



**Date of Policy: September 2024**  
**Date of next review: September 2025**

## STATEMENT OF INTENT

This policy covers all aspects of school meals at the school and addresses the issues of healthy eating, free school meals and student debt.

The School is committed to providing the highest standards of food to our students at the best possible value for money in the best environment. The School seeks to comply with the guidelines laid out by the Department of Children, Schools and Families and described by the School Food Trust.

## AIMS

The School seeks to:

- Make available to all students a healthy balanced diet which is in keeping with the “Eat Better, Do Better” ethos of the School Food Trust
- Ensure full availability and maximum uptake of free school meals for all eligible students
- Ensure that parents/carers are familiar with how the cashless system works and implement robust procedures for dealing with debt.

## SUPPLY OF MEALS

The School provides its school meals on the premises using fresh produce sourced locally when possible. Sandwiches are either provided by an external supplier or freshly prepared daily by the school catering team. The majority of sandwiches are prepared by the school catering team. All food provided meets the nutritional guidelines for school meals.

The Catering team offer a breakfast, mid-morning break and lunchtime menu making life easier for students whilst giving parents peace of mind.

The service uses up to date cashless catering facilities by using a biometric system.

## FREE SCHOOL MEALS

To apply for free school meals, parents/carers must complete the form available on the Warwickshire County Council website <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals>. A paper version is also available on their website.

Families who receive any of the following may be eligible for Free School Meals if they get any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Universal Credit if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get) Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)

## CASHLESS CATERING SYSTEM

The School uses a cashless catering system. Payment is in advance and there are various methods by which payment can be made. Payments can be made online via Plus Pay. This is the preferred method of payment. Alternative methods are that students can bring cash, to be paid onto their dinner accounts through the Finance Office.

All students, unless specifically requested in writing by the Parent/Carer, will have a daily spend limit of £5.00 applied to their account.

## DEBT PROCEDURE

The School anticipates that, on occasion, parents may not pre-pay promptly for school meals and for that reason the following sets out the procedure for dealing with debt consistently.

The School policy must balance the need for assuring the continued provision of food for all students with the need for all meals to be paid for. Students who have no money to pay for their meal will be allowed to have a meal that day, they will be asked to remind their Parent/Carer to top up their account.

The Debt Procedure will be implemented in three stages:

### Stage 1

An automatic reminder is sent directly from PlusPay if a student goes into minus that day. See Appendix 1.

### Stage 2

A report will be printed from our cashless catering system every Monday and all overdue balances will be chased. Parent will be contacted directly by phone to ask them to either top up the student's online dinner account or by handing cash to the Finance Office. If we are unable to contact the parent, Stage 3 will be applied.

### Stage 3

The student's debt is still outstanding after five working days from our initial contact (Stage 2) and the parent refuses to comply. A stronger letter from the School Finance Manager will be sent informing Parents/Carers that, with effect from a stated date, their child will no longer be provided with a school meal until the debt has been cleared. See Appendix 3.

## APPENDIX 1

Dear (Parent/Carer name), You have a low dinner balance.

**Your current balance is (£ insert balance).**

This is below the minimum balance of £5.00. Please login to +Pay to make a payment.

If you have recently made a payment please ignore this reminder.

## APPENDIX 2

Dear Parent/Carer

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child.....

Class:..... As at ....../...../20.... this account is showing a debt of £.....

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately. Once the debt has been cleared, please ensure the account is always in credit. You can make payment via Plus Pay online or by cash.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the Finance Manager [finance@avonvalleyschool.uk](mailto:finance@avonvalleyschool.uk) in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

Blake Francis  
Headteacher

## APPENDIX 3

Dear Parent/Carer

Our records show that despite previous contact with you, you have not paid dinner money for your child ..... Class:.....

As at ....../...../20.... the account is showing a debt of £.....

**In accordance with our school meal's policy, your child will not be provided with a school meal as of ..... until the debt is cleared.**

Please ensure you have made sufficient provision for your child's lunch as is your legal responsibility. Once the debt has been cleared your child is welcome to resume school meals with payment in advance.

Please arrange for this money to be paid immediately. If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the Finance Manager on [finance@avonvalleyschool.uk](mailto:finance@avonvalleyschool.uk) in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

Blake Francis  
Headteacher