

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2013-2014**

**EDUCATION & LIFELONG  
LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**13<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

**REPORT OF:  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND  
LIFELONG LEARNING**

**Agenda Item No. 5**

**Dinner Money Arrears**

**Author: - Catrin Edwards, Head of Education Finance  
Tel. No. (01443) 744205**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

The purpose of the report is to provide members with the outcome of the internal audit report on the administration of free schools meals, and subsequent action taken.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within this report.
- 2.2 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided.
- 2.3 Consider whether they wish to scrutinise in greater depth any matters contained in the report.

**3. AUDIT COMMITTEE REFERRAL**

- 3.1 On the 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2013 Audit Committee considered a finalised Audit assignment in relation to Dinner Money arrears and following the concerns raised by the Committee the item was referred to the Education & Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.2 The finalised Audit assignment is included as appendix 1 to the report.

**4 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 An internal audit review was undertaken on the administration of School Meal Arrears Procedure. Specific control objectives included:
  - To examine the implementation of the recovery procedure by Education Finance;

- To assess School's compliance with the agreed arrears protocol.
- 4.2 To assist schools in recording and monitoring dinner money, every school has an automated Schools Information and Management System (SIMS) dinner money system, for which every school clerk has been offered training. At the end of the financial year 2012/13 the service collected £2,058k for Primary school pupils.
- 3.3 At the end of every half term schools are required to inform Education Finance of all arrears. Amounts over 10 days are then recharged back to the school. Once the debt has been settled the schools are reimbursed.

#### **4. AUDIT OPINION**

- 4.1 Overall where there was an established, consistent approach to reminding parents and a clear escalation in involvement from the Headteacher, the accrual and recovery of arrears is well managed.
- 4.2 However there were several Schools sampled that had significant arrears and the absence of any routine chase-up coupled with a failure to report their debt levels to Education Finance has contributed to large amounts owing and no recovery action being taken.
- 4.3 There is a dinner money protocol in place but Internal Audit recommend that it is revised to standardise follow-up procedures and clarify the approach to invoicing/recharging School budgets and the agreed thresholds of debt that determine what course of action is taken.
- 4.4 Currently schools are recharged every half term for arrears over 10 days and some are experiencing difficulties in recovering monies in the absence of official debtor requests from the Council.
- 4.5 While a reconciliation exercise is undertaken by Education Finance on a termly basis to compare meal numbers to actual income received, the effectiveness of this process is hindered by the lack of a formal, structured follow-up where shortfalls are identified.
- 4.6 Internal Audit recommend that targeted correspondence, and/or School visits to ascertain the cause and undertake remedial action could mitigate the risk of further arrears accruing.

#### **5. ACTION TAKEN**

- 5.1 As a result of the internal audit report the protocol was revised and standardised letters recommended for use, Appendix 2.
- 5.2 The protocol was discussed with the Primary Headteacher Traded Services Board who approved the revised protocol.

- 5.3 To ensure that the protocol was fully understood and implemented, during September and October seven training sessions for the school clerks were held.
- 5.4 Training was provided on the revised protocol, which clearly lists all the steps that school clerks need to take, the referral process and which standardised letters to be used. These sessions allowed the clerks to raise any potential implementation difficulties, the result of which some changes were made.
- 5.5 Every parent is also required to sign a parental consent form, Appendix 3, to confirm that they accept that if their child receives a meal and they are not entitled to free school meals, then they must pay. Without this authorisation, escalated action for non payment cannot be taken.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The previous dinner money arrears procedures were not fully adopted by every school, which resulted in high levels of debt and inconsistent practices being adopted by schools.
- 6.2 A new protocol was introduced from September 2013 and every clerk has been invited to attend a training session on the implementation of it.
- 6.3 A review of the procedure will be undertaken by the end of November 2013 by which time every school should have provided their first half term report.
- 6.4 Non compliance of the protocol will be monitored and reported back to the Primary Traded Services Board.



