LANDKEY COMMUNITY PRIMARY ACADEMY

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE - CARING FOR ALL

Dinner Money Arrears Policy

Date Adopted: January 2024
Reviewed: September 2025
Next Anticipated Review: September 2026

This Policy has been created recognising the difficulties placed on Head Teachers in balancing the social welfare of pupils with the management of the school's budget.

If debts are incurred then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay debts incurred by parents which most people in the school community would feel was unacceptable.

The school is committed to a transparent, consistent and fair approach to the efficient operation of the school dinner system.

Aims of this document

1. To outline the school policy regarding school dinners;
2. To present a workable, fair mechanism for the collection of dinner money;
3. To work with parents to provide a flexible approach to the lunchtime nutritional needs of our children; provide a packed lunch or send payment for a school dinner.

Procedures

- Dinner money payments must be received in advance or on a daily basis rather than in arrears. Online payments through Bromcom are preferred but payments in cash can be accepted in the school office.
- Where a parent has failed to produce dinner money, the school may allow a meal to be provided where it is felt that this is a temporary situation e.g. Logging in issues, domestic problem etc. Parents will be contacted and the meal should be paid for at the next opportunity.
- If a pupil arrives at school without a packed lunch, or if a pupil's free entitlement has expired, the school will telephone home in the first instance to establish if alternative arrangements have been made. If subsequently a meal is required then a letter will be sent detailing how much parents owe. Payment needs to be made at the next opportunity and paid directly on Bromcom or in cash at the school office.
- Where payment is not made as requested above, a reminder will be sent to the parent by the administrator. If payment is not forthcoming within 5 days of the contact the matter will be referred to the Head Teacher. At this point a formal letter should be sent to the parent stating the amount of the arrears and requesting that the child either brings a packed lunch to school or goes home for lunch until the debt is cleared.

- If, in the opinion of the Head Teacher, failure to provide a meal could have serious consequences for that pupil, a meal should be provided and details recorded in writing to the parent and a copy kept as a record.

- If the problem persists an appointment with the Head Teacher will be made to meet with the parent to discuss the situation. A date for the repayment of the debt should be agreed.

- The school will not tolerate debt amounting to more than one-week (five days) payment, currently equating to £12.50 per week. This is per family and not per child. If a parent repeatedly fails to provide a packed lunch or sufficient monies to cover the costs of school dinners, this may be a matter for the Trust to pursue and advise the school on appropriate action.

- If the matter remains unresolved, the Head Teacher will decide how to address the situation, which may include referring the debt to the Trust. If payments are received in the form of a cheque and this cheque is subsequently not honoured, further payments must be via Bromcom.

If you are experiencing hardship which affects your ability to pay for school dinners, please speak confidentially to the Lead Administrator or the Head Teacher.