



Newtown C of E Primary School

School Debt Policy

Ratification Date:	March 2017	Signed: Mrs Emma Howlett (HEADTEACHER) Mrs Janet Cane (CHAIR OF GOVERNORS)
Reviewed	March 2024	Signed: Mrs Emma Howlett (HEADTEACHER) Mrs Glynis Wright (CHAIR OF GOVERNORS)
Reviewed	March 2025	Signed: Mrs Emma Howlett (HEADTEACHER) Mrs Glynis Wright (CHAIR OF GOVERNORS)
Next Review	March 2027	

School Vision

At Newtown C of E Primary School, our motto is enriched and sustained by our Christian values of **Love, Courage and Friendship**, rooted in the teachings of the Bible. We are guided by the call to *“love one another as I have loved you”* (John 13:34), *“be strong and courageous... for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go”* (Joshua 1:9), and *“a friend loves at all times”* (Proverbs 17:17).

As a school at the heart of an evolving community, we warmly welcome children and families from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. We are enriched by the unique qualities each child brings and value the talents and perspectives that help us grow together.

We are an aspirational school serving our community. We seek to know, understand and celebrate every child, nurturing their individual strengths and talents. We prepare our children to become confident, responsible global citizens in an ever-changing world, guided by our core values of love, courage and friendship.

Through **Love**, we show kindness, compassion and generosity, building a community where everyone feels safe, welcomed and valued. Through **Courage**, we persevere, meet challenge with confidence, and stand up for what is right with honesty and grace. Through **Friendship**, we grow together — encouraging one another, celebrating each other’s gifts, and looking to the future with hope and aspiration.

We live out these values by:

- Being a caring, welcoming and inclusive Christian community where staff, pupils, parents and governors work together in a safe and supportive environment, inspired by *“Above all, love each other deeply”* (1 Peter 4:8)
- Promoting the welfare and dignity of every child, safeguarding them from harm — including physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying — in accordance with statutory guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (Department for Education)

- Providing a rich, engaging curriculum that equips children with the knowledge, skills and character to become lifelong learners and responsible citizens, reflecting Christian teachings and British Values
- Building strong, positive partnerships with parents, the church and the wider community, and encouraging participation in local, national and global initiatives
- Fostering our Learning Behaviours of Resilience, Focus, Independence, Self-Regulation, Respect and Boundaries, encouraging children to act with integrity, perseverance and kindness in all they do

At Newtown, we want every child to know they belong, are cherished, and are capable of great things. Through **Love, Courage and Friendship**, we grow minds, shape futures and journey together in hope.

1.0 Introduction

As from 1st April 2017, Newtown C of E Primary School has adopted a strict NO DEBT policy relating to the school meals service and wrap around care.

If debts are incurred then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents. As a school, we could be viewed as being irresponsible and having financial mismanagement by allowing parents to accrue any level of debt.

Every parent will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents give this policy their full support. No parent would take their child to McDonalds and expect them to be given food without paying; the same applies at school.

If parents believe that their children may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals, please visit the eligibility checking service via:

www.hants.gov.uk/hc3s/freeschoolmeals.htm

This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify. Should you need assistance with your application please contact the school office.

2.0 School Meals

Parents must pay in advance for any school meal online directly to HCL, Newtown CofE Primary School catering provider.

3.0 Wrap around care

Parents must book any place at the school Breakfast Club or After School Club in advance, using their child's Arbor account. All places booked, must also be paid for in advance, please see Wraparound Care Terms and Conditions for more details.

Children participating in Breakfast Club sessions will be charged for all sessions booked from

7.30am at £3 per session. This is a charge rather than a voluntary contribution and no subsidies will be offered by school in any circumstances. No refunds for booked sessions can be provided as Breakfast Club is self-financing and has pre-booked staffing and food costs.

All children at Newtown CofE Primary School are eligible to attend the free Breakfast Club session from 8am, as per the National Free Breakfast Club programme.

Afterschool club (Teatimers) has 3 separate sessions available
3.15pm to 4.15pm - charged at £7.50 per day per child
3.15pm to 5.15pm - charged at £12 per day per child (includes snack)
3.15pm to 6pm - charged at £14 per day per child (includes snack)

On the occasion where a child is not collected at the end of the school day and the school finds it necessary to place the child in the After School Club, and Emergency payment of £5 (if the child is collected by 3.30pm) will be required. If the child is collected after 3.30pm the full cost of the session they are in attendance will be charged (see pricing structure above).

Any child not collected by the end of their booked After School Club session, will be subject to alteration of the session fee to cover their collection time. If collection has not occurred by 6pm, there will be an additional £5.00 charge for every 5-minute period past 6pm.

We recommend that parents pay the minimum of a week's sessions in advance; however we recognise that sometimes a last-minute request is needed for the safeguarding and security of your child.

4.0 Monitoring and Reporting of Debt

The Headteacher will ensure that the level of debt is regularly monitored. Suitable records will be maintained and reported to the Governing Body.

5.0 Debt Recovery Procedures

Where payment from the parent or guardian has not been received in advance or at the point of sale, the following process should be applied:

5.1 Debt Recovery Procedures – School Meals

School meal payments are made directly to Dolce the school's catering provider. Dolce will be responsible for all initial debt recovery. They will allow no more than 3 meals unpaid.

Should debt continue to be unpaid, Dolce will pass debt recovery to the school. Parents will be contacted by the school and advised that immediate payment is to be made either to Dolce or to the school (if the debt has been transferred). Parents will be advised that a pack lunch must be provided until the debt is cleared.

5.2 Debt Recovery Procedures – Wrap around care

Step 1:

Initial **Overdue Payment Reminder**: This initial reminder will usually be a reminder text to the Primary Contact of the child only and will say:

Hi Recipient(s) First Name,

We've noticed that Customer Account account has a balance of Customer Account Balance and could do with a top-up. Please make a payment as soon as possible.

Step 2:

Second **Overdue Payment text**: If the debt is not settled within the week or the school has not received any contact from either parent, a more formal text will be sent:

There is still Customer Account Balance owing on Customer Account BC/ASC account. We are yet to hear from you following our previous top up request.

Please make full payment by (set date, usually end of the week). We are happy to discuss a payment plan with you however, we have the right to cancel all future bookings for your child unless we hear from you by the end of the week.

Step 3:

If there is no response to the second overdue payment text or telephone call, the debtor will be invited, in writing, to meet the Headteacher to discuss how the debt will be settled. A template letter is stated below, which has been created for all Hampshire schools by the Hampshire Legal Services Team.

Dear [NAME OF PARENT]

RE: [NAME OF CHILD]

I am disappointed to note that despite several reminders you currently owe the school £[INSERT SUM] in relation to unpaid extended services for your child. I am very concerned at this current level of debt outstanding on your Breakfast Club/After School Club account.

As the School has to fund all debts from its budget, it is essential that all payments are up to date so that the quality of the service provided to all pupils is maintained. As I am sure that you will appreciate, the school operates on a limited budget therefore, to enable us to provide for the welfare of the children, excellent facilities at the highest level possible, then strict financial control is essential.

This situation cannot be allowed to continue and I would ask you to please make arrangements to clear this debt immediately and take steps to ensure your account is kept in credit in the future.

Unfortunately, if the debt is not cleared by xxxxx [usually the first date of the next month], we will no longer be able to offer the services of the Breakfast Club/After School Club to your child.

I am, of course, willing to discuss the possibility of you repaying this debt in instalments. Please make an appointment with the school office to see me within the next week where we will be able to discuss this at the meeting.

However, should I have not heard from you within the next 14 days, I shall arrange an appointment for you and will also be taking advice from Hampshire County Council Legal Services on recovering the unpaid sums from you.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears then please contact the school office immediately so that this matter can be resolved.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

*Yours sincerely
Headteacher*

6.0 Related information

We are certain that by implementing this debt policy, we can help parents/carers manage school payments better and, at the same time, ensure that the school budget is used directly for our pupil's education.

Whilst this policy relates to School Meals and Wrap Around Care, there may be other occasions where parents/carers are invoiced for goods/services not exclusive to school meals or extended services. Therefore, this policy will be used in all cases of debt to the school.