<b>EDUCATION &amp; LIFELONG LEARNING</b>		
<b>DINNER MONEY ARREARS</b>		
<b>Date: 21/05/2013</b>		
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>		
<p>Parents of primary aged school children are requested to pay for school meals every Monday for the forthcoming week at a cost of £10.40 per week/£2.08 per day (price effective from 1st September 2012 - 31st March 2013).</p> <p>In an effort to prevent the accrual of dinner money arrears where this request is not heeded, a Protocol has been devised and circulated to all Schools.</p> <p>Schools are now advised to enforce the 10-day rule, whereby the provision of meals should cease once the level of arrears exceeds 10 meals. At this stage, Parents/Guardians are advised to provide their child with a packed lunch or collect them at lunchtime. Meals can only be provided beyond 10 days where a Headteacher has sought and obtained written permission from the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning.</p> <p>Each School must submit details of any outstanding arrears to 'Education Finance' on a half termly basis, in order for debtor invoices to be raised against the parent where necessary. Schools are expected to have made their own efforts to recover the monies in the interim in accordance with the protocol.</p> <p>Where invoices have been raised, all recovery routes have been exhausted and the School have continued to provide meals after 10 days of arrears, the amount outstanding will be charged back to the School.</p>		
<b>AUDIT OPINION</b>		
<p>Overall, it was evident from the Schools visited during fieldwork that where there is an established, consistent approach to reminding Parents and a clear escalation in involvement from the Headteacher, the accrual and recovery of arrears is better managed. However, there were several Schools sampled that had significant arrears and the absence of any routine chase-up coupled with a failure to report their debt levels to 'Education Finance' has contributed to amounts owing with no recovery action being undertaken. It should also be considered whether a standardised follow-up procedure, complete with a suite of standard letters could be devised and provided to Schools to aid those without any and as a means of ensuring a consistency in approach.</p> <p>Internal Audit have incorporated several controls into the Primary School Self Evaluation process to help raise the profile of the protocol and the need to both manage arrears and provide the necessary information to Education Finance to recover the monies owed. Any non-compliance will be formally reported and Schools will be expected to respond and set out any remedial action required.</p> <p>This report also contains recommendations in respect of the protocol itself, and the need to clarify the approach to invoicing/recharging School budgets and the agreed thresholds of debt that determine what course of action is taken. The current practice of only invoicing where six weeks arrears are accrued within any half term has led to an increase in the use of budget recharges, but it is evident from the comparatively lower number of subsequent reversals (when parents pay their arrears), that some Schools are still experiencing difficulties in recovering monies in the absence of official sundry debtor requests from the Council.</p> <p>While a reconciliation exercise is undertaken on a termly basis to compare meal numbers to actual income received, the effectiveness of this process is hindered by a lack of formal, structured follow-up where shortfalls are identified. Targeted correspondence, and/or School visits to ascertain the cause and undertake remedial action could help mitigate the risk of further arrears accruing.</p>		
<b>Report Ref Number</b>	<b>High Priority Audit Recommendations made &amp; Agreed by Management</b>	<b>Agreed Implementation Date</b>
7.1.1	<p><b>AGREED RECOMMENDATION</b></p> <p>Where shortfalls in anticipated income are identified in the termly reconciliations, Education Finance should investigate and identify the reasons why i.e. arrears problems, coding errors. The materiality of any shortfall, and a threshold under which investigations are not deemed necessary should be considered and documented.</p>	30 <sup>th</sup> June 2013

