



Stanley St Andrew's Church of England Primary School

Payment Policy

At Stanley St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, we recognise the uniqueness of each person, young and old, and believe that all people are special and of worth in God's eyes.

This payment policy has been drawn up to ensure that parents know how and when payments should be made and to ensure that a consistent and fair approach is applied to any debt incurred by parents/carers. We also hope that it will minimise the opportunity for debt balances to build up.

Charges & Payments

All of our charges are set out in the school's Charging & Remissions Policy which is reviewed annually by the governing body.

We ask all parents/carers to use our online payment system Parent Pay to make payment for all school charges.

Parents/carers can also use childcare vouchers or the government's tax free childcare service to pay for breakfast, after school care and after school activity clubs. Please note that childcare vouchers cannot be used to pay for school dinners, trips or any other payment items which would not be classed as wrap around care. (For further information on childcare vouchers and the tax free childcare scheme, please contact the school office).

On starting at our school, families are set up with a Parent Pay account and a password and log in instructions will be issued. Any payments due will then be assigned to their Parent Pay account.

If parents/carers are separated, we are able to set up an account for each parent/carer if required. Please refer to our Separated Parents Policy for further information.

Account Queries

Parents/carers are expected to log in to their Parent Pay account regularly to ensure that any dinner payments are not in arrears and that any charges for clubs, trips and breakfast/after school club are as expected. If a parent has a query regarding any charges, this should be raised with the school office as soon as possible. It may not be possible to investigate charges that are raised later than one calendar month after the charge was levied so it is important to regularly check your account.

Outstanding Payments

As a small school, we operate an open door policy at all times and parents/carers can come and talk to us in confidence about anything. The last thing we would want to do is place any additional pressure on families that may be experiencing financial difficulties so if you are struggling to make

any school payments, we would encourage you to talk to us so we can try and help. It may be that you are eligible for free school meals, or for pupil premium, and if this is the case you can get financial help with the cost of dinners as well as breakfast and after school clubs. Even if you are not eligible for pupil premium there may be things we can put in place to help, such as a payment plan for any arrears and any future payments.

Dinner Money Debt

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are currently eligible for Universal Infant Free School Dinners (UIFSM) and will not be charged for school dinners. If a child is in Year 3 or above (and is not eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)*) their school dinners should always be paid for in advance. This could be weekly, monthly, termly or even longer term. **School dinner money balances should never be in arrears.**

Weekly email notifications will be sent out to parents/carers via Parent Pay if their child's dinner account is in arrears, and parents/carers are asked to make an immediate payment to rectify this. If a payment is not made and the debt exceeds £23 for **one child** or £46 for a **family**, direct contact will be made with the parent/carer either by Parent Hub, email or phone call.

If payment is not made within three school days following direct contact then a formal letter may be sent to the parent/carer instructing them that they will need to provide a packed lunch for their child/children until the outstanding amount is cleared. We may also ask for an advance payment equal to one week's dinner charges per child.

* **Free School Meals (FSM)** - FSM are available for parents who meet certain criteria including the receipt of state benefits. Anyone who thinks they may qualify for FSM should contact the school office for further information. FSM are a statutory right, and it is important that all parents/carers who qualify take up their child's entitlement so that they can receive a school dinner each day. Information on the entitlement to free school meals and how to apply online can be found on Derbyshire County Council's website:

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/education/schools/your-child-at-school/meals/school-meals/free-school-meals.aspx>

Breakfast & After School Club Debt

Parents/carers should ensure that payments are made for breakfast/after school club usage on a regular basis. This is in accordance with our breakfast and after school club policy and our breakfast/after school club usage agreement.

A notification will be sent via Parent Pay each week advising parents of the outstanding amount for breakfast and after school club use.

If a parent chooses to pay using a childcare voucher scheme the school may agree that they make payments on a monthly basis and parents should seek permission from the headteacher for this.

If a regular payment for the use of breakfast or after school club is not made (at least once a fortnight), or if an outstanding balance has existed for a long period of time, or if a large outstanding balance is being accrued, the school will make direct contact with the parent/carer to request payment within three working days.

If a payment is then not made, the school may write a formal letter to the parent advising that they cannot use the breakfast and/or after school club until the outstanding payment has been cleared or a written payment plan has been agreed. The school may also ask for an advance payment against any future usage charges.

After School Activity Club Debts

If a parent/carer wishes their child to take part in an after school activity club (for example Forest School or Sports Club) payment should be made on a regular basis (at least once a fortnight) for each session attended. If a regular payment is not made, direct contact will be made with the parent/carer requesting payment within three school days. If the payment is still not made, the school may write a formal letter to the parent advising that their child will be unable to attend any further after school activities going forward without payment of the outstanding amount.

One Off Payment Items

Parents are sometimes asked to pay for one off items, such as school trips and enrichment activities. We ask that these are paid for ahead of the event. We always seek to keep the costs of such activities to a minimum. If parents are struggling to pay for such items in one go, they should contact the school office and we can work out a payment plan to help.

Recovery of School Debts in Instances of Non-payment

The aim of this policy is to minimise the opportunity for debt balances to build up and to provide a fair and consistent approach to recovering any outstanding debt. The school does however reserve the right to begin legal proceedings to recover outstanding debts and, in the case of school dinner debts, inform the local authority that a child is not being provided with a suitable meal at lunch time. In certain circumstances, the school may believe it is necessary to inform the local safeguarding team if they are concerned that a child's basic needs are not being met.

Linked Policies

- Charging & Remissions
- Separated Parents
- Breakfast & After School Club
- School Handbook for Parents

All policies and documents listed above and referred to within this policy can be found on our school website and paper copies can be requested via the school office.

Policy Review

This policy has been written by the school administration team in conjunction with the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors. This policy was reviewed in June 2023 by the Headteacher and the school administration team and was approved for use by the Governing Body at their meeting on 17 July 2023. This policy will be implemented by the school administration team and the headteacher and will be reviewed annually.