School Meals and Payments Policy

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Reviewer	Teresa Horden

Part of OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Nottingham Diocese Multi Academy Trusts CATHOLIC SCHOOLS Moving Forward Together

Contents

School Meals and Payments Policy *1*

Contents 2

Our Mission Statement 3

Our Vision 3

Intent 3

Provision of School Meals 3

School Meals Costs 4

Application for Pupil Premium/Free School Meals Funding 4

Payment for School Meals 4

Special Dietary Requirements 4

Health and Safety 5

Management of School Meal Debt 5

Our Mission Statement

At Holy Cross, we are very proud of our school motto and our Catholic ethos; **Loved, Valued, Challenged**.

Loved: We love one another as Jesus taught us – our friends, our families and those who we may never meet.

Valued: We value everyone – everyone is important; pupils, staff, parents, governors, and members of the community– no matter their race, religion ability or need. We try to live like Jesus taught us.

Challenged: We challenge each other – not only with our learning but challenge each other to be more merciful to others, have a little more understanding of others' needs and challenge each other to be better people.

Our Vision

At Holy Cross, we aim to develop a caring Catholic community based upon the life and example of Jesus Christ, which envelopes the life and lives of everyone and everything in our school. It is through Christ's message of love and forgiveness that the children, staff, both teachers and ancillary, parents and governors, preserve the essential Catholic ethos of the school.

The school aims to provide a challenging curriculum that reflects our philosophy, broadly balanced and relevant, and to support the development of the whole child to his/her full potential. At Holy Cross, everybody matters, therefore we encourage all to show respect to each other and the environment.

Intent

The School Meal Payment Policy has been adopted to ensure a consistent and fair approach to dinner money payments by parents/carers whose children take school dinners.

Provision of School Meals

Parents/carers of pupils within the school have the choice of paying for a school lunch for their child or providing a healthy packed lunch. All school meals are prepared by cooks from Aspens Catering Services Team and meet the stringent guidelines by the government regarding the provision of healthy school meals. They provide a main course each day* and work on a three-week menu cycle which changes throughout each year.

*Daily menus choices are subject to change, but parents are notified prior to any menu change.

Free School Meals are available to those who qualify, and we believe it is important that those who are eligible take up their child's entitlement so that they can receive a cooked meal each day. Further information on entitlement to Free School Meals (FSM) may be obtained from the school office or via our website https://www.holycrossschoolhucknall.com/parents/school-meals/.

If a child's entitlement to free school meals expires or the parents/carers' personal circumstances change, then the parent/carer **must** provide a packed lunch or make payment in advance for a school lunch. Any parent/carer requiring help with registering for a free school meal claim can request assistance from the school office team who will be happy to help.

School Meals Costs

School meals are available to children at a current cost of £2.70 per day**, or at no cost if:

a) the child is in Reception to Year 2 and therefore qualifies for a Universal Infant Free School Meal.
b) the child qualifies for Free School Meals entitlement, and the school has been notified by Derbyshire County Council's Grants and Benefits Team.

School meals **must** be paid for in advance. Any revision to the price of meals will be notified to parents/carers with sufficient notice to the new charge taking effect.

**Price at £2.70 September 2026 - subject to change each year.

Application for Pupil Premium/Free School Meals Funding

As part of ensuring equality of provision across our schools, Our Lady of Lourdes CMAT has teamed up with Derbyshire County Council to confirm whether our academies are entitled to claim Pupil Premium Funding for your child. The Pupil Premium provides extra funding within the school for additional equipment and support. Pupils eligible for Pupil Premium, due to economic circumstances, will also be eligible for Free School Meals. Staff within your child's school will be able to advise further on this.

Free School Meal applications can be made via Nottinghamshire County Council:

https://notts.cloud.servelec-synergy.com/SynergyWeb/Enquiries/Citizen/FreeSchoolMeals.aspx/

Schools will be advised on the results of the eligibility status and any changes to this status monthly.

Payment for School Meals

Dinners may be paid in advance via your child's Arbor account. Any parent/carer requiring help with registering for online payment systems can request support from the school office.

Special Dietary Requirements

Our catering company, Aspens, firmly believes in providing high quality food for your child to enjoy that is safe to eat. Special diets are an integral part of our catering provision, whether because of an ethical or religious belief or a food intolerance or allergy.

They accept our duty to comply with the Food Information Regulation 2014 which states that allergen information must be provided for all food prepared and sold, and as such we are able to provide a

meal for your child if they have a special dietary requirement, in order for them to do this we require you to complete and return the **special diets form** to the school as soon as possible.

If your child has a food allergy resulting in a severe reaction/anaphylactic shock, we will be in contact to discuss a suitable menu. If this allergy is to one of the known 14 allergens (celery, cereals containing gluten, crustaceans, egg, fish, lupin, milk, molluscs, mustard, peanuts, sesame, soybeans, sulphur dioxide, tree nuts.) then your child can be fed from our allergy free menu until we have agreed a suitable menu with you. If your child has multiple allergies or is allergic to other foods, such as tomatoes we request that you provide a packed lunch for them until we have met with you to agree a suitable menu. For those children with intolerance and lifestyle choices, please follow the ordering system to select a suitable meal from the daily menu.

Health and Safety

If your child is bringing in their own packed lunch, hot liquids, such as soup, are **not allowed** to be sent into school. This is because we cannot control the temperature of hot liquids brought in to school and do not want to risk hot liquids spilling and possibly injuring another child. However, something such as warm pasta is acceptable.

Secondly, any packed lunch sent in from home should be healthy and nutritious. Therefore, it **will not be acceptable** to send into school left over take away food such as McDonalds or KFC burgers and fries type foods. Please continue to ensure that a packed lunch contains a healthy balanced diet. We still do not allow sweets in packed lunches. Finally, please remember we are a **nut-free school**, so please do not send any foods to school that contain nuts.

The NHS provide suggestions for healthy lunch boxes and recipe ideas for families: https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/

The NHS also provide guidance on suggestions for 'sugar swap' foods and further information can be found here: https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/food-facts/healthier-food-swaps/

Management of School Meal Debt

To ensure that the school's budget is not adversely affected by the cost of school meal debt, the Governors consider the fairest system to all families is to pursue a 'Zero Tolerance' approach as we are unable to carry these unmet costs. Although this may seem harsh to some parents/carers it is important that the school budget is spent for the benefit of **all** our pupils and not to cover the debt of a small number.

Therefore, if a child arrives at school without a packed lunch, sufficient money is not present in your child's online account, or if a child's entitlement to FSM has ceased, the school will send a message and telephone the parent/carer as a reminder, in the first instance, to establish if alternative arrangements have been made. In some instances, the school may allow a meal to be provided where it is felt that this is a temporary situation e.g., forgotten lunchbox.

If a child takes a school meal which has not been paid for an email or message detailing how much is owed will be sent to the parent during the week requesting immediate payment to the school. Prompt action will be taken to address any debt issue at an early stage to prevent arrears amassing.

Where a child continues to require meals due to the parent/carer experiencing exceptional hardship, the parent/carer should either apply for FSM or speak confidentially to the Headteacher or the Office Manager. The school will support parents/carers as much as possible in these circumstances. However, if parents/carers make no attempt to contact or co-operate with the school then parents can expect no further assistance from the school.