



South Wonston Primary School

Dinner Money Policy

Approved by: Jessica Lott

Date approved: June 2026

Review date: June 2027

Introduction

South Wonston Primary School is committed to ensuring that all children have access to a healthy, nutritious meal during the school day. This policy outlines the arrangements for ordering and paying for school meals, eligibility for Free School Meals, and the school's approach to managing meal accounts.

Payment for School Meals

As of September 2026, the cost of a school meal is **£2.85 per day (£14.25 per week)**.

- School meals are payable in advance.
- Parents/carers are expected to pay in advance or on a daily basis.
- Parents/carers pay for school meals online via the Arbor app in the meals section.
- Please note that once you have topped up, you will need to contact the school office if you would like to move money to a different account or would like a refund.
- If a child has ordered a meal and leaves part way through the morning due to illness, no refund will be given.
- If a child arrives at school without a packed lunch and no school meal has been ordered, the school will provide a meal to ensure that the child has access to food at lunchtime. The cost of the meal will be charged to the parent's Arbor account and should be paid promptly (except for children in receipt of Free School Meals or Universal Infant Free School Meals).
- School meal prices are reviewed periodically and parents/carers will be notified in advance of any changes.

Nursery Children

Nursery children may either bring a packed lunch or purchase a school meal. School meals for nursery children are charged at the same rate as statutory-age pupils and are subject to the same payment arrangements outlined in this policy.

Free School Meals

From September 2026, children from households in receipt of Universal Credit are entitled to Free School Meals.

Families may qualify for benefits-based Free School Meals if they receive one of the following:

- Universal Credit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

From September 2026, Free School Meals eligibility has been expanded to include all children in households receiving Universal Credit. Parents/carers are encouraged to apply even where their child already receives a

free meal through another entitlement (Universal Free School Meals), as this helps ensure the school receives the appropriate funding and support allocation where applicable.

Parents/carers can apply online through Hampshire County Council's Free School Meals application system: <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/hants>. If you do not have access to the internet, please ask the school office who can apply on your behalf.

All applications for Free School Meals are treated with the strictest confidence.

The school encourages all eligible families to apply for Free School Meals. In addition to providing free meals where appropriate, successful registration may enable the school to receive additional funding through Pupil Premium. This funding is used to provide additional educational support, resources and opportunities for eligible pupils.

Universal Free School Meals – Early Years and Key Stage 1

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to receive a free school meal at lunchtime through the Government's Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) scheme. Some children in these year groups may also qualify under the benefits-based Free School Meals criteria, and families are encouraged to apply where eligible.

The Universal Free School Meals entitlement applies automatically and does not require registration.

Each child is entitled to a hot, two-course meal each day, including:

- A meat or vegetarian main option
- Vegetables
- Potatoes, pasta or rice
- Salad
- A dessert

Special Dietary Requirements

The school and catering provider will make every reasonable effort to accommodate pupils with medically verified dietary requirements, food allergies or intolerances.

Parents/carers should notify the school of any dietary requirements and provide supporting medical information where requested. Appropriate arrangements will be made in consultation with the catering provider.

School Meal Arrears

School meals should be paid for in advance via Arbor. The school will monitor meal accounts regularly and parents/carers are expected to ensure that sufficient funds are available to cover the cost of meals ordered.

Where an account falls into arrears:

- The school adopts a strict no debt above £10 relating to school meals.
- An email will be sent to parents when a debt of £10 or more has built up on their child's account and they will be asked to pay for those meals as soon as possible.

- Parents/carers experiencing financial difficulties are encouraged to contact the school confidentially at the earliest opportunity so that support and advice can be offered.
- No debt of more than £10 per child will be allowed to incur before a request to provide a packed lunch is made.
- We request that all parents/carers give this policy their full support. If debts are incurred, the school has to pay for the meals eaten. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education has to be used for debts incurred by parents/carers.
- If a debt is not cleared, parents/carers must provide a packed lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received, nor a packed lunch provided, the school office will telephone the parent or carer asking them to come to school with the money immediately or provide a lunch option for their child.
- If a reasonable arrangement to clear a debt cannot be made, the school reserves the right to forward the debt onto Hampshire County Council Debt Recovery Service which could result in legal proceedings taking place.