

St Mary's Lewisham CE Primary School

School Payments Policy



Our Vision

To be a learning community that promotes the unique gifts, wellbeing and potential of every person. Our work is founded on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, building on His message of equality, peace and justice, guided by His words 'As I have loved you, so you must love one another' (John 13:34).

Introduction

This policy concerns the collection of school payments and the approach to be taken in the case of debts arising when parents/carers fall into arrears. This includes (but is not limited to) School Dinners, Breakfast Club, After School Clubs, Childcare charge for Late Collection and Nursery Fees. This policy will be published on the school website and parents/carers advised of the policy when their children start at St Mary's School and through periodic reminders on the newsletter.

Rationale

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on all children's education in order for them to reach their potential is instead used to pay for debts incurred by individual parents / carers. The governing body see this as unacceptable and request that all parents / carers give this policy their full support.

It is accepted that on occasion arrears may arise for various reasons e.g. children forget their dinner money or are absent on the day it is collected. However, arrears cannot be allowed to accumulate. Parents / carers in financial difficulties are encouraged to speak to the school, which is committed to working with families to find solutions and signpost to support services as required. This commitment is consistent with the School's vision and backed up by the employment of a School Home Support Worker.

Payment

All payments should be placed in an envelope and clearly marked with:

- the child(ren)'s name and class
- what the payment is for and the amount

This should then be placed in the red box in the reception area. Cheques are payable to St Mary's C.E Primary School.

All fees should be paid in advance.

Free School Meals Entitlement

Children in the Reception class and Key Stage 1 receive Universal Free School Meals. Children in Key Stage 2 will not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for, except those confirmed as entitled to Free School Meals. If parents/carers believe that their child may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals they should contact the Local Authority. As this allowance is a statutory right for qualifying children it is important that parents/carers make use of it. The school is only allowed to provide free school meals to children where this is officially approved and informed in writing by the Local Authority.

Procedure for Collection of Arrears

A first letter will be sent home if a parent/carer accumulates £10 of debt (see Appendix 1). This will include all arrears owed to the School, however accumulated.

A second letter will be sent to the parent/carer if a total of £20 of arrears is accumulated (see Appendix 2).

A third letter will be sent to the parent/carer if the arrears increase to £40 or if arrears above £20 haven't been cleared (see Appendix 3). This letter advises that services will be withdrawn if debts are not cleared with immediate effect.

A fourth letter will be issued if the arrears have still not been cleared. This letter informs the parent/carer that once the final five working day deadline has expired the debt can be passed onto Lewisham's Legal Services, where legal proceedings may begin (see Appendix 4).

A fifth letter will be sent to advise that the debt has been passed onto Lewisham's Legal Services, where legal proceedings may begin (see Appendix 5).

Consequences of arrears not being paid in full

Nursery Fees

Following the first two reminder letters, the third letter will advise that should fees not be paid in full, the child(ren) will not be allowed to attend Nursery full-time. The fourth letter will advise that the full-time place has been withdrawn.

Breakfast Club

Following the first two reminder letters, the third letter will advise that should fees not be paid in full, the child(ren) will have their place at Breakfast club withdrawn. The fourth letter will advise that the place at Breakfast club has been withdrawn.

School Meals

Following the first two reminder letters, the third letter will advise that should fees not be paid in full, the child(ren) will have the option to have a School Dinner withdrawn. The fourth letter will advise that the option to have School Dinners has been withdrawn and parents must provide a packed lunch for their child(ren).

Afterschool Clubs

Any after school clubs not fully paid for termly in advance will result in parents / carers receiving a letter (see Appendix 6) informing them that the offer of a place in that club has been withdrawn for that term. Some clubs (currently Gymnastics) can be paid for half-termly in advance.

Childcare Charge for Late Collections

Children collected after 3:30 will be charged at £5 per 15 minutes (or part thereof e.g. a child collected at 3:50 will be charged £10) in order to pay for the additional staffing required to provide Childcare (see Appendix 7). The same charges will apply for children attending after-school clubs.

In all cases, once all arrears have been cleared, it will be at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether services can be resumed.

APPENDIX 1

St Mary's Lewisham CE Primary School

Headteacher: Ms Christine Bernard

329 Lewisham High Street, London, SE13 6NX

Telephone: 020 8690 2613 Fax: 020 8690 6008

Email: admin@st-marys.lewisham.sch.uk

ST MARY'S LEWISHAM
C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL



FAITH LOVE
COMMUNITY

"St Mary's is a good school" - Ofsted July 2016

Date: _____

Reminder Letter

Child's name: _____

Class: _____

Dear Parent/ Carer

According to our records you have accumulated a debt of £_____.

This debt has been accrued as follows:

Please settle this amount as soon as possible by sending cash or cheque into the school office. Please make cheques payable to St Mary's CE Primary.

Our School Payments Policy is published on the school website in the 'Policies' section. A paper copy of this document can be made available on request.

Information on who is eligible and how to apply for free school meals can be found at www.lewisham.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals.

If you have any queries, please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely

Ms C Bernard
Headteacher

APPENDIX 2

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Date: _____

Second Debt Reminder Letter

Child's name: _____ Class: _____

Dear Parent/ Carer

Following our initial letter dated _____, according to our records you continue to have a debt of £____.

This debt has been accrued as follows:

Please settle this amount as soon as possible by sending cash or cheque into the school office. Please make cheques payable to St Mary's CE Primary.

Our School Payments Policy is published on the school website in the 'Policies' section. A paper copy of this document can be made available on request.

Information on who is eligible and how to apply for free school meals can be found at www.lewisham.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals.

If you have any queries, please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely

Ms C Bernard
Headteacher

APPENDIX 3

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Date: _____

Third Debt Reminder Letter

Child's name: _____

Class: _____

Dear Parent/ Carer

Following the second debt reminder letter dated____regarding debts owed to the school, our records show that this has not been paid and the amount of arrears is now £_____.

This debt has been accrued as follows:

If this debt is not cleared immediately,

(DELETE AS APPROPRIATE) you must provide a daily packed lunch for your child from this point until the debit is cleared. If the debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, we will phone to ask you to come to school with the outstanding arrears or to provide sandwiches before lunch time. Please note, no further school meals will be provided until this debt is cleared.

(DELETE AS APPROPRIATE) your child will no longer be able to attend St Mary's Breakfast club.

(DELETE AS APPROPRIATE) your child will not be able to attend Nursery full-time.

(DELETE AS APPROPRIATE) your child will not be able to attend after-school clubs.

This debt needs to be paid immediately, either by sending cash or cheque into the school office. Please make cheques payable to St Mary's CE School.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss this matter please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely

Ms C Bernard

Headteacher

APPENDIX 4

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Date: _____

Fourth Debt Reminder Letter

Child's name: _____ Class: _____

Dear Parent/ Carer

Following the third debt reminder letter dated__regarding debts owed to the school, our records show that this has not been paid and the amount of arrears is now £_____.

This debt has been accrued as follows:

Given that the debt remains, and as stated in the third letter, in line with our School Payments Policy, I am writing to advise you that,

(DELETE AS APPROPRIATE) you must provide a daily packed lunch for your child from this point until the debit is cleared. If the debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, we will phone to ask you to come to school with the outstanding arrears or to provide sandwiches before lunch time. Please note, no further school meals will be provided until this debt is cleared.

(DELETE AS APPROPRIATE) your child will no longer be able to attend St Mary's Breakfast club.

(DELETE AS APPROPRIATE) your child will not able to attend Nursery full-time.

(DELETE AS APPROPRIATE) your child will not be able to attend after-school clubs.

In line with the School Payments Policy, a copy of which is published on the school website, I must inform you that if payment is not received within five working days of the date of this letter, the debt will be referred to Lewisham's Legal Services.

The debt can be paid either by sending cash or cheque into the school office. Please make cheques payable to St Mary's CE School.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss this matter please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely

Ms C Bernard

Headteacher

APPENDIX 5

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Date: _____

Final Debt Notification of Referral to Legal Services

Child's name: _____ Class: _____

Dear Parent/ Carer

Following the fourth debt reminder letter dated _____ regarding debts owed to the school, our records show that this has not been paid and the amount of arrears is now £_____.

This debt has been accrued as follows:

Given that the debt remains, and as stated in the fourth letter, in line with our School Payments Policy, I am writing to advise you that, we have now referred your debt to Lewisham's Legal Services and they will be writing to you regarding the arrears.

I must advise you that the debt recovery process can result in a summons to Court.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss this matter please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely

Ms C Bernard

Headteacher

APPENDIX 6

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Date: _____

Non-Payment of After-School Club Fees

Child's name: _____

Class: _____

Dear Parent/ Carer

As advised in the offer letter, all clubs need to be paid for fully in advance. As you have not paid for the following clubs by the stated deadline:

I am writing to advise you that the offer of a place in this club has been withdrawn for this term.

Our School Payments Policy is published on the school website in the 'Policies' section. A paper copy of this document can be made available on request.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss this matter please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely

Ms C Bernard

Headteacher

APPENDIX 7



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Date: _____

Childcare Charge for Late Collections

Child's name: _____ Class: _____

Dear Parent/ Carer

As stated in our School Payments Policy, the school charge for late collection.

On _____ your child(ren) were collected at _____

and this has incurred a charge of _____ .

Please settle this amount as soon as possible by sending cash or cheque into the school office. Please make cheques payable to St Mary's CE Primary.

The impact on a child of not being picked up from their school on time cannot be underestimated. The child that has been left behind will feel an increasing level of anxiety and distress the longer that they are unsure of where their parents/carers are. Clearly this is not a good thing to happen to any child.

The impact on the school of having a child left behind at the end of a school day is also great as it requires two members of support staff to supervise that child. This means that those staff will not be able to undertake their duties in preparation for children's learning the following day and this also incurs additional staffing costs to the school.

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If you have any queries, please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely

Ms C Bernard
Headteacher