



# **Muswell Hill Primary School School Meals Payment Policy**

**Approved: May 2020  
Reviewed: May 2021  
Next review: May 2022**

**Muswell Hill Primary School is a Rights Respecting School, based upon the UNICEF Convention of the Rights of the Child.**

**We believe that all children should grow up aware of these rights and respect these rights for themselves and for others. Being a Rights Respecting School underpins policies throughout the school. As policies are reviewed within the cycle, they are adapted to demonstrate this. Reviews started in the academic year of 2019/20. The school received the Bronze Award in July 2020 and is currently working towards the Silver Award.**

## **Vision & values**

At Muswell Hill Primary we have worked hard to create a successful, high achieving, happy, inclusive community. One we are proud of and one which enables us to work in partnership with others, celebrate our successes and empower our children to be the best versions of themselves. Our community is where friendships thrive and where children are encouraged to discover a world of possibilities in a challenging yet supportive setting. Here at Muswell Hill Primary School, we embrace the joy of learning every day, through our strong, rich, broad curriculum.

## **5 Golden Values**

**Respect** (for themselves and each other)

**Integrity** (acting with at all times)

Sense of **Resilience**

**Curiosity** (discovering the world around them)

**Creativity** (exploring their learning journey)

## **The following articles underpin our vision & values:**

Article 28: The Right to an Education

Article 12: Respect for children's views

Article 29: Goals of Education

Article 13 and 14: Freedom of Expression/Thought

Article 42: Knowledge of Rights

Article 27: Standard of living for Physical, Emotional and Mental Health needs

## **Commitment to our pupils**

**At Muswell Hill Primary School, the staff and governors are working every day so that by the time you leave us:**

1. You will love learning new things, feel ready for the future and want to keep on learning.
2. You will understand how you learn best, learn from your mistakes and how to persevere.
3. You will know what it feels like to be motivated to be good at something, and to have achieved your very best.
4. You will understand just how incredible you are! You will believe in yourself and have the confidence to follow your dreams.
5. You will have grown as healthy and strong as you can, and you will know how to look after your body and your mind.
6. You will know friendship and will have learned how to get along with other people.
7. You and your family will be supported and cared for if you struggle or meet obstacles during your time with us.
8. You will feel part of your community, proud of your school, and inspired to make a difference.
9. You will leave Muswell Hill with lots of good memories and be the best version of yourself.

Aims/Mission: ***Everyone belongs here, everyone has a voice, and everyone is heard.***

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to make it clear how payment is made for school meals and to ensure a consistent and fair approach to any debt accrued by parents/carers whose children take school meals.

We are sure that parents/carers can relate to the situation that, just as they can't take their child to a restaurant for a meal without paying, neither should they expect the school to provide food for their child that has not been paid for. The free school meals system is there for those who cannot afford school meals and we actively encourage all parents/carers who are eligible to apply for their entitlement.

The school budget has to fund any outstanding debts that cannot be recovered which directly affects the amount of money that is available to provide education for all children. It is also very time consuming for the office staff to chase parents for money, by letter, phone call or in person. It is also embarrassing for all concerned and occasionally it can have a negative effect on our relationships with parents/carers.

Therefore, the Muswell Hill Governing Body feel that 'zero tolerance' approach to debt should be taken.

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

- a letter to parents/carers
- reminders in the school newsletters
- the school website.

This will ensure that all parents/carers get the same message in a consistent way. This will be done at least once a year, more often when it is first introduced. All parents will be provided with a copy of this policy when their child joins the school.

## **PROVISION OF SCHOOL MEALS**

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a universal free school meal for which there is no need to complete a form.

However, you can apply for free school meals if your child attends a Haringey school and you receive one of the benefits shown below:

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA (IR))
- Child Tax Credit (providing your assessed annual income is less than £16,190, and you are not entitled to any Working Tax Credit)
- Guaranteed element of State Pension
- Credit Universal Credit provided that you have an annual net earned income of less than £7,400 (616.67 per month)
- If you are supported by NASS under Part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. You must provide your NASS number.

**We encourage you to apply for the Free School Meals (FSM) entitlement even if your child is in Reception or Years 1 or 2 and automatically receives a free**

**school meal.** If you fulfil any of the criteria listed above, and are entitled to Free School meals, the school can benefit from Pupil Premium. This is extra money paid directly to schools to support the education of children of parents and carers on a low income or those from military families.

School meals are available to pupils in years 3 to 6 at a cost of £2.65 per day (with effect from 1 September 2021, agreed by Resources Committee on behalf of Governing Body, June 2021) or at no cost to those in receipt of Free School Meals.

The school meal menu is displayed on the school website.

