

March 2023

Management Circular No 24

To Heads of all Establishments

Procedure for Dealing with Non Payment of School Meals

With ParentPay now fully established in schools, this circular is intended as a reminder of the approach to the management school meal debt. This process should be applied when debt is incurred by both pupils and staff.

Every school should always ensure that our pupils have access to a school lunch. However, it is essential that the procedures below are followed as unactioned negative ParentPay balances can quickly turn into a significant debt burden for the council.

The procedure is as follows:

1. Schools should run reports from ParentPay showing current balances per child, at least once per month.
2. The Head Teacher and admin staff should discuss the report and agree on the next actions. Records of these decisions should be maintained for audit purposes and to identify recurrent non-payment.
3. For debts up to £20 per child, schools should contact parents advising of the accrued debt and of how to pay on ParentPay by emailing the parents with the letter template detailed in the processes on Glasgow Online. If it is deemed necessary, it may be useful to signpost parents to appropriate agencies that may be able to assist them in applying for relevant benefits or grants.
4. If the child continues to arrive at school without money or the ParentPay account has not had any funds added to it within a reasonable time¹, a reminder should be issued and all appropriate contacts/supports used to help the parent/carer to ensure that the debt does not escalate further. (¹ A reasonable time should be determined on an individual basis by the head teacher and a record of the decision should be retained).
5. If debts reach **£100 per child**, the school should contact the CBS Hub who will arrange for an invoice to be raised. At this point, the head teacher is confirming to proceed. Any invoice raised must be paid via the instructions on the invoice and not through ParentPay. Any monies paid into ParentPay cannot be offset against an invoice. This will also be stated on the invoice. Parents should be advised that the debt has been referred to CBS using the email template on the process document.
 - 5.1 When a pupil leaves a school, whether to another Glasgow school or another local authority, an invoice should be raised for the outstanding debt by following the process in point 5 above.
6. Once an invoice has been raised:

If a parent/pupil brings in money to the school, it should not be accepted. Parents must be reminded to pay the invoice following the instructions indicated on the invoice. If a pupil brings money to school to pay for invoice, the parent should be contacted, advised of the above and that no money was accepted from the pupil. This communication should be documented and retained.

If a parent adds funds directly to the pupil's ParentPay account rather than paying the invoice, this will not offset the monies due and the debt on the invoice will remain to be paid. However, if there are no other debts on ParentPay to offset, this payment can be refunded to the parent to allow them to pay the invoice.

7. When a parent pays the full amount of a GCC invoice, the CBS Hub will contact the school to advise of this. Upon receipt of this advice, an adjustment should then be made to the pupil's account and a record of the reason for the adjustment. Any adjustment made should balance and reflect the amount raised on the invoice.

A full note of the process can be found at the link below under Bad Debt procedures

<http://www.goglasgow.org.uk/Pages/View/154>

Douglas Hutchison
Executive Director of Education