	<p><b>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE</b></p> <p>Termly reconciliation exercise currently completed for any material discrepancy but are hindered due to lack of response from schools and resources available.</p> <p>Reconciliation to be sent to schools for formal response to include value of meals served and bankings to identify arrears or miscoding.</p> <p>Where no formal response has been received or request for site visit acknowledged the school will be charged for the difference between meals served and income banked.</p>	
7.1.2	<p><b>AGREED RECOMMENDATION</b></p> <p>Management should determine whether the decision to raise invoices only where six weeks worth of meals are accrued within a half term is feasible and in the best interests of recovering the monies owed from Parents.</p> <p>The protocol should be amended where necessary to reflect any decision made.</p> <p><b>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE</b></p> <p>Invoice to be based on accumulative value, removing practice where this is restricted to any half term period.</p> <p>This will be incorporated into a revised protocol from the new academic year.</p>	30 <sup>th</sup> September 2013
7.2.1	<p><b>AGREED RECOMMENDATION</b></p> <p>Management should ensure that the schools of concern visited during fieldwork are targeted in order to ascertain the extent of the arrears problem and to undertake recovery action as necessary.</p> <p>School 1, in particular had several parents in significant arrears. Management should consider whether sundry debtor invoicing (irrespective of when and over how many half terms the arrears were accrued as per 7.1.2) would be the most effective way to recover the sums owed.</p> <p><b>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE</b></p> <p>One school visited and other arrears received from one other sampled school. Other schools to be visited to agree action to be taken to recover any arrears in place.</p>	31 <sup>st</sup> July 2013



## **School Dinner Money Arrears Collection Protocol** **Primary, Special and Nursery Schools**

### **Introduction**

This policy provides guidance to help schools manage the collection of school meals income, and procedures to follow when debts arise if parents/guardians fail to pay for school meals.

### **Income Collection Arrangements**

#### **General**

1. The Headteacher is advised to let all parents know that there should be no expectation of meals being provided by the school without payment.
2. Parents of primary, special and nursery aged school children are encouraged to establish arrangements to pay dinner money **in advance** either on a termly basis or every Monday for the forthcoming week or first school day of the week if different. Where this is not feasible payments should be accepted any day of the school week. Parents should be encouraged to use the on-line payment platform available at participating schools.
3. Payments of arrears will be accepted any day of the week to reimburse the school for any arrears accrued.
4. If meals are not taken then a credit is transferred to the following week.
5. If more meals are taken, then any arrears are carried forward to the following week. **Parents must be given the flexibility of alternating between a packed lunch and a meal provided by RCT Catering Services in any one week, provided there is no issue of meal arrears over 10 days.**
6. If a child has forgotten their packed lunch, schools should seek consent from the parent/guardian before providing the child with a school meal.
7. If consent cannot be obtained, it is a matter for schools to decide whether a meal should be provided. **In the event that a meal is provided** schools should seek to recover such cost from the parent/guardian with immediate effect.
8. **All schools must enforce the 10-day rule.** School meals will not be provided once the level of arrears per child reaches 10 meals. At this stage, parents/guardians are required to provide their child with a packed lunch or make arrangements to collect them at lunchtime. Schools should follow the school dinner money protocol to prevent non paid meals reaching the 10 day threshold.

9. **Schools are only allowed to provide meals after 10 days of no payment if they have requested permission in writing from the Head of Catering Services, e.g. where the school is aware of welfare issues or there is a delay in the free meal application process.**
10. Debts accrued by sibling groups will be treated on a collective basis.
11. Where school meal arrears have been allowed to accrue, schools **must** send details to Education Accountancy every half term, where no arrears exist then a **nil return** must be provided.
12. Arrears must not be written off at the end of the academic year, they should be carried forward in the New Year registers. Details of any balance for school leavers must be passed to Education Accountancy where arrangements to recover any debt will be implemented in line with the debt recovery procedures.

## **Refunds**

1. Refunds may be given where appropriate out of cash received providing they have been clearly recorded, authorised and receipted.
2. Refunds should only be given in the following circumstances:
  - When entitlement to free school meals overlaps a period when the parent/guardian has been paying for the meals.
  - When parents/guardians have paid for meals in advance and are subsequently in credit at the end of the term due to pupil absences.
3. In instances where a parent is in credit, the school shall refund any amount less than £22.50 from cash income received. Any amounts over £22.50 will be refunded by cheque via the Authority Financials system (Creditors). Please contact Education Accounts of any instances of a parent being in credit.  
Telephone: 01443 680651  
[cateringmis@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:cateringmis@rctcbc.gov.uk)

## **Accounting For and Banking of Income**

### **Schools Responsibility**

1. The Primary School Meal return (PSM3) and SIMS catering return should be accurately completed, up to date and signed by the Headteacher on a weekly basis.
2. SIMS dinner money must be updated accordingly for any children arriving late in a morning.
3. Total cash collected and banked should reconcile to the school meal records.
4. The Headteacher should confirm that income received reconciles to the bank paying in records and evidences this on the SIMS banking authorisation form on a weekly basis.

5. Where school meal arrears have been allowed to accrue, schools **must** send details every half term to Education Accountancy of their half term report and their detailed pupil statement of account. **Where no arrears exist a nil return must be provided.** Any nil return must be evidenced with a half term report showing any credit or debit balance for all pupils at the school.
6. **All schools must enforce the 10-day rule.** School meals will not be provided once the level of arrears per child reaches 10 meals.
7. **Schools are only allowed to provide meals after 10 days of no payment if they have received permission in writing from the Head of Catering Services.**
8. Schools must chase up debt in line with arrears procedure.
9. The School must keep copies of all letters sent to parents in accordance with the arrears procedure.
10. Inform Education Accounts of any arrears paid which have been previously charged to the school dinner money arrears contingency budget or school budget.

### **Free School Meals**

1. Only children who are confirmed as being entitled to free school meals by the FSM team should receive free school meals.
2. Once a child is removed from the official list (through a cancellation notice from the FSM section) the parent/guardian must immediately start to pay for their school meals or make alternative provision.
3. Any apparent gaps in entitlement to free school meals should be checked with the FSM section as sometimes entitlement can be backdated and any arrears therefore cancelled.

### **The Free School Meals Section**

1. The Benefits Section will send a consolidated list by e-mail of FSM entitlement at the beginning of every term.
2. Confirmation of any changes both additions and cancellations will be sent as they arise during the school term.
3. Schools should update their FSM lists of these changes and inform the FSM Section with immediate effect if their records do not match those sent by the department.
4. The FSM section will provide a decision on FSM eligibility within 2 working days (where appropriate evidence is provided or a qualifying benefit can be validated through the hub) of receipt for completed postal and e-applications.

5. The FSM section will provide an immediate decision on FSM eligibility for requests made over the phone where all personal details are provided dependent on benefit received (in most cases this could just be name and address of parent) where appropriate evidence is provided or a qualifying benefit can be validated through the hub.
6. Where eligibility can not be determined within 2 working days, the FSM Section will advise the School of the reason. The school may then request permissions from the Head of Catering Services to continue to provide a meal until the FSM qualifying status is resolved.

### **Adult Meals**

1. Staff receiving a school meal must be entered on SIMS dinner money as appropriate. The correct paying in book should be used to account for VAT as this must be paid to HRMC.
2. Staff meals paid by the individual should be collected on a weekly basis and paid into the Council's account via the cash income system; alternatively staff could pay for meals using the on-line payment platform.
3. Any free/Duty meals provided to staff will be charged back to the school budget.

### **Monitoring Arrangements**

1. All primary schools must use the Sims Dinner Money system for the collection & recording of school meal income.
2. Where meals are provided by the County Caterers SLA contract, the Weekly Financial return (form PMS 3) should be completed by the school kitchen, countersigned and agreed by the school and returned to Education Accountancy each week. It is important that the return is completed accurately with particular attention to meal categorisation i.e. free, adult and paid.
3. Schools **must not write off any arrears** balances that have been allowed to accrue. Details must be passed to Education Accountancy who will implement the arrears procedure.

