



Charging & Remission Policy

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1. Introduction

The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including trips, clubs and residential experiences can make towards pupils' education.

The Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

This Policy has been compiled in line with DfE requirements and in accordance with S457 of the Education Act, 1996 and will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Governing Body's Finance Committee.

The school cannot charge for education provided during school hours including the supply of materials, books or other equipment). However, the school can ask for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities.

2. General

The Governing Body may from time to time, amend the categories of activity for which a charge can be made. Nothing in this policy statement precludes the Governing Body from inviting parents to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of additional activities which take place in school time.

Parents may be advised that the continuance of an activity may depend upon voluntary contributions, but once it has been decided to run such an activity no qualifying child will be excluded on the grounds of voluntary contributions.

3. Charges

The Governing Body reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances for activities organized by the school:

- School journeys in school hours
- The board and lodging element of approved residential activities deemed to take place in school hours
- Activities outside school hours – the full cost to each pupil of all approved activities deemed to be optional extras taking place outside school hours
- Individual instrument tuition – the cost to the pupil for providing any instrument tuition not part of normal LEA peripatetic provision
- Charging in kind – the cost of materials, ingredients, equipment (or the provision of them by parents) for the following subjects: D&T, Science, Art / Craft. The governing Body reserves the right to charge for ingredients and materials or require them to be provided if the parents have indicated in advance that they wish to own the finished product.

- Late pick up from school – any collections made after 3.45pm is subject to charge per 5 minute period up to 4pm, and increased for every 15 minutes thereafter*. We would hope every effort is made to pick up at the end of the school day.
**Any collection after 4.30pm may be referred to Child Protection services.*
- Lost library books – the cost of the replacement of the book will be charged for lost library book
- Damaged or lost items – the school may charge parents for the cost of replacing items broken, damaged or lost due to their child's behaviour.

Other items the school charges for include but are not limited to: school lunches, nursery fees, extended hours clubs including breakfast club, hire charges, damage to, or loss of property.

Appendix 1 list the current charges.

4. Payments

There are a number of ways available to make payments to the school.

The school encourages all payments to be made online in becoming a cashless school. Payments can be made by most debit or credit cards via Pay360, official payment links sent by the school and QR codes.

For invoiced items parents / companies can make direct bank payments as per the invoice.

Payment can also be made on site via a card reader. We are unable to take payments over the phone. All card payments made on site will be subject to a transaction fee as per the provider transaction charge rates.

5. Remissions

When the parents of a pupil are in receipt of income support or universal credit, the Governing Body will offer to remit in full the cost of full board and lodging for any residential activity that is deemed to take place in school hours or where it forms part of the syllabus for the National Curriculum.

The governing Body may wish to remit in full or in part the cost of other activities for particular groups of parents, for example, in the case of family hardship. When arranging a chargeable activity such parents will be invited in confidence for the remission of charges in full or in part.

Authorisation for such remission will be made by the Headteacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors.

6. General principles underlying Charging and Remissions

Letters detailing class visits and excursions make explicit reference to contributions being voluntary.

No child or family will be discriminated against or made to feel self-conscious about making no payment or part payment towards school visits and excursions

Costs of visits and excursions will be kept to a minimum to be affordable to families

In the event of a visit costing considerably more the school will look to subsidise costs making up the shortfall from the curriculum budget (accepting that corresponding savings will have to be made elsewhere) or arrange fundraising or support from William Patten PTFA to ensure all costs are affordable.

In some instances, it might be necessary to cancel an activity if insufficient voluntary contributions are made.

7. Pupil Premium

Pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium may be funded for all school activities, music, after school clubs, trips and residential. Those in receipt of Pupil Premium who may want to make a voluntary contribution to the school is welcomed to do so.

8. Refunds

If a child is unable to attend an activity for any reason, any contribution made will not be refundable if the activity is still taking place and if the school still has to pay the cost for that child's attendance at the activity.

School Dinners

Refunds will be given for school meals if notification is received before registers open on the morning of the cancelled meal. Refunds will take the form of credit against future lunches.

9. Failure to Pay

Unless there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher has agreed to the remission/partial reduction of any of the above mentioned charges, the school will take all action necessary including legal action to recover unpaid charges.

Useful Links:

Learning Outside the Classroom guidance:

Latest DfE guidelines:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charging-for-school-activities>

REMISSION POLICY

10. Debt recovery

Any money owed to school has an impact on the budget and may affect the resources we can provide to all children. We hope that parents understand this and will make every effort to avoid owing the school money.

The school will take all reasonable measures to collect debts as part of its management of public funds. . This encompasses all debts owed to the school including, but not limited to, payments for goods, services, school trips, and school meal payments. A debt will be written off or passed onto an external debt collection agency only after all reasonable measures (commensurate with the size and nature of the debt) have been taken to recover it.

In general payment for all goods and services supplied by the School would be collected in advance or 'at the point of sale'.

The school's debt recovery policy will observe the relevant financial regulations and guidance set out in the financial procedures manual for schools and any other legal requirements. There is an active debtor control account on the school's accountancy system.

