



**SCHOOL MEAL DEBT POLICY**

**Potten End Church of England Primary School**

**Policy Review**

This policy was agreed by the Governing Board on.....27/11/25.....

It is due for review on.....November 2027

Signature ..... Date .....

Head Teacher

Signature ..... Date .....

Chair of Governors



## Potten End Church of England Primary School

Potten End C of E Primary School is responsible for any unpaid school meal debts owed to Herts Catering Limited. This money must be paid from the general school budget, therefore reducing money available for other, vital, school expenditure. This policy is designed to keep such costs at nil, wherever possible.

By requesting paid school meals, parents are entering into an agreement to meet the cost of this provision.

Universal Free School Meals are available for every child in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. Free School Meals are available for all those children whose parents are entitled to a range of benefits. This is a statutory entitlement and this funding is beneficial not only to children and their families, but also provides extra funding to the school. The school will encourage families on qualifying benefits to apply for Free School Meals. If a child qualifies for benefit related Free School Meals, advice of how to claim, can be sought from the School Office.

Meals must be paid for in advance, via Arbor. As the school is “cashless”, if a parent is unable to pay via Arbor, they should contact the School Office. It is possible for the office to complete the payment process with the parent using a debit or credit card.

To assist in keeping this debt to an absolute minimum:

- The school will highlight any debt amounting to five meals or more.
- The school will send an e-mail message via Arbor on a Friday to parents, requesting that they top up the meal payment for their child. The expectation is that the outstanding amount will be paid, in full, prior to the following Monday morning.
- If the debt remains unpaid, the school will send out a second reminder e-mail message via Arbor on the following Tuesday.
- If the debt remains unpaid, on Friday, a letter will be sent via email requesting that a packed lunch be provided for the child from Monday of the following week.
- If, following the letter, a debt remains outstanding and a packed lunch is not provided, the school will telephone the parent before 10.30am to request payment, or provision of a packed lunch.
- If a packed lunch is still not provided then school will provide a meal however the lack of packed lunch will be considered a safeguarding concern.



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- If the debt still remains outstanding then the School Office has the right to refer the debt to the governing board for further action. If this course of action is unsuccessful then Herts County Council has the right to use a debt collection agency to recover the debt.

If a debt remains unpaid at the end of a school term, Herts Catering Limited will charge the debt to school and collect this via Direct Debit.