

Date	Review Date	Drawn up by	Committee Approving
Spring 2021	Spring 2023	HT/ RE	Main GB

## **St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School**

### **NO DEBT POLICY**

#### **Rationale**

This policy has been compiled recognising the difficulties placed on the school in balancing the social welfare of pupils alongside the responsibility of managing the School Budget.

St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School operates a strict NO DEBT policy . Money owed affects the school's overall budget and must be settled promptly.

If the outstanding debt remains unpaid the Governing Body will take Debt Recovery Action commensurate to the size of the debt to recover this.

#### **School Meals**

##### **Free School Meals**

If parents think their child may be entitled to a means tested benefit, Free School Meals (FSM), they should speak to the school office.

All children in KS1 (Reception, Year 1 & 2) are entitled to a FSM under the Government scheme.

#### **Debt recovery**

##### **Payment for school meals**

- All school meals need to be paid for in advance using the Parentpay account. All parents and staff have access to an account with Parentpay. All payments for school meals must be made via this account.
- If issues arise accessing a Parentpay account, please speak to the school office.

## **Levels of Concern**

### **Level 1**

Indicator: A Parentpay account goes into debt

- When advance payment for a meal has not been made, the school will allow a meal to be provided. However this debt must be paid by the next day and the account must be kept in credit for all future meals. The school will contact the parents / staff advising them of the situation and the amount outstanding.

Action 1: send a 'Gentle debt reminder' (Appendix 1/2)

### **Level 2**

Indicator:

Parents: A child comes to school again without the debt being paid or a packed lunch.

Staff: A staff member orders another meal without the debt being paid.

Action 2: Personal contact

Office will contact the parent / staff to ask them to either bring money or pay online or (for parents) bring packed lunch to school before lunchtime or arrange to take their child home at lunchtime.

### **Level 3**

Indicator: Parent / staff does not comply with any of the options as set out at level 1 or 2

Action 3: send Strong debt letter (Appendix 3/4)

### **Level 4**

Indicator: The parent/ staff member consistently does not comply with any of these options,

Action 4:

Staff- Suspend all school meals for staff member

Parent- Consider involving outside agencies

If parents continue to fail to provide either payment or a suitable meal, this would constitute a safeguarding issue and treated accordingly.

### **Extended School Clubs (ESC)**

All ESC clubs offered MUST be paid in advance of the clubs starting. Parents will be given a reminder either by phone or text from the office. Failure to pay after this reminder may result in your child being taken out of the club and their place offered to someone else on the waiting list.

Children will remain ineligible to receive a place at another paid club while a debt from a previous club remains unpaid.

Please note that most of our teachers/coaches are from outside agencies who must be paid in advance.

### **External 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Debts**

Where the school has taken reasonable measures to recoup any debt from an external 3<sup>rd</sup> party debtor, the Governing Body will take Debt Recovery Action commensurate to the size of the debt to recover this.

**Appendix 1 (Gentle Reminder)- PARENT**

DATE .....

Dear .....

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child .....

Class: .....

As at ..... your account is showing a debt of £-.....

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately. Once the debt is cleared please ensure the account is always in credit.

You have 2 ways to pay:

1. In the secure online payment system ParentPay, using the login already provided, go to [www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com) NB THIS IS OUR PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD

Your username and password are: Username: xxxxxx Password: yyyyyyy

2. Send in money to school in a marked envelope

No matter how you pay you can check the account balance anytime by logging into your ParentPay account at [www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com). You can see what meals have been taken and when.

The cost of a school meal is £..... per day      £.....per week.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely

School Office

**Appendix 2 (Gentle Reminder)- STAFF**

DATE.....

Dear .....

Our records show that as at .....your account is showing a debt of £-  
.....

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately. Once the debt is cleared please ensure the account is always in credit.

You have 2 ways to pay:

1. In the secure online payment system ParentPay, using the login already provided, go to [www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com) NB THIS IS OUR PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD

Your username and password are: Username: xxxxxx Password: yyyyyyy

2. Send in money to school in a marked envelope

No matter how you pay you can check the account balance anytime by logging into your ParentPay account at [www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com). You can see what meals have been taken and when.

The cost of a school meal is £..... per day      £.....per week.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely

School Office

### Appendix 3 (Strong Reminder)- PARENT

DATE .....

Dear .....

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child.....

Class: ..... despite a previous written reminder and a telephone call.

As at ..... your account is showing a debt of £-.....

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately.

You have 2 ways to pay:

1. In the secure online payment system ParentPay, using the login already provided, go to [www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com) NB THIS IS OUR PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD

Your username and password are: Username: xxxxxx Password: yyyyyyy

2. Send in money to school in a marked envelope

No matter how you pay you can check the account balance anytime by logging into your ParentPay account at [www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com). You can see what meals have been taken and when.

The cost of a school meal is £..... per day £..... per week.

Since non-payment for school meals affects the quality of service we offer to the children, we need to ensure that all payments are up-to-date and I am afraid that if the debt is not cleared by the end of this week it will not be possible to provide your child with a school meal. You will need to make your own arrangements for your child's lunch.

The school reserves the right to begin legal proceeding to recover the debt and to inform social services of our concerns that you are not providing a meal for your child at lunch time.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## Appendix 4 (Strong Reminder)- STAFF

DATE .....

Dear .....

Our records show that despite a previous written reminder, as at .....  
your account is showing a debt of £-.....

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately.

You have 2 ways to pay:

1. In the secure online payment system ParentPay, using the login already provided,  
go to [www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com) NB THIS IS OUR PREFERRED PAYMENT METHOD

Your username and password are: Username: xxxxxx Password: yyyyyyy

2. Send in money to school in a marked envelope

No matter how you pay you can check the account balance anytime by logging into  
your ParentPay account at [www.parentpay.com](http://www.parentpay.com). You can see what meals have been  
taken and when.

The cost of a school meal is £..... per day £..... per week.

Since non-payment for school meals affects the quality of service we offer to the  
children and staff, we need to ensure that all payments are up-to-date and I am  
afraid that if the debt is not cleared by the end of this week it will not be possible to  
provide you with a school meal. You will need to make your own arrangements for  
lunch.

The school reserves the right to begin legal proceeding to recover the debt.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office  
immediately.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher