



Charging, Remissions and Refund Policy

Reviewed by Finance and Personnel Committee 17/10/17

Next Review Date: Autumn 2018

1. POLICY STATEMENT:

This policy has been formulated in accordance with the following DfE guidance:

- Charging for School Activities, October 2014
- Model Agreement: Early Years provision and free of charge and free childcare, March 2017
- Early years entitlements: operational guidance, July 2017

This policy is monitored by the Governing Body, and will be reviewed annually or earlier if necessary.

2. AIM

The aim of this policy is to set out what the school will charge for trips and activities that occur inside and outside of the school hours, including fees for wrap around care provision and the school nursery. The policy also outlines the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested from parents.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body of Bridgewater Primary School is responsible for determining the content of the policy and the Head teacher for implementation. Any decisions with respect to individual parents will be considered by the Governing Body.

4. ACTIVITIES FOR WHICH THERE IS A CHARGE:

In line with DfE guidance, the Governing Body makes the following charges:

Residential trips during school time:

The school charges parents for the full cost of board and lodging of these trips and request a voluntary contribution to cover the cost of activities and transport. Children who are registered, at the time of (or at any point in the 6 month period prior to) the visit, for Free School Meals will not be charged for board and lodging but will be asked for a voluntary contribution to cover the cost of activities and transport. If the school does not receive sufficient voluntary contributions the residential will be cancelled. The school operates a Pupil Premium Voucher scheme for children registered for Free School Meals or Pupil Premium funding (see section 8). These vouchers may be used to contribute towards residential visits.

Residential trips outside of school hours:

The full cost of any trip and overnight stays, organised by the school, that take place at weekends and during school holidays will be charged for as these are deemed to be 'optional extras'.

Out of School Club:

Wrap around care for pupils is considered to be an 'optional extra' for which there is a charge. Fees are calculated taking into consideration a number of factors which include equipment, consumables, accommodation and staffing costs. In addition, to the core costs for regular advanced bookings the following additional charges are made:

- 'ad-hoc' sessions
- late collection (after 5.45pm)
- late payment and debt recovery
- supplement for nursery children

These incur additional staffing costs and charges to the school for extending the opening hours of the school building.

Charges are reviewed annually.

In all circumstances, parents/ carers are required to sign a contractual agreement with the school to secure Out of School provision for their child.

The school also accepts Childcare vouchers and subscribes to the Government Tax Free Childcare scheme for payment of the Out of School Club fees.

Nursery School:

Free Entitlement:

From the term following a child's third birthday parents/carers are entitled to a maximum of 570 hours free childcare per year (15 hours per week over 38 weeks). No charge will be levied for parents/carers claiming their Free Entitlement only.

Parents/carers may claim their entitlement from more than one provider at the same time but must not exceed a total of 570 hours over 3 funding periods. Where parents/carers have claimed at a different setting the school reserves the right to charge the parent/carer for any funding shortfall at the rate of the Free Entitlement funding for that child under the Local Authority single funding formula plus any deprivation supplement applicable.

Working parents/carers who meet the national eligibility criteria may access up to 30 hours free childcare at Bridgewater Primary Nursery School subject to availability.

In order to qualify for free entitlements parents / carers must, by the head count day set by the council each term, have:

- provided proof of address and the child's birth certificate,
- signed the LA free entitlement form and
- had their eligibility (if claiming 30 hours) verified by the school

Fee-paying nursery places:

Fees for any additional hours used by the child and family over and above any free entitlement will be charged per session with appropriate rates for Breakfast Club, Morning / Afternoon sessions, Lunch Club and After School Club. Fees for nursery children attending the school's wrap around care will reflect the additional staffing requirements.

Additional hours are offered in line with the following criteria:

- The school will prioritise the offering of Free Entitlement places where children are eligible and on the school application list
- Places that might otherwise be unfilled following the admissions process (ie when all eligible applicants have been offered), and before the termly census date, can be offered for a fee
- Part time fee paying places for rising threes may be offered where the child will have their third birthday in that term but is not yet eligible for the Free Entitlement. For example a child who turns 3 on the 6th September would be eligible for the 15 hours Free Entitlement from the following January. However, where this is an unfilled place they could pay for their additional hours and take up a place from their third birthday.
- Fees will be invoiced each term in advance for additional hours and payment can be made termly or on a monthly basis but always in advance. Ad-hoc sessions may be available and will incur an additional supplement for administration.
- If fees are persistently paid late, the child's place for additional hours may be withdrawn.

In addition, to the core costs for regular advanced bookings the following additional charges are made:

- 'ad-hoc' sessions
- late collection from a session
- late payment and debt recovery

Charges are reviewed annually by the school and Governing Body

In all circumstances, parents/ carers are required to sign a contractual agreement with the school to secure additional hours for Nursery provision.

The school also accepts Childcare vouchers and subscribes to the Government Tax Free Childcare scheme for payment of the Nursery fees.

Lunch, Breakfast and After School Club:

The Lunch Club excludes the provision of lunch but includes drinks. Children will be expected to bring their own packed lunch. Advice will be given to parents/carers on the

importance of providing a healthy and nutritional packed lunch. Parents/carers can request, in advance, a hot lunch from the school menu for which there will be an additional charge. Breakfast club charges include the cost of a healthy breakfast and the After School Club charge includes the provision of a snack. Packed tea are available at an additional cost and must be booked in advance.

