

BLACKHORSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Meals Policy

Author/Person Responsible	Delegated to the School Business Leader
Date of Ratification	February 2025
Review Group	Delegated to the School Business Leader
Ratification Group	Finance, Staffing & Premises Committee
Review Frequency	2 Years Awaiting Leaf Trust Policy
Review Date	March 2027
Previous Review Amendments/Notes	July 2015 July 2017 June 2019 March 2021
Related Policies	Charging & Remissions Policy

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Part 1: EIA Screening

Policies, Procedures or Practices:		DATE:	July 2017
EIA CARRIED OUT BY:	S Botten	EIA APPROVED BY:	S Botten

Groups that may be affected:

Are there concerns that the policy could have a different impact on any of the following groups? (please tick the relevant boxes)	Existing or potential adverse impact	Existing or potential for a positive impact
Age (young people, the elderly; issues surrounding protection and welfare, recruitment, training, pay, promotion)	N/A	N/A
Disability (physical and mental disability, learning difficulties; issues surrounding access to buildings, curriculum and communication)	N/A	N/A
Gender reassignment (transsexual)	N/A	N/A
Marriage and civil partnership	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	N/A	N/A
Racial groups (consider: language, culture, ethnicity including gypsy/traveller groups and asylum seekers)	N/A	N/A
Religion or belief (practices of worship, religious or cultural observance, including non-belief)	N/A	N/A
Sex (male, female)	N/A	N/A
Sexual orientation (gay, lesbian, bisexual; actual or perceived)	N/A	N/A

Any adverse impacts are explored in a Full Impact Assessment.

POLICY ON SCHOOL MEALS

Adopted by the Governors of Blackhorse Primary School

Aims

- To outline the school's procedures regarding school meals;
- To work with parents to provide a flexible approach to the lunchtime nutritional needs of our pupils;
- To ensure the smooth, efficient and cost effective operation of the school dinner system;
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of school staff, parents and pupils;
- To present a workable, fair mechanism for the collection of school dinner money.

1. Policy

- 1.1 School meals are available to pupils at a cost or at no cost to those in receipt of a free meal entitlement.
- 1.2 To enable the service to be efficiently planned the School requires advance notice of your child's requirements and by 9:30am at the latest each day. We would therefore ask that if you know your child will be late coming into school that you call ahead and inform the school office of your child's lunch requirements.
- 1.3 Meals can be ordered in advance via the Arbor system and we would encourage all parents to do this. It allows parents to see the meal options and to book and pay in advance.

2. Paying for school meals

- 2.1.1 The payment for meals is required in advance on a weekly, monthly or half-termly basis.
 - 2.1.2 Payments must be made via Arbor.
 - 2.1.3 Return of money due to absence will be credited off the following week's payment.
- 2.2 Should a child arrive at school without payment or a packed lunch, the School will telephone home in the first instance to establish if alternative arrangements have been made.
 - 2.3 If a child's entitlement to free school dinners has expired, the parent/carer must provide a packed lunch or make payment via Arbor.

3. If payment has not been made

- 3.1 If a child has taken a school meal which has not been paid for the parent/carer will be sent an email reminder detailing how much they owe (**Appendix 1**). Payment must be made immediately and must be paid via Arbor. If payment is not received by Friday the following week a further email will be sent detailing the consequences of non-payment and a final date by which payment must be made (**Appendix 2**).
- 3.2 If the matter remains unresolved, a 3rd and final email requesting payment and detailing the school's next course of action will be sent. (**Appendix 3**)
- 3.3 The school cannot allow the debt to amount to more than one weeks' payments.
- 3.4 If a parent repeatedly fails to provide a packed lunch, or sufficient monies to cover the cost of school meals, there may be a referral to Social Services as this has an effect on a pupil's welfare and it is your legal responsibility to make lunch provision for your child.

- 3.5 The school is not obliged to provide a school dinner where payment is not forthcoming or where authorisation for free school meals has not been received and you will be asked to provide your child with a packed lunch until the debt is cleared. We will therefore act promptly to address such issues at an early stage, in order to prevent arrears of dinner monies from accumulating to a point beyond parents means to settle.
- 3.6 The school will, in exceptional circumstances, postpone the refusal to provide meals where parents have advised the school of their financial situation and school is satisfied that the funding will be forthcoming.
- 3.7 The school will work closely with parents in working out a form of payment plan to help resolve the situation if requested by the parent. However, where no attempt is made to clear the debt it will follow the procedure of the school's Charging and Remissions Policy.
- 3.8 Information regarding free school meals is available from the School Office and our website www.blackhorsepri.org.uk

APPENDIX 1

1st Reminder

Parent or carer of

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for CHILD'S NAME.

As at DATE your account is showing a debt of £-

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately. Once the debt is cleared please ensure the account is always in credit. Please make payment via Arbor.

The cost of a school meal is £X.XX per day - £XX.XX per week.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely

SCHOOL OFFICE

APPENDIX 2

2nd Reminder

Parent or carer of

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for CHILD'S NAME despite a previous written reminder. As at DATE your account is showing a debt of £-

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately by Arbor.

The cost of a school meal is £X.XX per day - £X.XX per week.

Since non-payment for school meals affects the quality of service we offer to the children, we need to ensure that all payments are up-to-date and I am afraid that if the debt is not cleared by the end of this week it will not be possible to provide your child with a school meal. You will then need to make your own arrangements for your child's lunch.

The school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to recover the debt and to inform social services of our concerns that you are not providing a meal for your child at lunch time if dinners continue to be ordered without the debt being cleared.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely

HEADTEACHER

Appendix 3

3rd and final reminder

Parent or carer of

Our records show that despite previous reminders you have not paid dinner money for CHILD'S NAME for some considerable time now and as at today's date your account is showing a debt of £-

In accordance with our School Meal's Policy, your child will not be provided with school dinners as of DATE until the debt is settled and we therefore require you to send CHILD'S NAME into school with a packed lunch from DATE.

Please ensure you have made sufficient provision for your child's lunch as it is your legal responsibility.

Once the debt has been cleared your child is welcome to resume school meals with payment in advance.

I would be grateful if you could please contact me to discuss your outstanding debt, together with a payment plan as to how this debt will be settled. Failure to do so will result in the activation of the school's debt management recovery procedure.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

HEADTEACHER