



## School Meal Debt – Operational Procedure

**Date approved:** January 2020

**Date of Next Review:** January 2022



### **Article 24**

Every child has the right to good quality health care, to clean water and good food.

This operational procedure applies to Crown Wood Primary School and all governors and staff of the school must abide by it. The procedure has been adopted in accordance with and pursuant to the strategic and trust-wide policies of the Greenshaw Learning Trust (GLT).

It is the responsibility of the local governing body and Headteacher of the school to ensure staff adhere to this operational procedure. In implementing it, school staff must take account of any advice given to them by the CEO and/or Board of Trustees.

This operational procedure is subject to the Trust's strategic and trust-wide policies and the Scheme of Delegation approved for the school. If there is any ambiguity or conflict then the strategic and trust-wide policies and / or the Scheme of Delegation (and any specific Scheme or alteration or restriction to the Scheme approved by the Board of Trustees) takes precedence. If there is any question or doubt about the interpretation of this, the CEO must be consulted.

*Crown Wood Primary School is part of the Greenshaw Learning Trust. The Greenshaw Learning Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales, company number 7633634, registered at Greenshaw Learning Trust, Grennell Road, Sutton, SM1 3DY.*

School meals must be paid for in advance through ParentPay. If you do not have an account, please speak to the office. It is the responsibility of parents to check their account regularly and to ensure there are sufficient funds to pay for their child's school meals.

**Children will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for in advance or they are entitled to a Free School Meal (FSM) or the Universal Infant Free School Meal (UIFSM).**

To allow for parents who have genuinely forgotten to arrange payment, there will be a five working day 'grace period' before any action is taken. However, this debt must be paid off and future meals paid in advanced before any further meals are provided. In collecting any outstanding debts, a step-by-step process will be followed:

1. If, after the five working day grace period, the debt has not been repaid or any contact made with the school to discuss extenuating circumstances, a "first debt letter" will be sent via ParentMail and/or child. **This letter requests that the child be provided with a packed lunch until the debt is cleared.** The school office will ensure this is adhered to – **if the child arrives at school without a packed lunch the parent/carer will be telephoned asking them to bring one into school immediately.**
2. If the debt has not been cleared within 5 working days of the "first debt letter" being sent, the school will contact the parent / carer by telephone. Parents / carers will be asked to give a date when the debt will be paid and / or to arrange a meeting or call-back with the school's Pastoral Support Officer if there are circumstances preventing payment.

**We acknowledge that, on occasion, families have financial difficulties and in these proven circumstances, the school will work hard with the family to agree a solution / arrangement that is not to the detriment of the child.**

**If parents do not contact the school regarding the debt and no payment is paid, any additional administration costs may be added to the debt.**

3. If the debt has not been cleared or a satisfactory arrangement put in place within 15 working days of "debt letter one" being sent, the debt will be referred to the Headteacher and a "second debt letter" will be sent via Royal Mail recorded delivery. **This letter gives a final reminder and explains what happens if the debt is not cleared.**
4. The Headteacher will then make a decision on how to deal with this debt. If necessary, the school may seek to reclaim additional administrative costs and any outstanding debt through the Small Claims Court.

If parents fall into debt more than 3 times in a term, the school reserves the right to refuse to provide meals for the rest of the term.

If any monies are outstanding at the end of the academic year or when children leave the school, the school reserves the right to charge an administration fee for time taken to recoup any outstanding debt, as well as claiming the money owed through the Small Claims Court.

The operation of this policy will be monitored by the Local Governing Body (LGB).