

Policy Name:	Debt Policy
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Responsibility for dissemination to new staff:	Headteacher

Signed Headteacher *Date of Signature:*

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Vision Statement

Romsey Abbey C of E Primary School will be a distinctive community, rooted in Christian values, whose culture has limitless ambition, professionalism, engagement and caring at its heart. Staff, parents and governors will work together closely to give every child the best possible education and life chances. The school will make a positive contribution to the local community and beyond.

Our Mission

At Romsey Abbey CE School we believe that a world of opportunity lies at our feet. We see our role as a school as instilling in learners the confidence to enable success and relish challenge. We help children, families and staff to learn how to demonstrate love and grow in our ability to forgive each other, to aspire to be the best we can be. We feel it is important to both rejoice in our own success and equally in the success of others. As a church school our whole school life is based around our common values of, “walking in the footsteps of Jesus with love, trust and forgiveness.”

Our Aims

Build a culture and ethos of support and respect, inclusive of language, ethnicity, ability and gender.

Create a healthy, safe environment through relationships, resources and opportunities which are accessible to all.

Provide an outstanding curriculum and learning environment that inspires, achieves the highest standards, creates a spirit of adventure, reflects culture and community and builds confident and independent learners.

Strive to build systems of communication that ensure all members of the school family have opportunities to contribute ideas and knowledge that will be valued.

Purpose of Policy

This policy has been written to help our school to adopt a consistent approach to debt with a view to eliminating completely. It provides clarity and consistency in managing the debt and will also help parents and carers clearly understand what is expected of them.

The services provided by school are no different to those provided by any other business and the meals and other services must be paid for. Most parents understand that they cannot take their child to a cafe and expect them to be given food without paying or to a music teacher who will teach their child free of charge.

However a minority of parents do not pay on time for services offered by the school. This puts the school in the position of subsidising a few families with funding that is intended by law for the teaching and learning of all children, as well as causing considerable extra work for office staff and embarrassment for all concerned.

The Governors at Romsey Abbey Church of England Primary School feel that the best system of approach is to have a No Debt Policy in place. We understand that it may seem a very hard stance as there has been a culture of debt tolerance. Pupils who attract Pupil Premium may also be funded for before and after school clubs, trips, etc.

Please be aware that when there is an outstanding debt at school, access to other services e.g. extra-curricular activities (paid for) will not be permitted until the debt is cleared. If a family finds itself in financial hardship then an appointment should be made to meet with the Headteacher who will use their discretion to decide on any support the school is able to offer.

School Lunches

The Tucasi/SCOpay system is in use for all the services offered by the school to make payment easier. Tucasi/SCOpay also highlights debt and balances so keeping track is easy. School will also contact parents by email if there is insufficient credit on their account for that week.

Children will not be provided with a school lunch unless it is paid for in advance (except for those children entitled to Free School Meals and/or Universal Free School Meals).

If a parent/carer genuinely forgets to pay, the school may grant a debt allowance of one meal. However this debt must be paid next day and future meals must be paid for in advance before any more meals are provided.

If the debt is not cleared, parents must provide a packed lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, parents will receive a telephone call asking that they bring in a packed lunch for their child.

If parents do not clear the debt and provide a packed lunch, the school will send a final letter and begin debt recovery proceedings. Once this final letter has been issued parents will be told that their child won't be able to receive school dinners for the remainder of the term. Children's services may also be informed that these parents are not carrying out the responsibility of care by not providing food for their children at lunchtime.

School Lunches No Debt policy implementation

Level 1

Indicator: A child's account goes into debt

- Check 1 is this a FSM child, are dates correct?
- Check 2 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?
- Check 3 does this parent normally pay on time, is this just a one off?

Action 1:

- Send a 'Gentle debt reminder'

Level 2

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

- Check 1 is this a FSM child, are dates correct?
- Check 2 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?
- Check 3 has this parent made contact?

Action 2: Personal contact

- Someone will phone the parent to ask them to either bring the money into school or bring sandwiches in before lunchtime

Level 3

Indicator: The parent does not comply with any of these options,

- Check 1 is this a FSM child, are dates correct?
- Check 2 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?
- Check 3 has this parent made contact?

Action 3: send strong debt letter

The head teacher will send a final letter.

Level 4

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

Check 1 is this a FSM child, are dates correct?

Check 2 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?

Check 3 has this parent made contact?

Action 4: bring in outside agencies

- LA to advise, small claims court, children services

Other services (Breakfast Club, Sports Tuition, After School Club etc)

The school is invoiced for food, trips, sports and music lessons and has to pay staff to run our breakfast and after school club so it is essential that sufficient funds are available. If there were insufficient funds from those who use this service the school would have to cover the shortfall from the budget it is given for all children's teaching and learning. That would be unfair, illegal and unsustainable.

Parents who are experiencing difficulty in paying for a chargeable service offered by the school should inform the school office immediately. In most circumstances a payment plan can be agreed to help parents clear their debt to the school as soon as possible. Large debts left unpaid will be passed to a professional debt collection agency to legally recover.

Children will not be admitted to Breakfast Club or After School Club unless this has been paid in advance

Breakfast Club/Afterschool Club Debt policy implementation

Level 1

Indicator: A child's account goes into debt

Check 1 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?

Check 2 does this parent normally pay on time, is this just a one off?

Action 2:

- Send a 'Gentle debt reminder'

Level 2

Indicator: A child comes to Breakfast Club/Afterschool Club again without the debt being paid

Check 1 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?

Check 2 has this parent made contact?

Action 2: Personal contact

- Someone will phone the parent to ask them to bring the money into school or allocate funds to Tucasi/SCOpay to return the account to credit

Level 3

Indicator: The parent does not comply with any of these options,

Check 1 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?

Check 2 has this parent made contact?

Action 3: Do not admit the child to Breakfast Club/Afterschool Club and send a final letter. The child loses the place in the Breakfast Club/Afterschool Club

Key Information

- A copy of the debt policy is available on the school website
- All services provided including school lunches, music tuition, sport classes, breakfast and after school club places must be paid for in advance.
- A child should not be sent to school with no money in their account and expect to be given a meal, music lessons or access to breakfast or after school club care.
- Parents who don't want their child to have a school lunch should provide a healthy packed lunch.
- All parents will be provided with a copy of the policy when their child joins the school.

Role Holders

Names of all Role holders specified in this document can be found on the school website:

<http://www.romseyabbeyschool.co.uk/>

