**Llanfair Primary School**

**School Meal Debt Policy**

**Introduction**

All schools within the local authority became responsible for managing school meal payments as of 1st April 2017. As such, where a meal has been ordered but not paid for, the school will be charged. This is an inappropriate use of school resources.

It is every parents’ responsibility to ensure their child receives a meal during the school day. Parents can pay for the school meal service to provide a meal or they can provide a packed lunch. School meals are provided without cost to pupils who are entitled to free school meals.

This policy outlines the school’s ‘zero-tolerance’ approach and the steps that will be taken where school meal debt exists.

**Information to Parents**

School will ensure that information is included in its prospectus and that this policy will be available on its website. Periodic reminders will be sent through the school’s communications with parents. School will endeavour to support parents in accessing additional financial support where this is needed.

**Procedure**

The school expects all school meals to be paid for in advance. Therefore it is expected that parents ensure their ParentPay accounts are in credit by at least the cost of a single meal.

School will utilise ParentPay to identify accounts that are in debt. Where a debt is identified school will ensure that it considers whether;

* The child is in receipt of free school meals.
* Any credits have yet to register.

Where a debt is identified the following four stages will be followed:

**Stage One:**

School will send a reminder to parents that a debt exists and that no further meals should be ordered. Where this occurs in the morning, school will permit one meal to be ordered for that day.

**Stage Two:**

If the debt continues and a second meal is ordered, a member of staff will telephone the parent to request that a cash payment is brought to school or an online payment is made. Alternatively the parent can provide a packed lunch prior to the commencement of the lunch service.

**Stage Three:**

Where a debt continues to exist, the HT will send a formal letter to parents explaining the situation and advising parents of the potential next steps. No further school meals will be served.

**Stage Four:**

Where a debt continues to exist following the implementation of the previous stages, the school will contact the local authority for advice in regards to possible referral to the small claims court. If school meals continue to be ordered and a debt exists, school will consult with the local authority. This may result in a referral to social services as it the parents’ responsibility to ensure their child is fed.

This policy has been drafted in line with guidance from the local authority and will be reviewed periodically as needed.