

# ALDER COPPICE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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*Achievement through Commitment*

## Dinner Policy

Policy for the Attention of			
<i>Audience</i>	<i>Key Audience</i>	<i>Optional Audience</i>	<i>Additional/Notes</i>
Senior Leadership Team	✓		
Teachers	✓		
Teaching Assistants	✓		
Administrative Staff	✓		
Curriculum Support	✓		
Lunchtime Supervisors	✓		
Site Manager			
Cleaners			
Governors	✓		
Parents	✓		
Website	✓		
Local Authority		✓	

# School Dinner Money Policy – including Dinner Arrangements

It is the responsibility of parents (other than those whose children are entitled to a free school lunch) to ensure that their child has a lunch each day.

## Packed Lunches

We encourage a balanced lunch so children benefit from a healthy meal.

Children are welcome to bring a packed lunch to school.

Sweets, fizzy drinks and glass bottles are not allowed.

Food containing nuts must not be brought into school.

We avoid children throwing left-overs into a bin and ask children to bring them home in their lunch box. This way any food that has not been eaten can be seen by parents. We have had occasions where children will throw their sandwiches or a large amount of food away and because the lunch box is empty parents believe the food has been eaten.

We do not encourage children to swap food with each other as this can cause problems between them and parents will assume their child has eaten the food they have provided and this may affect some children who have food allergies.

## School Dinners

The Catering Service, which provides our school meals service, is independent from the School and is run by Harrison Catering, who provide fresh wholesome meals which are cooked on site.

## Payment for School Meals

- Parents are made aware of costs of school meals via home/school communication and also on the School Website.
- **Payment must be made in advance, via +Pay.** This should be for the intended lunches for the week ahead or may be for longer periods in advance, if that is more convenient.
- If children are absent, their dinner money is credited for future bookings.
- Refunds may only be given, for credits at the end of a school year, or if a child is leaving this school to attend another.
- If a child forgets their packed lunch and is given a school meal, parents/carers must pay for that meal as soon as possible, and within 7 school days at the latest (except for children in receipt of Free School Meals).

## Universal Free School Meals (Reception and Years 1 and 2)

As part of a current Government initiative, children in Reception and Key Stage 1 are entitled to a free school lunch.

Parents must still go on to the system and tick the days that they wish their child to have a lunch.

## Key Stage 2 Free School Meals (Years 3 – 6)

When children start Key Stage 2 in Year 3, Universal Free School meals provision finishes, which means that unless your child is entitled to benefits related Free School Meals, school dinners must be paid for.

Parents/Carers of children in Key Stage 2, who are in receipt of certain financial benefits, may be entitled to Free School Meals.

These include

- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit (Not Working Tax Credit)
- Pension Credit Guarantee and be in receipt of Child Tax Credit above the basic family element

Further information can be obtained from the Local Authority via <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/benefits/free-school-meals/> or by contacting the School Office.

**It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that they notify the School Office within a working week of a change of circumstance affecting their child's eligibility for Free School Meals i.e. that their child is now entitled to or is no longer entitled to a Free School Meal.**

Do not presume younger siblings will automatically be allocated Free School Meals status. Each child must be applied for individually.

Please be aware that all applications for Free School Meals are treated with the strictest confidence.

## Debt Policy

- The Governors have adopted a strict **NO DEBT Policy** relating to school meals.
- The Kitchen will allow a 5 day "window" of non-payment, after which parents will be sent a text reminding them that they have an outstanding dinner money debt of £12.50. Please can you pay this amount today.
- If during the next week, the debt has still not been paid, or, is increasing towards or has reached £25.00, parents will receive a phone call from the Assistant Headteacher. Where the debt has reached £25.00, they will be informed that this no further meals will be served until this has been paid in full.
- **Unless there are exceptional circumstances, until a debt is paid in full, a child will not receive a school lunch. This means that paying a part amount or an amount to cover one day's dinner will not be acceptable - the owed amount must be paid in full before a child resumes school lunches.**
- If a parent/carer genuinely forgets to pay, the School may grant an exception and allow the parent/carer to pay the following day. This debt must be paid the next day and future meals must be paid for in advance before any meal is provided.

- If a debt is not cleared, parents/carers must either provide a packed lunch or take the child home for lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received, nor a packed lunch provided, a member of the Admin Team will telephone the parent or carer asking them to process payment, provide sandwiches before lunch or take the child home for lunch.
- **If the child/children is/are not provided with the requested lunch and/or the parent cannot be contacted the Kitchen will provide the child with cheese, biscuits and a piece of fruit only.**

Cheese and biscuits & fruit will be provided for the child if:-

- A parent has not responded;
  - The debt has not been paid off in full;
- A parent has chosen not to provide their child with a packed lunch or take them home for lunch.
- Assistant Headteacher, Mrs Randall, may refer the issue to Dudley Social Services indicating that Parents/Carers are not carrying out their responsibility of care as they are not providing food for their child at lunchtime.
- If a reasonable arrangement to clear a debt cannot be made, the School reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to secure payment.

Please remember that unless your child is entitled to a free school lunch it is not the School's responsibility to feed your child and you are putting your child in a very awkward position if you allow your child's account to get into significant debt.

We request that all parents give this Policy their full support.

We hope that by implementing this Debt Policy we are able to help parents manage school dinner money and ensure that all money that is for learning is available for that purpose.