

# Pipworth Community Primary School



## Money Recovery Policy

Date Reviewed:	March 2026
Reviewed by:	Tracy Bates
Policy to be reviewed by:	September 2026

## **Debt Recovery Policy (School Meals)**

### **1. Policy Statement**

Pipworth Community Primary School is committed to ensuring a consistent, transparent, and equitable approach to the management and recovery of school meal debt. This policy has been established to safeguard the school's financial resources while maintaining a sensitive and supportive approach towards families.

With the cessation of Local Authority responsibility for the administration of school meal debt, the school now holds full accountability for the management and recovery of any outstanding balances. Any unrecovered debt must be met from the school's delegated budget, thereby reducing the resources available to support the education and wellbeing of all pupils.

This policy aims to:

- Ensure clarity for parents/carers regarding expectations for payment.
  - Minimise the accumulation of debt.
  - Establish consistent procedures for the recovery of outstanding balances.
  - Protect the school's financial stability.
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### **2. Legal and Statutory Context**

All children in Foundation Stage 2 and Key Stage 1 are entitled to Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM).

In addition, Free School Meals (FSM) remain a statutory entitlement for eligible pupils of all ages whose parents/carers meet the qualifying criteria. The school actively encourages all eligible families to apply.

Further information is available via Sheffield City Council:

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/schools-childcare/school/school-meals>

The school will support parents/carers in making applications where appropriate.

Where FSM entitlement ceases, or where families are not eligible, parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child has either:

- A paid school meal (paid in advance), or
  - A suitable packed lunch
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### **3. Payment Procedures**

To ensure effective financial management, all school meals must be paid for in advance.

- Payments must be made via the school's approved online payment system.

- Parents/carers are required to maintain their child's account in credit.
- Access to the system is provided through a unique login issued by the school office.
- Support will be offered to families experiencing difficulties with the payment system.

The school will **not** routinely permit the accrual of debt.

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#### **4. Management of Debt**

The school recognises that, on occasion, payments may be missed. In such circumstances, a staged and proportionate response will be implemented.

##### **Stage 1: Initial Reminder**

- If a payment is not received, the child will be provided with a meal on that day.
- The parent/carer will be contacted (e.g. text, email, or phone call) requesting immediate payment.

##### **Stage 2: Follow-Up**

- If the debt remains unpaid, a further 2 x reminders will be issued.
- Parents/carers will be advised of the outstanding balance and expected timescale for payment.

##### **Stage 3: Withdrawal of Meal Provision**

- A maximum debit accrued for school meals will be up to the value of £10.00.
  - If the debt is not cleared within the agreed timeframe, the school will require parents/carers to provide a packed lunch.
  - School meals will no longer be provided until the account is brought back into credit.
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#### **5. Support for Families**

The school is committed to working sensitively and confidentially with families experiencing financial difficulty.

Where appropriate, the school will:

- Encourage and support applications for Free School Meals
- Offer guidance on accessing financial support.
- Consider reasonable repayment arrangements in exceptional circumstances.

All discussions will be handled with discretion and respect.

***Management of other debts such as trips, damage etc will be handled in the same way – non-payments will be discussed with the Finance Sub-Committee Governors.***

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## **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Headteacher**

- Overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this policy
- Ensuring consistency and fairness in its application

### **School Business Manager / Office Staff**

- Day-to-day administration of school meal accounts
- Monitoring balances and initiating debt recovery procedures

### **Governing Body**

- Oversight of the policy's effectiveness
- Ensuring appropriate financial controls are in place.

### **Parents/Carers**

- Ensuring timely payment for school meals
  - Maintaining their child's account in credit
  - Informing the school of any changes in circumstances
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## **7. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body, or sooner if required, to ensure it remains compliant with current guidance and continues to reflect best practice.

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## **8. Equality and Inclusion**

This policy will be applied in a fair and equitable manner, in line with the school's Equality Policy. Consideration will be given to the needs of vulnerable pupils and families to ensure that no child is disadvantaged.