



# SHARPS COPSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Our ref: SCPN School Debt Policy – Oct 2023

20<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Dear Parents & Carers

I am writing to inform you that we've come to that time of the year again when we're reviewing and updating our school debt procedures. A copy of this policy is available for you to view by visiting our school website at [www.sharpscopse.hants.sch.uk](http://www.sharpscopse.hants.sch.uk) or available on request as a hard copy from the school office.

In a brief outline, the school takes the stance that the best system of approach is a '**NO DEBT**' policy. We understand that it may seem a very hard stand as there appears to be a culture of debt tolerance, and that this will be tough to implement. However, it should become easy to maintain once parents and carers realise our school only offer free school meals to children whose parents qualify for **Free School Meal** (FSM) entitlement and/or **Universal Free School Meals** (UFSMs), applicable to children in **Years R – 2**.

A Before and After School Activity Club service is provided for our children whose families are working or are attending college courses, at a cost of **£3.25** per child per session, payable in **advance** of attendance.

After School PE Clubs are also provided for children in 5 week blocks every half term at a cost of **£3.25** per child per session, payable in **advance** of attendance.

School uniform is also available to purchase from the school; sweatshirts are priced at **£11.15** each, fleeces **£15.95** each and bookbags are **£6.45** each.

Please place orders by emailing us on [adminoffice@sharpscopse.hants.sch.uk](mailto:adminoffice@sharpscopse.hants.sch.uk) Include your child's name in the **subject heading** and we'll size them up - payments to be made using the **SCOPay** account.

PE Hoodies can be ordered and purchased via the school and are **sold on supply and demand**, alternatively plain ones are acceptable and can be purchased via our local super markets and sports stores.

These services and supplies are no different to those that are provided by any other business' in that meals and other services must be paid for in advance and on demand. Most parents and carers understand that they can't take their child(ren) to McDonald's and expect the provision of food or services without paying or who say they'll pay when they get paid at the end of the month, or expect a football coach or music teacher to teach their child(ren) free of charge.

However a minority of our parents and carers don't pay on time for these services, which **potentially** places the school in a position of **subsidising** these families with funding that is intended by law to educate children, causing a considerable amount of extra work for our office staff as well as embarrassment for all concerned by chasing outstanding money owed to the school.

## **School Lunches**

If your child has a school lunch every day **£15.00** should be paid in **advance** on Monday morning using the SCOPay cashless system or **£3.00** per day. If a **pre-payment** has been made and your child is absent, a **credit** will be made to their account and carried forward until their return to school.

Parents and carers of children who arrive without a packed lunch or who have not had their lunch paid for, will be contacted and asked to make a payment using the SCOPay method if a school lunch is required, asked to send in a packed lunch or make arrangements for their child to be collected for a home lunch. The school office staff need to know by **10.00am** (after this time meals are being prepared and cooked) to let your child know what has been arranged as well as letting kitchen staff know in time for a meal to be cooked.

If a parent or carer genuinely forgets to pay or has left their child's packed lunch at home and is unable to return due to work/college commitments, the school may grant a debt allowance of one meal, and is dependent on whether there are other outstanding school debts. This debt must be paid by the end of the day of receipt or at the latest the next day, and future meals must be paid for in advance before any more meals are provided.

The school will have no alternative but to send a **final letter** from the Headteacher stating that it's unacceptable and legal proceedings may be forthcoming if parents and carers who make no **attempt/or are unable** to clear the debt, or to provide a packed lunch for their child or to make arrangements for them to be collected to go home for lunch. Once this final letter has been issued, your child won't be able to receive **school lunches** until the debt has been cleared. There's also a possibility that Children's Services will be informed that you are not carrying out your **care of duty/responsibility** to your child by not providing food for them at lunchtime.

## **Before & After School Clubs**

Advance attendance codes for our **Before** and **After** School Club members are pre-populated every 4 weeks or as near to the end of each month as possible, to enable parents or carers to make an **advance** payment at the beginning of the month using information provided by you on your registration form, so that parents and carers can see at a glance on SCOPay how much is owed; fees are **£3.25** per child per session, which is **£16.25** per week or **£65** per 4 week block.

An email is sent to parents and carers at the same time to let them know the weeks being charged for and that a statement is on the way home. Payments can be made at anytime using this system eg, weekly or monthly etc, but is expected in **advance** of attendance in all cases, much the same as

practiced by other childcare providers. If an absence occurs due to **illness** or other **reported absence** during this time, a credit will be carried over on your child's account to the next 4-week block.

Debts occurring using these services may put your child's placement at risk of suspension or even loss until they've been cleared. If hardship is occurring, please let the school know sooner rather than later so that we can help if we can and put a payment plan in place.

### **After School PE Clubs**

The school runs these in 5 week blocks every half term and charge **£3.25** per session per child, much the same as the Breakfast and After School Club. Fees are expected to be paid for in advance for each 5-week block; if an absence occurs due to illness or if rained off (all clubs are taking place outside due to lack of space), a credit will be carried forward. If your child is a member of the After School Club, they will go back there and charges made for attending this club, and if not a member then a credit will be made. Advance attendance codes will be pre-populated onto our SCOPay system for you to see the status at a glance. If the club is rained off, parents and carers will be contacted in advance via text message or email of the situation and decision.

Parents and carers should be aware that when there is an outstanding debt at school, access to other services eg, an emergency admission to the Before and After School Activity Clubs, use of After School PE Clubs will not be permitted until the debt is cleared.

Please don't hesitate to contact me on the above number if you need further information about the content of this letter, where I'll be more than happy to answer any concerns or queries you may have.

Thank you for your continued support, co-operation and understanding.

Yours sincerely

M. Elsen  
Headteacher