

Bitterne C of E Primary School



Policy for Charging for School Activities and Remissions Policy

Headteacher

Last review- December 2022

Next review – December 2024

Chair of Governors- Amanda Humby

Charging Policy for School Activities

Including guidelines for personal property in school

Reason for policy

This policy is designed to:

- ✦ Support the principle of free education, whilst recognising budget limitations
- ✦ Provide the basis for a whole school approach to charging for school activities
- ✦ Inform staff, parents, governors and inspectors of the school's approach to funding off-site and other activities.

The legal position

The 1996 Education Act sections 449 to 462 requires the school, subject to the limited exceptions detailed below, cannot charge for education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)

The school must inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of eligible benefits of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

This policy reflects the guidance set out in the DfE 'Charging for school activities, (May 2018)

Aims

We aim to

- ✦ Provide offsite activities that will support and develop all pupils' learning.
- ✦ Give reasonable advance warning to parents of the need for a charge, or a contribution.
- ✦ Ensure that any activity for which a charge is made or a contribution is required, provides value for money and complies with the Charging for school activities DfE May 2018.

The policy – Main principles

What the school cannot charge for:

- As part of an admission application- paragraph 1.9 of the 'School Admission Code 2012) rules out requests for financial contributions as part of the admission process.
- education provided during school hours (including supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- education provided outside school hours, if it is part of the national curriculum, or part of religious education
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent.

What the school can charge for:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/ her to own them.
- Optional extras- see below
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances
- Community facilities

Optional extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as 'optional extras'. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, or equipment.

Optional extras are:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not part of the national curriculum or part of religious education.
- Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the pupil is to be educated)
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.
- Extended day services offered to pupils (for example breakfast club and after – school clubs)

In calculating the cost of an optional extra, an amount may be included in relation to:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- The cost of buildings and accommodation;
- Non-teaching staff
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
- The cost or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided by the number of pupils participating. It will not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

In addition, where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge cannot include the cost of any alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. Therefore, no charge will be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional extra will be based on parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore sought for an optional extra where charges will be made.

At Bitterne CE Primary School, there are a range of optional extras where parents can choose for their child to attend. (residentials, music tuition, after school clubs, breakfast club). The school Pupil Premium Offer is there to assist parents on low incomes and on certain benefits to access any optional extra. Please refer to the current offer.

Residential Field Trips (optional extra): Currently Stubbington Year 4 and PGL Year 6

Parents in receipt of allowances in line with Pupil Premium eligibility will have the board and lodging charge supported by the Governors provided the course takes place in school time, or is part of the National Curriculum. Please refer to the current Pupil Premium offer for the level of support given.

If the activity is outside the National Curriculum it is defined as an optional extra and a charge will be made to cover the actual costs incurred. Participation in these activities will be on the basis of parental choice and willingness to meet the charge levied.

One-Day Field Trips (Voluntary contributions)

In order to cover the cost of field trips, it will be necessary for parents to contribute. Contributions are voluntary and parents are under no obligation to make a contribution. However, if insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the school cannot fund it from some other source, then the visit must be cancelled.

In each instance, the school will state the level of contribution per child necessary to enable the visit to take place. This is usually already subsidised by the Friends PTA for every child.

For children who are eligible for Pupil Premium or Free School Meals, the school will fund all or part of the cost from Pupil Premium budget. (Please refer to the current Pupil Premium offer)

Alternatively, in discussion with the Headteacher a reduced voluntary contribution will be agreed. However, every child will be included on the trip regardless of contribution. Bitterne CE Primary will work to ensure that parents are not made to feel pressured into paying, as it is a voluntary contribution and not compulsory,

The school will not ask the parents who have already contributed to cover any shortfall for the trip overall.

The school will be mindful of the proposed cost of any off-site trip at the planning stage. Where the cost for admission and/ or transport are particularly high for a trip, the headteacher will liaise with the trip leader on how to reduce the cost or find an alternative. The alternative may be arranging for an expert to visit the school at a cheaper cost while still enhancing and bringing to life the children's learning

Materials for Technology and Art:

Materials and ingredients: some activities, which broaden the curriculum and make it more interesting for children are expensive in terms of materials and ingredients. Where models, recipes etc. are being made which require a special purchase of materials and ingredients, a contribution may be required and or a charge may be made for the completed item, if the child / parent wishes for this to be taken home and own the items.

However, there will be no requirement to purchase. This is an option where the parent wishes to own the finished items.

The charge will cover costs and no more. If a child / parent does not wish to take the item home, the amount charged will remain the same. The charge will be calculated by the total cost divided by the total number of children.