Music tuition:

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. In addition, the school also subscribes to the government's First Access programme. This provides whole class instrumental sessions in Key Stage 2 delivered by staff from the Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust (NMPAT). The school does not charge for these lessons.

The school does charge for instrumental music tuition provided by peripatetic teachers from NMPAT for individual or small group lessons provided at the request of parents. Parents are required to give at least 6 weeks' written notice if they wish to terminate music lessons and will be required to pay the music fees for this period unless the vacancy can be filled. The costs are subsidised, in part, by the school and this subsidy is reviewed on an annual basis by the Governing Body. The Governing Body reserves the right to withdraw the subsidy if music fees are not paid promptly. We give parents information about additional music tuition as pupils enter Year 3.

Lost school equipment, books etc

Parents will be expected to pay or replace lost items of school equipment.

Breakages, damage to school property and equipment

A charge may be made to recover part, or the whole cost, of damage to buildings or school property and equipment which is the result of willful damage or neglect by a pupil.

5. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS:

When organising school trips or visits, or visitors into school e.g theatre groups, which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to contribute to the cost of this.

The following is a list of additional activities organised by the school, which require voluntary contributions from parents. These activities are known as 'optional extras'.

This list is not exhaustive:

- for class trips to locations outside of school that requires a fee to be paid. For example:
 - visits to museums and topic related visits;
 - outdoor adventure activities;

- sporting activities which require transport expenses;
- visits to the theatre;
- musical events.
- for the cost of a coach to and from the school.
- pay for the cost of an educational visitor to run a programme in school.

The terms of any request made to parents will specify that the request is for a voluntary contribution and in no way represents a charge. In addition, the following will be made clear to parents.

- that the contribution is genuinely voluntary and the parent is under no obligation to pay
- if the school does not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, it may cancel the event.
- That the registered pupils at the school will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request.

The responsibility for determining the level of voluntary contributions is delegated to the School Business Manager.

Voluntary contributions will be used to:

- cover the admission fee for groups of children on trips
- cover the cost of coach transport to and from school
- cover the cost of employing an educational visitor into the school to run programmes.

6. REFUNDS:

Refunds for day trips and activities will only be offered under exceptional circumstance (eg if a school visit has to be cancelled or if a child is absent due to illness) or if the surplus collected for an activity exceeds the cost of that activity by £5 per pupil. Income of less than £5 per child will be paid into the main school account. Any surplus generated less than £5 will be used to cover any deficits on any under-recovered activities.

Should the amount collected per pupil exceed £5, parents/carers will be offered the refund in writing, with a reply slip attached to the letter stating whether they wish to take up the offer, or decline it, where the surplus will be placed (see below), along with a deadline by which a response is required. If no reply is received by the deadline, the school will assume that the parent/carer intends for the school to retain the funds. All refunds should be made via cheque payment or parentpay to the parent/guardian concerned.

Deposits paid by parents and carers for residential trips will be non-refundable unless another pupil takes up the place, or the school can be refunded by the third party organisation. All letters asking for deposits will inform parents of this policy through the wording: *“To secure a place on a residential visit a deposit will be required. This deposit will be non-refundable unless another pupil can be found to take up the place. However, if the trip is cancelled by the school, for example for reasons outside our control, we will try to make a full refund wherever possible.”*

Where trips are cancelled the school will refund all money, except where deposits have been paid by the school and cannot be redeemed from the third party.

Refunds are not issued for ‘optional activities’ including music tuition, pre-booked wrap around care and nursery provision.

7. REMISSIONS POLICY:

Should the estimated cost to parents or carers make it financially impossible for any pupil to take part in any activity they should contact the school. All discussions relating to individual family’s financial circumstances will be confidential. Under exceptional and legitimate financial circumstances the governing body may agree to provide some financial support for activities.

Children of parents who are defined by the government as ‘on a low income’ are encouraged to register for ‘Free School Meals’ (FSM), even if their child is already receiving Free School Meals as part of the government’s Universal Infant Free School Meal programme. The school uses the FSM register to identify and to provide additional support to these children.

Parents of children who are on the FSM register will not be charged for the cost of board and lodging for residential trips.

Children could qualify for Free School Meals (and hence Pupil Premium), if parents are in receipt of the following entitlements:

- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family’s income (as assessed by Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190 (Financial Year 2013/14);
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
- an income related employment and support allowance

Parents can register or check their eligibility online using the following link:

<https://northamptonshire.firmstep.com/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F.Name=pngUPC7K7Fo>

8. PUPIL PREMIUM VOUCHER SCHEME:

The Governing Body has agreed that, from September 2014, children who are registered for Free School Meals or who have been registered for Free School Meals during any period in the last 6 years will be eligible for the school's Pupil Premium voucher scheme. Each child will be given a nominal £100 annual virtual voucher which can be used within the school to pay for music lessons, make voluntary contributions towards trips and to take part in clubs. These vouchers may be also accumulated to subsidise the cost of residential trips in year 4 or year 6. These funds are not transferable should a pupil move to another school. The purpose of the scheme is to overcome barriers to learning or stimulate a love of learning outside the curriculum.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Reviewed by the Finance and General Purpose Committee on 17th October 2017

Ratified by the Full Governing Body on 1st November 2017

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
Mary Kay,
Chair of Governing Body