



Grasmere Primary School

Dinner Money Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Over 12% of children at Grasmere Primary School are eligible for free school meals. It is important for parents of eligible children to send in a claim form to the Learning Trust so that the school is not having to pay for school dinners on those children's behalf.
- 1.2 Those ineligible are required to pay for their school dinners.
- 1.3 Children cannot learn optimally if they are undernourished or malnourished. The school clearly has a duty of care to ensure that children do not go hungry at lunch time. It also has a legal responsibility to abide by regulations stipulating the nutritional content of food served to children.
- 1.4 This right to be well fed must be balanced with the responsibility of parents to pay for school meals. However, there are cases of genuine financial hardship in the school's catchment.
- 1.5 This policy attempts to strike the balance between the right of children to be well nourished at a reasonable cost and the need for the school to receive payment for the meals it provides.
- 1.6 The parents cannot swap between packed lunch/school dinners on a daily or weekly basis; changes can **only** be made at the beginning of each half-term. This helps Grasmere maintaining accurate records by keeping to this.
if parents regularly change their meal patterns it is very difficult for school to ensure that the parents are charged the correct amount.

2. Guidelines

- 2.1 A confidential register of those children eligible for free school meals will be kept.
- 2.2 The school will send out reminder notices to those parents whose children are eligible for free school meals to complete the relevant application form.
- 2.3 The school meal service will only operate on an online payment system.
- 2.4 All dinner money collected will be receipted and entered accurately into the computerised dinner money accounting system.
- 2.5 In view of possible financial hardship parents will be allowed a period of up to two weeks grace to pay for the meals of their children.
- 2.6 The school will then send out reminder letters asking for prompt payment of the balance.
- 2.7 Parents who do not respond to reminder letters will not be allowed to increase their debt at the school. They will have to provide their children with a Packed Lunch until such time that the debt is cleared.

- 2.8 The Senior Admin Officer is responsible for monitoring dinner money and for contacting parents at the end of the two weeks grace period to encourage them to pay any outstanding balance. The Senior Admin officer will then make telephone calls a week later if the arrears have not being paid.
- 2.9 The Business Manager will contact parents two weeks after following Senior Admin Officer's telephone call if there were still no payments at all.
- 2.10 In exceptional circumstances the Business Manager, in consultation with the Headteacher, will have discretion to write off any outstanding dinner money balance.

The governing body will review the policy annually.

Policy agreed March 2019 Review date March 2020

Signed: _____ Headteacher Date: _____

Signed: _____ Chair of Governors Date: _____