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# School Meals Policy



		Date
Reviewed by:	SBM	02/11/2023
Authorised by:	F&P	Spring 2024
Signed:	<i>Amy Slade</i>	

Change Log	
Reviewed	✓

## Aims

**In the context of our Equality and Safeguarding policies and practice we aim to:**

- Make available a healthy nutritious daily meal for children
- Outline the school's procedures regarding school meals
- Ensure the smooth, efficient and cost effective operation of the school dinner system.

## Introduction

School meals are available to pupils at a cost of £2.40 per day (KS2 pupils) or at no cost to those in receipt of a free meal entitlement.

School meals are prepared by Oxfordshire County Council, who are a leading provider of contract catering and support services to the education sector.

OCC is committed to helping to develop great eating habits in young people by providing nutritious, tasty and exciting dishes created by a dedicated development team, freshly prepared onsite by catering staff.

An important way of doing this is by offering variety, adapting 'grown up' dishes to children's tastes and encouraging children to try something new. OCC also aim to make mealtimes at school enjoyable by celebrating special days at school with festive menus. Examples are important dates in the calendar such as Christmas, but menus which link to the curriculum are also offered, such as European Week.

OCC are responsible for ensuring all meals are nutritionally balanced over the course of a three- week cycle. Each day there is a choice of two meals – one meat/fish and one vegetarian. Once a week is a meat-free day, usually on a Monday. Baguette or sandwiches are available in the Summer Term as part of a 'picnic option' – children are able to eat on the school field, weather permitting.

Children can sit down together and enjoy their meal whilst at the same time developing social skills of eating together that are so important in later life.

A well-fed and happy child is more likely to be receptive to participating in the afternoon's activities.

## Special Diets

Special dietary needs can be catered for. This requires a note from a doctor or dietician along with an application from the parent to be returned to the school office. OCC will then develop a menu appropriate to the child. This will be shared with the parent, the school and kitchen staff.

## Paying for School Meals

Parents **are required to** order and pay for school meals in advance, currently on a weekly basis via ParentMail.

Payment along with orders, is made via ParentMail; or in exceptional circumstances and pre-arrangement, by cheque (made out to OCC Woodstock CE Primary School) or cash, accompanying the order form to the school office.

## Non-payment

The school has no legal obligation to provide each child with a hot meal, just to ensure that a hot meal is available to them. As parents, it is your duty to ensure your child is provided with the right nutritional requirements throughout the day.

The school does not offer a credit facility and the school cannot allow debt amounting to more than one week's payment as this would mean that money which should be spent on children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents.

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.

### A child without payment or packed lunch

Should a child arrive at school without a packed lunch and not previously ordered a school dinner, the school will telephone home in the first instance to establish if alternative arrangements have been made.

If a school dinner is provided in the case where no packed lunch is provided, parents will be required to pay for this. A communication (letter, email or via ParentMail) will be sent to the parent advising of the outstanding debt, which must be made immediately and can be sent in with your child. If payment is not received by the end of the same week, a further communication will be sent detailing the consequences of non-payment and a final date by which payment must be made.

If the matter remains unresolved, you will be sent a third and final communication requesting payment and detailing the school's next course of action, which would include pursuing debt recovery procedures via Oxfordshire County Council.

The school will in exceptional circumstances postpone the debt recovery process where parents have advised the school of their financial situation and where the school is satisfied that the payment will be forthcoming.

### Non-payment of school meals procedure

Payment status will be checked weekly. Any outstanding balances will be communicated to parents requesting immediate payment.

If payment is not received, or no satisfactory explanation or solution is provided, then the school will not be able to provide a meal for your child/ren and a further communication will be sent detailing the consequences of non-payment and a final date by which payment must be made.

Outstanding debt will be brought to the attention of the school governors.

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 Debt Management Policy.

If the debt remains after four weeks, the school will place the debt on the County Council debt recovery list and legal action is likely to be taken if the debt remains outstanding.

### Free School Meals

If you think your child is entitled to free school meals, please speak in confidence to either the office or the School Business Manager.

Before claiming free school meals for their child, parents must ensure that they provide the school office with the following details: their full name, national insurance number and date of birth, and wait for confirmation from the Local Authority.

Failure to follow this process may result in a parent being charged for the meals they have ordered.

In cases of a new arrival to the school, or a change in circumstances, parents should speak to the Office or the Business Manager immediately to ensure that meals can be provided straight away if there is an entitlement.

## Universal Infant Free School Meals

All children in Key Stage 1 (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) in state-funded schools in England are entitled to receive a free school lunch, through the introduction of the government's Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) policy. Parents will be required to order meals ahead of time as for paid meals and provide a packed lunch should they wish to not take up the school-provided cooked meal.

## Monitoring and Review

The Business Manager will monitor payments in two ways:

**Weekly:** Non-payment reminders will be sent.

**Termly:** Report to Governors on effectiveness of procedures and any outstanding debt.

In addition, the Headteacher will report to Governors termly on relevant aspects of school meals provision.