### **Education Accounts Responsibility**

1. The Education Accountancy Section will endeavour to process any arrears in line with the arrears procedure within two weeks (excluding school holidays) of receipt.
2. Schools will be advised when invoices have been paid in full on the Debtors system so that meals can be resumed for that child.

3. Where invoices have been raised previously and all recovery routes have been exhausted and schools have not requested permission in writing to continue providing meals after 10 days of arrears, **the arrears will be charged back to the school budget.**
4. Where all recovery routes have been exhausted and where schools can evidence that they have followed in full the dinner money protocol, **arrears will be met centrally via the dinner money arrears contingency budget and not charged back to the school.**
5. Reconciliation will be sent to schools every Term for a formal response. Where no formal response has been received or request for site visit acknowledged the school will be charged for the difference between the value of meals and income banked.
6. If no Dinner Money Arrears Return is submitted, Education Accounts will contact the School to arrange a site visit to discuss any potential arrears.

### **Collection of Overdue Debts**

The following policy clearly outlines clear protocols for both the School and the Local Authority on the management of school meal debt.

### **Arrears Procedure September 2013**

#### **Introduction**

The following is a standard procedure to be applied when school meal arrears arise in primary, special and nursery schools. The letters included in the Appendices and on SIMS can be used or adapted to suit the requirements of the school. However, the basic information within the templates should be included in any letter sent to parents/guardians regarding school meal arrears.

If schools do not comply with the procedures in relation to school meals arrears (**Stages 1&2**), any resultant arrears **will be charged to the school.**

#### **Stage 1: 1-2 weeks (suggested 5-10 non paid meals)**

##### **When debt is below 10 meals or £22.50**

It is assumed that schools will, at the earliest opportunity, have attempted to make contact with the parents/guardian either in person, text message, by telephone or by means of a detailed pupil statement sent home with the child in an effort to try and resolve the issue and avoid it becoming unmanageable.

They should also have contacted the Free School Meals Section to determine FSM eligibility.

The first letter to parents/guardians should detail the outstanding balance and outline the eligibility criteria for free school meal entitlement. Immediate payment should be requested and it is suggested that alternative lunchtime arrangements should be made for the child(ren) until the debt is settled.

**(see Appendix A template)**

Copies of all letters sent home should be retained should the matter have to be referred to Education Accountancy.

**Stage 2: 2 weeks (suggested where the 10 meal threshold has been reached)**

**Where the outstanding debt is 10 meals or £22.50 and above**

Where arrears are in excess of two weeks parents/guardians should be informed that they must make alternative arrangements for their child's midday meal until the arrears are cleared.

The school must obtain permission in writing from the Head of Catering Services to continue to serve meals without payment, and provide reasons for continuing to provide a meal e.g. where the school is aware of welfare issues or there is a delay in the free meal application process. If permission is **granted** meals can be extended for a further 5 days beyond the 10 day threshold, additional permission is required beyond 15 unpaid meals. If permission is **refused** the meals will be charged in line with the school dinner money arrears protocol.

If payment remains outstanding, a second letter of a stronger nature should be sent by the school to the parents/carers detailing the level of the debt reached as at that week ending. It is advised that this letter should either be sent by post or hand delivered – it should not be sent home with the child.

**(See Appendix B template)**

**Stage 3: 3 weeks (suggested where no payment received after 5 working days of letter B).**

Parents/guardians should be contacted by the school to make an appointment in order to discuss the situation and determine a resolution.

Arrangements for payment by instalment can be drawn up to help clear the debt. It should be stressed that if the child is not entitled to a free school meal the parents/guardians should either (i) provide a packed lunch or (ii) commence payment for meals forthwith and that, should they default on an instalment arrangement, the debt will be automatically referred to the Education Accountancy section where an invoice will be issued and any necessary debt recovery action instigated.