Acceptable 'credit period'

The Full Governing Body has determined that one half term is an acceptable 'credit settlement period' before the debt recovery procedures are applied.

The acceptable period of a debt will initially be 30 days, which must be stated on invoices and/or charging documents/letters. Any debt outstanding after this period will be dealt with, by the Business/Finance Manager or other delegated personnel, as follows:

- 1) An invoice should be issued on official school stationery, for the full amount in order to officially set up the debt
- 2) The first reminder letter will be sent through the student or by mail
- 3) If, within two weeks of the first reminder letter, payment has not been received, a second letter will be sent by recorded delivery.

If no response is received following the second reminder after 3 months, the school will send a letter, stated as "Final" to the debtor advising them that the matter may be referred for legal action.

This letter will be sent by recorded delivery to ensure that the debtor has had every chance to respond. At this point, at the discretion of the Governing Body, the debtor may be advised that they will have to pay in advance for certain services in the future.

11. Dinner Money Debts

Payment for school meals should be paid in advance or at the point of sale. However where meals have been issued and payment has not been received in advance or at the point of sale, parents will be telephoned or written reminder letters sent immediately. Any money outstanding 14 days after meals have been taken will be dealt with in line with steps 1 – 3 above. If within one week of the second letter payment has not been received, then a final letter will be sent in line with (4) above. At this stage the parent/guardian may be told that their child can no longer have school meals and informing them that they should arrange to send a packed lunch in for their child from a specified date.

All through the above stages every effort will be made to make personal contact with the debtor via telephone and text messaging. A log of correspondence and telephone calls and copies of all letters will be kept for audit and legal purposes.

12. Negotiation of Repayment Terms

Debtors are expected to settle the amount owed by a single payment as soon as possible after receiving the first 'overdue payment' reminder.

However, if debtors are unable to pay on time and make requests for 'repayment terms' these may be negotiated at the discretion of the Headteacher. The debtor may be advised that they will be required to pay in advance for all future supplies or the supply will no longer be available to the student or to the debtor. This decision and its basis will be recorded.

A record of all such agreements entered into will be retained and in all cases, a letter will be issued to the debtor confirming the agreed terms for repayment.

13. Debt Write Off

All efforts to recover the debt, must have been exhausted, before being considered for write off, including:

- i) Assessing if all reasonable steps been taken to recover the debt
- ii) Assessing the prospect of recovering the income without significant investment in time or resources e.g. where the value of the debt is less than the cost of recovering it

14. Reporting of outstanding debt levels

The Head teacher will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is regularly monitored. Suitable records will be maintained to detail individual debts and the total value of debt to the school in order that it can be determined at any time and reported to the Finance Committee and/or Governing Body. The Resources Committee and/or Governing Body will review the level of outstanding debts every term to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debts is effective.

The Business/Finance Manager will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is monitored reported to the Finance/Resource Committee and the Governing Body in their scheduled

meetings. The Committee will review the level of outstanding debts every term to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debts is effective.

The system of accounting maintained should be so up to date that the level of outstanding debt is known at any time. The Business/Finance Manager will inform the Headteacher of outstanding debts on a monthly basis.

15. Debt Recovery Procedures

If people are unable to pay

The School may reduce or cancel a debt in certain circumstances. A sensitive approach to debt recovery will be carried out, taking the following factors into account.

- Hardship – where paying the debt would cause financial hardship.
- Ill health – where our recovery action might cause further ill health.
- Time – where the debt is so large compared to the person's income that it would take an unreasonable length of time to pay it all off.
- Cost – where the value of the debt is less than the cost of recovering it.
- Multiple debts – where someone owes more than one debt to the School. In this situation, an attempt to agree one repayment plan to include all debts will be established.

Debtors are expected to settle the amount owed by a single payment as soon as possible after receiving the first 'overdue payment' reminder. If a debtor requests for 'repayment terms' these may be negotiated at the discretion of the Finance Committee and/or Governing Body.

16. Bad debts

Write-off of any debt over the value of £250 can be authorised by the Headteacher and up to £500 requires the written approval of the Finance Committee via the Chair, debts over the value of £500 will be referred to and authorised by the Full Governing Body.

Where debts exceed £5,000, schools must first obtain the approval of the Assistant Director of Finance at Hackney Education and then the Governing Board/Finance Committee, to write the debt off.

A record of the write-off, the reason for it, and the approval for it, will be retained for 7 years.

Policy Agreed: April 2023
Policy Review Date: April 2024

Appendix 1: Charges

current as at 2022.23

School lunch = £2.75 per day

Nursery top up fees = £135 per week

Breakfast Club = £3.50 per day

School run clubs (before school, after school and lunch times) = £5 per session

Hire Charges = various (see lettings policy and application form)

Unauthorised late pick up from school = £5 every 5 minutes from 3.45pm – 4pm; £15 every

15 minutes thereafter up to 4.30pm

Charging for materials / ingredients - variable

School residential - variable

Music tuition - tbc