General Equipment

In EYFS and KS1, all children have a pencil available to use and some in Y2 will have a pen. In KS2, children receive their own pencil and a writing pen at the start of the year from school stock. These can be replaced free of charge when they run out.

Details of all activities for which a contribution is sought or a charge made will be circulated to parents well in advance of the activity.

Library Books

The school uses online software to manage the loan of school books. Children scan books and these are recorded against their personal library account.

The school librarian will regularly send a reminder letter to the parents of children who have an overdue book.

No child will be stopped from taking books home on loan even when they have damaged or lost books in the past. The school will work with the child / parents to ensure they understand the value of books and develop a lifelong respect for books.

The school will only charge for lost books as a last resort after exhaustive searches in school or at home. However, if a school book is lost or wilfully damaged by a child, the school may make a charge to go towards its replacement, usually a contribution of £5.00. However, this does not usually cover the cost of replacement. The charge will be refunded if the book is later found and returned to school.

This charge also applies to any Little Wandle books that are lost or wilfully damaged. It is very important that staff report any lost or unusable books to Beth Barry (Phonics Lead), so a replacement can be ordered to ensure the scheme is complete.

Damage to property

Repairs to equipment by accidental damage will not be charged.

Damage caused by wilful or negligent action by a pupil will be charged to the parents.

However, the cost to parents can be reduced, in agreement with the Headteacher, where the child completes some community tasks afterschool. These will be carried out under the supervision of the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Procedures - For Dinner Money

Parents are asked to use the online payment system for dinner money. The child or parent should pay for school meals before the meal is taken. However, the school will not allow a child to go hungry due to them not having a lunchbox or the money for a school meal.

The school aims for all children who are eligible for 'Free School Meals' to claim for them.

The school office will send out reminder letters for non-payment. We will work with parents who are not paying for school meals to agree measures to ensure that the debt reduces. This will involve setting up a meeting with the Business Manager and the Headteacher to find a solution to clearing the debt. This may be through a repayment plan and/or bringing sandwiches for lunch. The school will also explore Free School Meal eligibility with these parents.

If a child or staff member is absent from the start of the day, there will be no meal charge. When a dinner is booked during registration and then the child or staff member is then unwell and has to leave the school after 9.30am, the dinner will still be charged for as the order has been placed with the kitchen and the food has been cooked.

Staff ordering a City Catering dinner, must also ensure that they have enough funds in their account to pay for their meal before ordering it. If an ordered meal results in a staff member's account into debt, they will be asked to add funds to their account. If this does not happen, they will not be able to order a dinner until funds are added to clear the debt.

Breakfast Club

The schools asks for payment in advance of the sessions attended. There is a discount if all 5 days are attended and a reduction for siblings of the same family.

The school funds places for children eligible for Free School Meals or Pupil Premium.

Children must be registered before they can attend Breakfast Club.

On the occasions where a child who has not attended breakfast club comes to school hungry, as they have not eaten breakfast, they can be offered cereal or toast. The allergies list will be referred to and parents contacted. This will enable them to access their learning for the morning. The Breakfast Club Leader may make a nominal charge made to cover the cost of providing the breakfast, particularly if this is a regular pattern. This will always be added to cpoms, so the DSL has oversight of the situation and can look for patterns and clarify with parents and take further action, as needed.

The Breakfast Club has a separate policy for fees and payments that should be read alongside the above.

Non Payment of dinner money and breakfast club fees

The Office Manager in liaison with the Business Manager will ensure that the procedure for recovering debt to the school due to non-payment of dinner money or breakfast club fees is followed. This procedure is set out below in Appendix 1

After school clubs

These happen outside of school hours and are not part of the national curriculum. The school engages with a number of trusted suppliers of after school club provision. These clubs are privately run and charge parents directly as an optional extra.

The school makes a termly charge to the club leader in order to cover use of the space, basic utilities, consumables and admin connected with the club.

Holiday / INSET day child care – community facilities

Schools are allowed to provide facilities that can be used by the local community for example out of hours/ holiday childcare. These facilities further the benefit of the pupils at the school and their families. The school will make a charge for the use of these facilities, and a profit can be generated provided it is spent on the purposes of the school.

Transport during school hours

This could be for a visit or a sporting event. Transport provided by the school in school hours will be provided to all, although a voluntary contribution may be requested.

Please refer to the current Pupil Premium Statement for the offer.

CHARGING GUIDELINES FOR MUSIC TUITION

How the guidelines were developed

Although the law states that, in general, all education provided during school hours must be free, instrumental and vocal tuition is an exception to that rule.

The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 set out the circumstances in which charges can be made for tuition in playing a musical instrument, including vocal tuition. Details below.