If a parent/guardian makes arrangements to pay and the arrears reduce each week then there is no requirement to refer to the Education Accountancy section to pursue the recovery of the debt as long as the outstanding arrears are reducing and **future school meals are paid for in advance**. In such cases school meals can continue to be provided.

**Stage 4: 4 weeks (Referral to Education Accountancy)**

If no payment is received after 20 school days (10 working days after letter B issued) have passed then the matter should be referred to the Council's Finance Section for debt recovery. Schools should send parent/guardian's full name, address, telephone number and full period of non-payment should be supplied along with copies of all letters sent, detailed pupil statement and payment acknowledgement form signed by parent/guardian.

**(See Appendix C template)**

**If the arrears procedure stages 1 & 2 have not been followed then the Education Accountancy section will not attempt to recover the debt and the school budget will be charged for any outstanding arrears.**

The Education Accounts section will write to the parent and raise an invoice for the outstanding debt where stages 1 & 2 have been followed.

**(See Appendix C template)**

Once a parent/guardian has been invoiced by the Council, no further attempts at recovering the debt should be made by the school and no payments should be accepted by the school against this invoice. Methods of payment as stated on the invoice should be followed. Notification of the invoice will be sent to the school.

### **Stage 5: County Council Debt Recovery**

If payment is not received within 21 days of the invoice date, the Councils Debtors section will send a **First Reminder** letter.

Notice of legal proceedings is then issued 10 days after First Reminder Letter date.

A telephone call is made to debtor immediately prior to passing debt to Debt Collection Agency.

After 10 to 15 days of Notice of Legal Proceedings the debt is then passed to a Debt Collection Agency if no contact or progression of payment by the debtor.

### **Stage 6:**

Once payment is received the Education Accounts team will contact the school and meals can be resumed.

If the debt is not recovered this will be written off to the dinner money arrears contingency budget.

## School Meal Arrears Procedure

## Appendix A

### School Meal Arrears

Dear

It appears that as of today an amount of £(*amount*) is outstanding for school meals taken by (*name of child(ren)*). I would be grateful if you could arrange for this money to be paid as soon as possible.

To ensure that it does not increase further I would request that you make alternative arrangements for your child(ren) at lunchtime as a school meal can only be provided if payment of arrears is made.

Payment can be made at the school office by cash or cheque or alternatively you may wish to pay using your debit or credit card via the secure online payment system at participating schools at [www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schooldinnermoney](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schooldinnermoney) using the login already provided.

The school is keen to provide any necessary assistance and support it can to try and resolve this matter as quickly as possible so if you would like to discuss this matter please contact the school. Our contact details can be found at the top of this letter.

### Free School Meal Eligibility

A free school meal is available to children whose parents have applied for free school meals and who are in receipt of **any one of the following:-**

- Income Support
- Income-Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (**but not if you are also receiving Working Tax Credit**) and your joint Annual Taxable Income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue) is £16,190 **or less** per annum (this figure is subject to change in April of each year)
- Employment and Support Allowance (income related)
- State Pension Credit (Guarantee Element)
- Supported under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

To obtain a copy of the Free School Meals application form you should contact the school office or Free School Meals section directly at Bronwydd House, Porth, CF39 9DL.

Alternatively, if you are in receipt of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit you can make a telephone application by contacting 01443 680363.

I look forward to this matter being resolved in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

## School Meal Arrears Procedure

## Appendix B

### School Meals Arrears

Dear

Despite my previous letter of (*date*) it appears that the amount owing for school meals remains outstanding and has now reached £(*amount*). This amount should be paid with immediate effect.

Payment can be made at the school office by cash or cheque or alternatively you may wish to pay using your debit or credit card via the secure online payment system at participating schools at [www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schooldinnermoney](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schooldinnermoney) using the login already provided.

As stated in that letter until the debt is cleared you should make alternative arrangements for your child(ren) at lunchtime as a school meal can only be provided if payment is received.