If you would like your child to have school meals please contact the School Office and let them know. If your child has school meals and decides that they no longer want them we ask you to give us a half term's notice, i.e. you would continue paying for the meals until the next half term or end of term whichever is the closer. Please pay for meals **in advance**, on a weekly, monthly or termly basis. The payment of school meals is made through our online payment system – ParentPay. When you join the school, you are given details on how to set up a ParentPay account; if you have any queries please contact the School Office who will be pleased to help you.

### **HOW TO APPLY FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS**

You can apply for free school meals via the online form at the following link:

<https://www.haringey.gov.uk/children-and-families/schools-and-education/school-application-forms/free-school-meals-fsm-and-clothing-grant#apply>

or you can collect a copy of the form from outside the School Office and give it to a member of the School Office Team.

### **KEY INFORMATION REGARDING THIS POLICY**

1. All parents will be provided with a copy of this policy when their child joins the school.
2. All school lunches **must be paid for in advance**.
3. No child should be sent to school with no money in their ParentPay account and expect to be given a meal.
4. Parents/carers who do not want their child to have a school lunch should provide a healthy packed lunch.

### **MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL MEAL DEBT**

In order to be fair and transparent we will apply the following procedures in all cases of non-payment of school meals debts:

#### **Level 1 Indicator - A child's account goes into debt**

- Check 1 – has this child been approved for FSM and are the dates correct?
- Check 2 – is there a possibility that payments have not been credited to the ParentPay account?
- Check 3 – does this parent/carer normally pay on time and is this just a one-off?

**Action 1** – Send a 'gentle debt reminder' email/letter – see Appendix A for example

**Level 2 Indicator - A child comes to school again without the debt being paid or without a packed lunch**

- Check 1 – has this child been approved for FSM and are the dates correct?
- Check 2 – is there a possibility that payments have not been credited to the ParentPay account?
- Check 3 – has the parent/carer made contact with the school following receipt of our 'gentle debt reminder'?

**Action 2** – The School Office will phone the parent/carer to ask them to either settle the debt on ParentPay immediately or bring a packed lunch before lunchtime

**Level 3 Indicator – The parent/career does not comply with any of these options**

- Check 1 – has this child been approved for FSM and are the dates correct?
- Check 2 – is there a possibility that payments have not been credited to the ParentPay account?
- Check 3 – has the parent/carer made contact with the school following receipt of our 'gentle debt reminder'?

**Action 3** – A strong debt reminder will be sent – see Appendix B for an example, this will be the final letter and it will come from the Headteacher

**Level 4 Indicator: The parent/carer consistently does not comply with any of these options**

- Check 1 – has this child been approved for FSM and are the dates correct?
- Check 2 – is there a possibility that payments have not been credited to the ParentPay account?
- Check 3 – has the parent/carer made contact with the school following receipt of our 'gentle debt reminder'?

**Action 4** – We will bring in outside agencies.

**We very much hope that it will not be necessary to regularly use this system for debt management and that all parents/carers will understand the need to pay for meals in advance and develop their own systems for ensuring that their ParentPay account is in credit.**

**Thank you in advance for your co-operation and understanding.**

**APPENDIX A – EXAMPLE LETTER  
'GENTLE DEBT REMINDER'**

Dear Parent/Carer of

Class:

**SCHOOL MEAL ARREARS**

This is a reminder that, according to our records, you have arrears on your child's school meal account.

Our records show that at **DATE** your debt is **AMOUNT**.

In order for your child to continue to receive school meals, it is important to keep your account in credit at all times.

Please arrange for the amount stated above to be paid today. Please also add an additional £13.00 to pay, in advance, for school meals for the week ahead. In the meantime, please provide your child with packed lunches until the outstanding account has been paid.

Please pay using ParentPay using the login details you created when setting up your account. You can check your account at any time by logging in.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the School Office.

With thanks in advance for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

School Office

**APPENDIX B – EXAMPLE LETTER  
'STRONG DEBT REMINDER'**

Dear Parent/Carer of

Class:

**SCHOOL MEAL ARREARS**

This is a reminder that, according to our records, you have arrears on your child's school meal account.

Our records show that at **DATE** your debt is **AMOUNT**.

**Your debt has already been outstanding for more than seven days. We would therefore ask you to make immediate payment. If you are unable to do so please provide your child with packed lunches until your account has been settled.**

If this amount continues to be unpaid, the School Office will contact you to discuss any queries and arrange a payment schedule.

**Please note that payment for school meals should be made in advance for the week ahead (£13.00), and that your account should be in credit at all times.**

Please pay using ParentPay using the login details you created when setting up your account. You can check your account at any time by logging in.

If you think that your child may be entitled to free School Meals, please contact the School Office.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher