

Varna Community Primary School



Dinner Money Policy

Approved by: Governing Body

Date: February 2026

Last reviewed on: January 2025

Next review due by: February 2027

Aims

- To outline the school's procedures regarding school meals
- To work with parents to provide a flexible approach to the lunchtime nutritional needs of our pupils
- To ensure the smooth, efficient and cost effective operation of the school dinner system
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of school staff, parents and pupils
- To present a workable, fair mechanism for the collection of school dinner money.

Key Information

- The Headteacher and Governing Body believe that it is important that your child/ren have a healthy, nutritious school meal at lunchtime to provide him/her/them with the energy required to concentrate in class and cope with the demands of the day
- Parents who do not want their child/ren to have a school lunch should provide a healthy packed lunch. For lunchbox tips visit <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>
- If a parent wishes their child/ren to change from school meals to packed lunches or vice versa this can all be completed via Dolce catering online portal (School Grid) <https://app.schoolgrid.co.uk/>. You can also access the link from the school website .

Meal Payments

School meals are payable in advance directly to Dolce Catering through the online portal <https://app.schoolgrid.co.uk/>.

Meals can be pre-ordered, paid for in advance and balances can be reviewed.

Meal prices are communicated by Dolce to parents/carers. Prices are also located on the school website.

Free School Meals

Your child may qualify for free school meals. Information is available on Manchester City Council website, for the latest guidance refer to:

https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/500186/education_benefits/7355/free_school_meals

Apply online

<https://apply.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims>

If you believe that your child/ren may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals, please apply online or contact the school office if you need help with your application.

Universal Infant free school meals in England

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a universal free school meals (UFSM) for which there is no need to complete a form.

However, if your child is entitled to Free School Meals, you should still apply online in order that the school can benefit from Pupil Premium funding.

<https://apply.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims>

Allergies

If your child has an allergy to specific food this must be notified on the pupil starter pack prior to admission. Any changes must be notified in writing to the school office immediately.

Parents/carers should also note any allergy on the Dolce meals portal (School Grid) via the Food Allergens page.

Procedure for the collection of school meal arrears

Meals are payable in advance. Dolce Catering may allow up to three days' meals debt, after which the debt is passed to the school to make payment via invoice. Any further debts incurred will be charged directly to the school. The school budget is intended to support children's learning, and we cannot use it to cover meal debt owed to school.

Next steps to recover debt:

School will ask parent/carer to move their child to packed lunches until the remaining balance is paid in full. We want to help you avoid accumulating further debt. Once the debt is cleared, you are welcome to resume school meals, provided the account is in credit.

In some circumstances, a payment plan may be agreed with the Headteachers authority. Please speak to the school office to discuss.

However, if an agreed payment plan is not kept up to date, school may seek legal advice for recovery and refer the debt to Manchester City Council legal team.

A final debt letter will be issued from school to parent/carer before referring the debt to Manchester City Council legal team. **See Appendix A.**

Appendix A

Final Parental debt letter

.

[Insert date]

Dear [name of parent],

I am writing to you following [insert dates of any letters/communication sent concerning the debt].

Your outstanding debt is [insert amount]. As we have not received payment from you to settle this cost, I have no option but to refer this outstanding debt to our advisers to see what legal action we can pursue to recover it.

We will continue to offer support where practical. If you would like to hear more about the support available or meet again to discuss options, I would be more than happy to do so. You can contact the school at [insert contact details].

We will contact you in due course over the action we will take, which could include taking legal action to recover

To prevent this, please contact the school office immediately to discuss steps you can take to repay the debt.

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher]