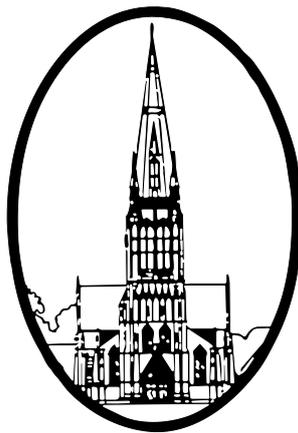


St. Mary's C. of E. Primary School

'Through God's love, we strive to be the best we can be.'



School Meals Policy

Revised: July 2017

Review date: July 2018

Mission Statement and Values

“Through God’s love, we strive to be the best we can be.”

St Mary’s is an inspiring and creative school which fosters a love of learning as well as developing skills for life. We strive to enhance every child’s moral, spiritual, intellectual, social and physical well-being and celebrate every child’s gifts.

As a faith school we hold **love** at the centre of all we do. This and the following values reflect the ethos of our school.

Respect – ourselves, each other and our environment

Courage – to stand up for what is right, overcome our fears and embrace new challenges

Truth – in the choices we make and our dealings with family, friends, school and community

Hope – that inspires us to look forward in confidence to a better life for all

This policy has been written to help our school adopt a consistent approach to registering for Free School Meals, payment of school dinners and debt management by parents whose children take school dinners. It provides clarity and consistency in managing the debt and will also help parents clearly understand what is expected of them.

Occasionally we may have to make a decision as to whether a child should be refused a meal in school, if there has been no payment made. However, the school meals service is no different than any other business and the meals must be paid for by someone.

Parents should be able to relate to the situation that they cannot take their child to a restaurant e.g. McDonalds and expect them to be given food without paying. Yet a minority of parents in the school expects us to provide food for their children without paying for it. The Free School Meals system is there for parents who cannot afford school meals, there should be no excuses.

It is very time consuming for office staff to continually chase parents for money – by letter, phone call or in person. It is also uncomfortable for all concerned and occasionally it can have a negative effect on the relationship between the school and home of which we want to avoid.

The Governing Body of St Mary’s C of E Primary School work hard to ensure the school has everything it needs to ensure your child receives a good education and will not tolerate using the schools budget to pay for school dinner debt incurred by parents/ carers. The budget is there to provide staffing, resources etc.

The school will make parents aware of this policy in the following ways:

- A letter to parents
- Reminders in the school's newsletter
- The school brochure
- The school website

Payment for school meals

- All payments must be paid through ParentPay
- The school operates a cashless system for school meals payments
- The cost of a school dinner is currently £2.20 per day
- **This is payable at least one week in advance**
- Parents are expected to pay on a Monday each week for that week or may pay for a half-term/term in advance if more convenient either online via ParentPay or at a local Pay Point (you will need a card for this service, please ask at the office)
- If children are absent their dinner money will be credit for the following week
- Notification of a change of meal arrangements from school meals to packed lunch, or vice versa must be **received 6 weeks in advance due to food ordering** time scales
- Once a commitment is made to having school meals, parents will be liable to pay for them up until 6 weeks' notice is given to change
- If a child does not have a packed lunch and is given a school meal, parents must pay for the meal on the same day or the following morning at the latest (except for children registered for Free School Meals)
- The school monitors children having a packed lunch to ensure they are not receiving a school meal without notice

Free School Meals

Parents or carers who are in receipt of certain benefits may be entitled to Free School Meals. These include:

- Income support
- Income based jobseekers allowance
- Employment and Support allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit (NOT Working Tax Credit)
- Pension Credit Guarantee and be in receipt of child Tax Credit above the basic family element

- Even if you want to provide a packed lunch for your child but think you may be entitled to Free School Meals or your child is entitled to Universal Free School Meals, please complete the Free School Meals application form as school funding is calculated on the number of pupils in receipt of Free School Meals, the school will not receive funding if you do not apply
- Children who have a packed lunch but who are entitled to free school meals must notify the office if changing to a packed lunch because the school will still be charged for a dinner
- Please be aware that all applications for free school meals will be treated with strictest confidence
- Until the school has been informed by the Hackney Learning Trust of your Free School Meals eligibility, you will still be liable for payment of school dinner money
- Please talk to the school office for further guidance on applying for Free School Meals