If no payment is received within 10 days of date of this letter, the debt will be passed to the Local Authority for collection.

### Free School Meal Eligibility

A free school meal is available to children whose parents have applied for free school meals and who are in receipt of **any one of the following:-**

- Income Support
- Income-Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (**but not if you are also receiving Working Tax Credit**) and your joint Annual Taxable Income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue) is £16,190 **or less** per annum (this figure is subject to change in April of each year)
- Employment and Support Allowance (income related)
- State Pension Credit (Guarantee Element)
- Supported under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

To obtain a copy of the Free School Meals application form you should contact the school office or Free School Meals section directly at Bronwydd House, Porth, CF39 9DL.

Alternatively, if you are in receipt of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit you can make a telephone application by contacting 01443 680363.

If you would like to discuss this matter please do not hesitate to contact the school. The school is keen to provide any necessary assistance and support it can to try and resolve this matter as quickly as is possible.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

**School Meal Arrears Procedure****Appendix C**

School Details	
<b>School:</b>	<b>DfE No:</b>
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Postcode:</b>	<b>Tel:</b>
<b>E-Mail</b>	
<b>Contact at School:</b>	

Family Details			
<b>Child(ren)</b>		<b>DOB:</b>	
<b>Parent/Carer:</b>			
<b>Address:</b>			
<b>Postcode:</b>			
<b>Contact Tel:</b>			

<b>Amount Outstanding £</b> _____ <b>for meals taken between</b> _____ <b>and</b> _____
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<p>In referring this school meal debt I confirm that all necessary action as outlined in the School Meal Arrears Procedure guidance has been implemented by this school to no avail. Enclosed with this referral are:</p> <p>(1) photocopies of the Detailed Pupil Statement showing the accrual of the school meal arrears  (2) copies of letters sent to the parents/carers.  (3) copy of payment acknowledgement form signed by parent / guardian  (4) any other information of relevance to this referral including details of any disputes investigated</p> <p>Authorised by the Headteacher _____</p> <p><b>Should the debt remain outstanding after Stage 4 of the Procedure it will be automatically referred to Legal Services unless advised otherwise by the school.</b></p>
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**For Education Accounts Office only:**

<b>Date referral received and acknowledged:</b>			
<b>Date invoice raised</b>		<b>Account/Invoice number</b>	

**Send to: Education Finance School Catering Team, Bronwydd House, Porth, CF39 9DL**

## School Meal Arrears Procedure

## Appendix D

### **SCHOOL MEAL ARREARS**

Dear

I have been advised by *(name)* School that as of week ending *(date)* you have incurred a debt of £*(amount)* in relation to school meals for *(name of child(ren))*. Despite several attempts being made by the school to resolve this matter the amount remains outstanding.

It is therefore assumed that the debt is not in dispute and this office is now required to forward an invoice to you for the amount outstanding. This will be sent under separate cover.

Payment should be made according to the instruction overleaf on the invoice. Failure to settle your account will result in the debt being referred for Legal action.

**Until this debt is cleared you should make alternative arrangements for your child(ren) at lunchtime as the school will no longer be able to provide a school lunch.**

**You should not contact the school or this office regarding payment of this debt. This matter is now being managed by Credit Control.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Appendix 3**

**Parental Acknowledgement Form**  
***Insert School Name***

**School Dinner Provision**

Dear Head Teacher,

I \_\_\_\_\_ (please print name) parent/guardian of the following child understand and agree that if my child receives a school dinner on school premises that I am required to make payment for the meal provided.

If no payment for meals is received I agree that I need to arrange alternative provision for my child at lunchtime.

<b>Name of child</b>	
<b>Parent/Guardian Full Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Telephone Numbers</b>	
<b>Alternative contact name</b>	
<b>Alternative contact number</b>	

<b>Parent/Guardian signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

**For school office only:**

<b>Date received</b>	<b>Received by (Print Name)</b>	<b>Signed</b>

