day. Breakfast Club **must** be paid for in advance. Club Oyster is £7.50 per child, per day. Club Oyster **must** be paid for in advance. Any revision to the Breakfast Club/Club Oyster prices will be notified to parents/carers the term prior to the new charge taking effect.

Payment for School Meals and Wrap Around Care Club

These **must** be paid for **in advance** via:

<https://login.eduspot.co.uk/public/portal/parent/?app=schoolmoney> no later than a Monday morning for the coming week's meals or Club attendance.

Management of School Meal and Wrap Around Care Club Debts

To ensure that the school's budget is not adversely affected by the cost of School Meals or Wrap Around Care Club debt, the Governors consider the fairest system to all families is to ensure that school debts are cleared **weekly** as it is important that the school budget is spent for the benefit of all our pupils and not a small number. Prompt action will be taken to address any debt issue at an early stage in order to prevent arrears amassing.

If a child takes School Meals or attends Wrap Around Care Club that have not been paid for, a text detailing how much is owed will be sent throughout the week to the parent/carer requesting immediate payment. Where a child continues to require a School Meal or attend Wrap Around Care Club the school will support parents/carers to establish if the child is entitled to Free School Meals (excludes Wrap Around Care Club), or if the parent/carer is experiencing hardship which affects their ability to pay. Under these circumstances the parent/carer are asked to apply for Free School Meals or speak confidentially to the School Business Manager.

When the debt exceeds £10 for **a child or family** a phone call, text message or formal letter (Letter 1) will be made/sent to the parent/carer informing them to make payment immediately to ensure that we are able to continue to provide their child/ren with a School Meal or attendance at Wrap Around Care Club.

If the debt exceeds £20 for **a child or family** and/or action proves unsuccessful in securing School Meal or Wrap Around Care Club arrears, another phone call, text message or formal letter (Letter 2) will be sent to the parent/carer. This will detail that a School Meal will no longer be provided to your child/ren and you must make your own arrangements for your child's lunch until the debt is fully cleared, or that they are unable to attend Wrap Around Care Club until the debt is cleared. If this debt is not cleared within three working days and there has been no contact with the School Business Manager then the school **may inform the local Safeguarding Team** and the school Governors.

School Meals - If the child/ren are not provided with the requested packed lunch, a member of the office team will contact the parent/carer requesting that a packed lunch is dropped in to the office by 12pm. If the parent/carer cannot be contacted,

the school will provide a sandwich, piece of fruit and a glass of water only and this will be charged at £2.30 and will be added to the current debt.

Wrap Around Care Club – If a child attends Wrap Around Care Club, a member of the office team will contact the parent/carer requesting that they are picked up until school starts at 8.30am/when school ends at 3pm. If the parent/carer cannot be contacted, the school will provide a piece of toast and a glass of fruit juice only and this will be charged at £2.00/£7.50 and will be added to the current debt.

There may be occasions when the Debt Policy process is used for debts under £10; for example recurrent debts, long standing debts, etc.

Monitoring and Recovery of School Meal Debts

At each meeting of the Governing Body, the School Business Manager will provide Governors with details of any outstanding debts and the current position with regard to such debt. The aim of the School Debt Policy is to minimise the opportunity for debt balances to build up and incurring costly referrals for the school. The school does however, reserve the right to begin legal proceedings to recover outstanding school meal debts and inform the local authority that a child is not being provided with a suitable meal at lunch or breakfast time.

All write-offs of outstanding debt must be approved by the Governing Body following submission of details of the debt by the School Business Manager together with reasons for no further action being taken.

Letter 1

Parent or carer of (Pupil Name)
(Address Line 1)
(Address Line 2)
(Address Line 3)
(Post Code)

Date: XX/XX/XX

Dear xxx

School Meals/ Wrap Around Care Club provided to (Pupil Name)

According to the school's financial records you have not paid dinner money/ Wrap Around Care Club for your child _____ (pupil name) in Class

As at xx/xx/xx your account is showing a debt of £xx.

In order that the school's budget is not used to clear your child's debt please make arrangements for the outstanding dinner money/ Wrap Around Care Club debt to be paid immediately at

<https://login.eduspot.co.uk/public/portal/parent/?app=schoolmoney> This will ensure that we are able to continue to provide your child/ren with a school meal/ Wrap Around Care Club.

Once you have cleared the current debt I should be grateful if you could ensure that you keep your account in credit.

If you think you may qualify for Free School Meals, please contact the school office for further information. Remember that Free School Meals are a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify, your child will then receive a free school meal each day. Additional information and an application can be made at <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/kent/>

If you have any queries regarding these arrears or wish to discuss the matter further please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Eyles – School Business Manager.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Ransley
Headteacher

Letter 2

Parent or carer of (Pupil Name)
(Address Line 1)
(Address Line 2)
(Address Line 3)
(Post Code)

Date: XX/XX/XX

Dear xxx

School Meals/ Wrap Around Care Club provided to (Pupil Name)

I am writing regarding the current level of outstanding school meal debt/ Wrap Around Care Club that is showing on your account. Despite previous reminders the debt for your child (Name xx) in Class (xx) is still outstanding.

The School's records show that as at xx/xx/xx your account is £x in debt.

Please make payment immediately to:

<https://login.eduspot.co.uk/public/portal/parent/?app=schoolmoney>

Until the debt is cleared, unfortunately, a school meal/ Wrap Around Care Club will no longer be provided to your child and you must make your own arrangements for your child's lunch from today/unfortunately your child can no longer attend Wrap

Around Care Club. I would ask that you please make arrangements to clear this debt immediately and once you have cleared the current debt I should be grateful if you could ensure that you keep your account in credit.

If this debt is not cleared within three working days and there has been no contact with Mrs Eyles - School Business Manager, the school may inform the local Safeguarding Team and the school Governors whom may be forced to put this debt into the hands of the small claims court.

If you think you may qualify for Free School Meals, please contact the school office for further information. Remember that Free School Meals are a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify, your child will then receive a free school meal each day. Additional information and an application form can be found at <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/kent/>

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact Mrs Eyles – School Business Manager immediately so that this matter can be resolved.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Ransley
Headteacher