

Ravensworth

Terrace Primary School



Debt Recovery Policy

Embedding an Inclusive Culture | Establishing Progressive Consistency | Enabling Cohesion | Ensuring Coherence

*We believe in the worth and potential
of every individual.*

*We have high expectations and goals
for ourselves and others.*

We will persevere even in the face of obstacles.

We believe that everyone can succeed.

Together, we are winners.

Respect Independence Perseverance Kindness Teamwork

Ravensworth Terrace Primary School

Respect Independence Perseverance Kindness Teamwork

Debt Recovery Policy

Rationale

At Ravensworth Terrace Primary School we will endeavour to collect any monies due to the school quickly and efficiently. In order to protect the interests of the school we will follow a strict policy for bad debts to ensure that the financial viability of the school is not put at risk.

Aims

- To recover monies owed to the school as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- To have clear procedures for dealing with bad debt.
- To be sensitive to the needs of parents when pursuing debts.

Implementation of Policy

At Ravensworth Terrace Primary School wherever possible, income due will be collected before or at the time the relevant sale or service is provided. If this is not possible, a debtor's account will be issued. All debts will be recorded and non-payment will be followed up. This policy applies to income collected for a range of services including private music tuition and breakfast club. At Ravensworth Terrace Primary School, we raise our own debt requests for services provided by the school such as music tuition. Reminder letters will be sent out at regular intervals with a final reminder at **12** weeks. If the debt remains outstanding then the service will be withdrawn.

This policy also applies to school meals and this aspect of the policy requires some service specific context

School Meals

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a legal duty on all state-funded schools in England, to offer a free school lunch to all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 from September 2014.

Ravensworth Terrace Primary School is responsible for the collection and reconciliation of all school dinner money for children in Years 3 - 6.

Parents are responsible for providing a lunch for their child(ren) in Years 3 - 6, this may be in the form of a paid meal, application of a free meal entitlement or a packed lunch from home.

Parents must pay for school meals in advance unless their child(ren) have a free school meal entitlement.

Application for free school meals are available online at [Free school meals - Gateshead Council](#)

Ravensworth Terrace Primary School has a clear set of procedures for the payment and collection of school meal money and any arrears that occur.

Meal Arrangements

- Children have school dinners during their Reception year. The meals in Reception Class, Year 1 and Year 2 are currently provided free of charge from government funding.
- Pupils may have either a packed lunch or a school meal.

- Should a pupil, who has packed lunches, forget their meal or require a lunch due to exceptional circumstances, then a school meal will be provided.

Meal Charges

The school will adopt the pricing considering recommendations by the school meal provider, Gateshead Council.

Meal Payments

- All parents and carers are expected to pay for school meals unless the pupil is in receipt of a free school meal.
- Payments should be made online using the Arbor App.

A full dinner money statement is available from the school office, detailing meals taken and payments made.

- If your child is absent from school and meals have been paid for, these will be carried forward as credits. If credits continue to the end of the child's time at Ravensworth Terrace Primary School they will be refunded back to parents and carers.
- Reminders will be sent to parents who have not paid for school meals that week. These reminders will take the form of a letter which will be sent via e-mail. (Appendix 1)
- In the event that a school dinner is expected when arrears stand at one week then parents and carers will be contacted by the school administrators and will be expected to bring a packed lunch to school for lunch time that day.
- Should arrears total 2 weeks then parents and carers will be informed that they are responsible for feeding their child and that failure to provide either a lunch or lunch money may result in a referral to children's services as a neglect issue and reminded that they are required to send packed lunches for their child(ren) until the debt is cleared. (Appendices 3 & 4)
- Once a cessation of service letter has been issued, a parent will not have the option of transferring back to school meals unless the debt has been cleared. If the debt has been cleared the child will be allowed to transfer back to meals, however, meals will only be provided if paid for in advance. If payment is not received in advance then the meal service will cease immediately.
- Debts will be carried over and remain with the child across the years in school to allow the maximum time for arrears to be recovered. Debts will be transferred to a sibling if the child leaves the school at the end of Year 6 and a younger sibling is in school as the child does not hold the debt but the parent or carer.
- In the event that the debt is not recovered and packed lunches are not provided from home, the school reserves the right to request advice and assistance from the Education Welfare Officers or in extreme cases Children's Services.

Procedure to Write off Debts

If after every effort has been made to collect the debt and it has been unsuccessful, individual (irrecoverable) debts may be written off in accordance with the following procedures:

- Debts up to the value of <Insert Amount> to be approved by the Headteacher and reported to the next meeting of the governing body.

- Debts exceeding <Insert Amount> to be referred to the governing body for approval, either directly or after consideration by the finance committee.
- Debts exceeding <Insert Amount> should be referred to the Local Authority for advice.

Policy reviewed: September 2026

Appendix 1 Graduated Response Letter 1

Ravensworth Terrace Primary School



Mount Pleasant Road, Birtley DH3 1AY Telephone (0191) 4334200

Email: ravensworthterraceprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk

Head Teacher: Mr A Ramanandi

Name

Address

Date

Dear INSERT NAME HERE

Re: School Meal Payments for XXXXX Year 3

XXXX lunch account is currently in arrears. The outstanding balance on 27 September 2026 is -£15.00. I would be grateful if payment could be arranged as soon as possible online via the Arbor App.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Scott

Administrative Assistant

Appendix 3 *Graduated Response Letter 2*

Ravensworth Terrace Primary School



Mount Pleasant Road, Birtley DH3 1AY Telephone (0191) 4334200

Email: ravensworthterraceprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk

Head Teacher: Mr A Ramanandi

Name

Address

Date

Dear INSERT NAME HERE

Re: School Meal Payments for XXXXXX Year 3

XXXXXX lunch account is currently in arrears. The outstanding balance on 27 September 2026 is - £30.00.

Please either pay the outstanding amount in full on the next school day or contact me on 0191 433 4200 to discuss how you may pay by instalments.

Payment for school meals should be made in advance online via the Arbor App.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Mowbray
School Business Manager

Appendix 4 Graduated Response Letter 3

Ravensworth Terrace Primary School



Mount Pleasant Road, Birtley DH3 1AY Telephone (0191) 4334200

Email: ravensworthterraceprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk

Head Teacher: Mr A Ramanandi

Name

Address

Date

Dear INSERT NAME HERE

Re: School Meal Payments for XXXXXXX Year 3

XXXXXXX lunch account is currently in arrears. The outstanding balance on 27 September 2026 is - £25.00.

We previously requested in a letter dated ????? that the amount outstanding for XXXX's lunch account was to be paid in full or for you contact Mrs Mowbray to arrange paying in instalments.

We have not received full payment or any form of contact requesting to pay in instalments.

The governors have instructed me to take this matter very seriously. If you have any problems paying this debt, please contact me immediately. If you do not contact me within 2 working days of receipt of this letter, in line with the School's Debt Recovery Policy, we insist that you send a packed lunch for your child until the debt is cleared. As it is your responsibility to feed your child, if you do not provide a packed lunch or lunch money then it may result in the school seeking assistance from the School Welfare Officer or in some circumstances a referral to Children's Services as a neglect issue.

Please contact me on 0191 414 3108 to arrange a meeting to discuss how the outstanding amount of -£25.00 will be paid to the school.

Yours sincerely

Mr A Ramanandi
Head Teacher