

# School Meal Payment Protocol



**Wistaston Academy**  
Primary and Nursery School  
Together We Learn • Together We Achieve

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<b>Responsible Governor's Committee</b>	Finance, HR and Resources
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<b>Frequency of Review</b>	Review in the light of changes to legislation or operating experience
<b>Website</b>	No

## **PROTOCOL FOR SCHOOL MEALS DEBT (PAID MEALS)**

This is a protocol to cover circumstances where parents have not paid for their children's school meals for a period of time.

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT SCHOOLS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT DEBTS IN RELATION TO SCHOOL MEALS DO NOT MOUNT UP.**

**The following should be noted:-**

The school will try to ascertain the reason for non-payment and enquire whether the family is eligible to receive Free School Meals. If so, the parents should be encouraged to make an application by telephoning 0300 123 5012 for advice.

The school is happy to assist with applications.

**If the school is concerned about the wellbeing of the pupil at any stage in this process, they should contact the appropriate Social Services team for advice.**

Throughout any stage of these processes, schools may agree a payment by instalment process with the parents that would negate the need for further action to be taken. Should that agreement then break down, the Protocol would be reintroduced.

Protocol to be followed:-

**1. Parent fails to pay for pupil's school meal and the debt for any one family reaches £10.**

- a. School will continue to ask parents for payment during any period of non-payment, this will be in the form of debt letters issued each Friday.
- b. Once this figure is reached, the school will ring the parent/carer requesting that payment be made forthwith. The conversation will state that the child will be given a dinner on that day but failure to comply with this request will lead to the school stopping the provision of schools meals to the pupil in the future. The parent should provide an adequate packed lunch for the child/children. School meals will be reinstated when the outstanding debt has been settled.
- c. If a pupil arrives at school without the appropriate payment for the debt or a packed lunch, parents will be rung again and asked to bring the outstanding payment into school with that day's dinner money or a packed lunch. If the parents cannot be contacted by telephone a text message and a letter will be issued that day.
- d. If parents again cannot be contacted or refuse to bring in payment or a packed lunch, school will provide the child/children with toast and a drink to ensure they do not go hungry.
- e. The school will endeavour to meet with the parent/carer on the same day.
- f. If the situation continues for a further day, the school may contact Social Services as failure to provide sustenance to children is a serious concern.

**2. If the debt is not cleared after 31 days**

- a. The school may take legal action to recover the 'bad debt'.