

GORTIN



Primary School

Non-Payment Policy

Policy Date: _____

Signature of Principal: _____

Signature of Chairperson of Board of Governors: _____

Review Date: _____

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to make clear how payment is made for school meals and other services provided by the school and to ensure a consistent and fair approach to any debt accrued by parents/carers whose children take school meals or avail of other provisions requiring payment. As the Education Authority is not accountable for the administration of money debt the responsibility now falls on the school to pursue instances of non-payment. As a result, the school budget may have to directly fund any outstanding debts that cannot be recovered thereby directly affecting the amount of money that is available to provide education to all pupils and that is neither feasible nor sustainable.

AIMS

- To outline the school's procedures, in alignment with EA guidance, regarding payment of school meals and the collection of debt accrued by non-payment of any services provided by the school.
- To work with parents to provide a flexible and fair approach to the payment of school meals and other school services/provisions.
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of Board of Governors, school staff, parents and pupils

PROVISION OF SCHOOL MEALS

At Gortin Primary School, meals are prepared in Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School Greencastle and transported to our school kitchen by staff employed by EA Schools catering service. The available meals follow a menu developed in partnership with the EA and the Public Health Service. A menu is available on our school website and a copy is sent out to our families at the beginning of the year.

School meals are available to pupils in year 1 to 7 at a cost of £2.60 per day a total of £13/week, or at no cost to those in receipt of Free School Meals (see appendix 1)

HOW TO APPLY FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS

You can check your eligibility and apply for free school meals by completing the online form at the following link:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants/apply-for-free-school-meals-uniform-grants>

The EA will then:

- check your eligibility for free school meals.
- send a letter to you confirming your free school meal entitlement.
- inform the school.

Free school meals cannot be granted to any child until EA have received a correctly completed form and proof of eligibility. The entitlement to free school meals cannot be backdated. If you are claiming free school meals due to receiving a qualifying benefit or tax credit with a specified low income, you must inform EA immediately if your circumstances change.

PAYMENT OF SCHOOL MEALS/After School Club/Milk and Other Provisions

In order to assist with the efficient ordering and planning of school meals, milk, after school Club etc. **please pay in advance**, on a weekly basis, using our yellow envelopes and marking clearly with the name of your child/children, class, the amount enclosed and indicating what it is for. This can be handed to the class teacher on a Monday morning. All monies received are recorded on a spreadsheet, meaning, if a child's school meal or after school Club has been paid for in advance but they are absent, the cost of the meal or after school club is held in credit against future payment, milk money cannot be credited. Should a child arrive at school without payment or a packed lunch, the school will telephone home in the first instance to establish if alternative arrangements have been made. Under no circumstances will the school refuse a child a school meal or after school care. If a child's entitlement to free school dinners has expired, the parent/carer must provide a packed lunch or send payment for school meals in a sealed envelope.

MANAGEMENT OF DEBT

The school understands that there may be unforeseen circumstances that result in school meal or other payment arrears, however, in order to apply this policy fairly and transparently the following procedure will be adopted for all non-payment of monies owed to the school:

End of Week 1

If your child has a school meal or availed of other services that has not been paid for, we will text you the amount owing as a reminder. Please send in the money ASAP.

Our standard text will read:

'Our records show you have an outstanding balance of £__ for _____ from / / to / /. We now require immediate payment. (Principals's Initials)'

End of Week 2

If payment has not been received by the end of the second week The Principal will make a telephone call to the parent/carer, requesting immediate payment. If The Principal is unable to make contact a second text will be sent.

Our standard text will read:

'Our Principal has tried to reach you by phone, our records show you still have an outstanding balance of £__ for _____ from xx/xx/xx to xx/xx/xx . We now require immediate payment. (Principals's Initials)'

End of Week 3

If payment remains unpaid by the end of the third week, the Board of Governors will send a letter outlining the management of the school's request to make immediate payment.

(See appendix 1).

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, please contact The Principal as soon as possible in order that we can work together to reach a mutually acceptable agreement.

MONITORING OF DEBT

The school secretary will provide The Principal with details of any outstanding debt and the current position regarding such debt. The principal will ensure the agreed procedure is being followed. It is the Board of Governor's responsibility to ensure that this policy is applied fairly

and consistently in order that the school budget is used to provide for children's learning and not to pay costs incurred by non-payment of school dinners, milk, After School Club or other services provided by the school.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed and verified tri-annually by the Full Board of Governors.

We hope that the payment of school meals and other services can be completed soon through an online payment system.

Appendix 1



Gortin Primary School
9 Plumbridge Road
Gortin
Omagh
BT79 8QB

DATE: _____

Dear _____

School Meals/Services provided to _____

According to the school's financial records you have not paid £ money for your child _____
in Class: _____. As of / / your account is showing a debt of £ .

In order that the school's budget is not used to clear your debt please make arrangements for
your outstanding bill to be paid immediately.

Once you have cleared your current bill, I would be grateful if you could ensure that you keep
your account in credit, as per our School Non-Payment Policy.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears or wish to discuss the matter further, please
do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Please ignore this letter if you have recently made payment.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Houston
Chair of the Board of Governors