Dinner Money Debt Policy

Front Street Primary School

2026- 2027

Policy Date:	24th September 2026
Next Review Date:	September 2027
Approved by the Full Governing Board on	Awaiting ratification

Front Street Primary School is responsible for the collection and reconciliation of all school dinner money and will be liable for all arrears and non-payments.

Parents/carers are responsible for providing a lunch for their child(ren), this may be in the form of a paid meal, application of a free meal entitlement or a packed lunch from home.

Parents/carers must pay for school meals **IN ADVANCE** unless their child(ren) have a free school meal entitlement. School has application forms for free school meals. Please contact the school office to request a form. Alternatively, an online form can be found on Gateshead Council website, please search for "Free School Meals".

Front Street Primary School has a clear set of procedures for the payment and collection of school meal money and any arrears that occur.

- School meal money should be paid in advance of a **Monday morning** to pay for school meals for that current week. Payments should be made using the online payment system Arbor. The school office can provide you with login details, which you will need to set up your account if you do not have one already.

- Reminders will be sent to parents/carers who have not paid for school meals, by way of email/message. Parents/carers will be asked to provide a packed lunch for their child(ren) until the debt is settled.

- If payment remains outstanding a phone call will be made to the parent/carer.

- If payment is not received a letter will be sent home to chase any outstanding payments and advising no further school meals will be given until the debt is settled. Parents/carers will be expected to provide a packed lunch for their child(ren) in this situation.

- Should arrears total over £15.50 (arrears of 5 days meals) then parents/carers will be contacted and requested to provide packed lunches for their child(ren) until the debt is cleared.

- In the event that a child chooses a school dinner when there are arrears, parents/carers will be contacted by the school and will be expected to bring a packed lunch to school.

- If payment remains outstanding with no attempts to clear the debt, a letter will be sent home to the parent/carer offering the opportunity to clear the amounts according to a strict repayment schedule. If the debt is not cleared within the agreed timeframe, the debt will be passed on to a professional debt collecting agency.

- If your child is absent from school and meals have been paid for, the amount will remain on the school meals account of that child as credit. If credits continue to the end of the academic year, they will be refunded back to parents direct to the bank account they were paid from.

This policy is reviewed annually.