Charges can be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of any size, if the tuition is at the request of the pupil's parent. Charges will not exceed the cost of the tuition, including the cost of the staff who provide the tuition.

Children at Bitterne CE Primary School can expect the highest quality of music tuition in school. The school works with an external music provider to implement a wider opportunities project called 'Music on the Map' in Year 4 where every child plays an orchestral instrument 'free of charge'. This is because the school cannot charge where we teach the national curriculum for music.

Children in years 2 to 6 are encouraged to continue to learn to play an instrument through the provision of peripatetic music lessons organised by the school outside of normal music lesson times.

The Governors of Bitterne CE Primary are determined that every child who wishes to should be able to play an instrument, regardless of their family's ability to pay. Therefore, the school will fund tuition for children eligible for Pupil Premium.

The school will also not make a charge for music tuition where a pupil is 'looked after' (LAC) or 'previously looked after' (PLAC) by a local authority.

School's terms and conditions for the provision and maintenance of current music provider's instruments

The cost of providing and maintaining instruments is expensive. Therefore, in respect of any loaned instrument, parents are responsible for the following:

- The maintenance and safe-keeping of the instrument
- Insuring the instrument through the provider's insurance policy. Once this has happened children are able to take the instrument home. The insurance fee is still payable for children in Year 4 who take part in free 'Music on the Map' instrumental tuition, if they wish to take the instrument home.

Parental charge towards the cost of music tuition, music books, sheet music and instrument accessories

Parents are charged for the cost of tuition each term by our music provider (Showcase Performance)

directly. The school will support Showcase in implementing their terms and conditions for charging and collection of fees. The following guidelines apply:

- A charge is requested at the start of the term
- Parents are asked to commit, where possible, to their child learning an instrument for the year and will be still be charged for the whole term when their child gives up without reason. The Music Leader will liaise with Showcase for any children who have indicated they wish to give up in order to find a reason. In most cases this can be resolved and the child can continue to enjoy learning their instrument. Where this is not possible, parents will be informed Showcase of their decision.
- Showcase will not refund in the event of the occasional absence of either the music teacher or the pupil.
- The school is not liable for any other event that means a child's lesson cannot go ahead eg. Off-site trip, Church Service. Planned events will be shared with Showcase before each term to avoid event impacting of peripatetic lessons.
- When a child does not turn up for their lesson on time, the peripatetic teacher will endeavour to find them without impacting on the tuition of other children. There will be no refunds in this situation. The school would look to put in place a system for reminding the child in liaison with the class teacher and Showcase. Showcase inform parents if the child is choosing not to attend.

In addition, other costs may include and would be paid direct to Showcase Performance:

- Music books or sheet music, which may range from £5.00-£12.00. This can usually be purchased through Showcase or from local music shops or online.
- The full cost associated with music exams (NB some children may be prepared and entered for graded music exams by their instrumental teacher. Children are not entered for a music exam without prior discussion with the parents and their written approval)
- The cost of replacement reeds, strings etc., as appropriate

Music charging responsibilities

The Music Leader will:

- Liaise with Showcase Performance and all peripatetic music teachers over organisation of their lessons in school- ensuring registers are kept and shared, progress is being made, and reports are written and appropriate music grades are prepared for.
- Plan for the level of music tuition needed each year to ensure all children that wish to can play.
- Discuss in the first instance any parent or pupil concerns over their music tuition including those relating to value for money or costs.
- Liaise with Admin Officer over numbers/ groupings for music tuition

The peripatetic music provider (Showcase) will:

- Co-ordinate payment of annual instrument insurance and provide an up to date list to the school.
- Send out Music tuition payment letters at the start of each term and follow up any non payment

The Deputy Headteacher will:

- Liaise with the current music provider to ensure that every child is provided with high quality music tuition with value for money.

- Provide information to governors on number of children playing instruments, broken down by those eligible for Free School Meals
- Discuss impact on school budget of subsidised music tuition on delegated music provision funding.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or sooner if needed

Guidelines for personal belongings in school

Responsibilities for property brought from home

The school takes no responsibility for any items brought from home that then become damaged or lost in school.

The school asks that portable game consoles and cameras etc. are not brought into school.

Sometimes items that relate to current learning are brought into school at the request of the class teacher. The class teacher will make every effort to ensure they are not damaged or lost will supervise these items.

Where an item is valuable or irreplaceable the parent of the child must ensure safe handover of the item to the class teacher who will take custody of the item on behalf of the child and parent. However, the school will not be liable for loss or damage.

All scooters and cycles **must be locked** in the racks and are left at the owner's risk. The school will not be liable for any loss or damage.

Mobile phones- see E Safety Policy – For Upper KS2 only.

The school understands that a large number of children in Upper KS2 have a smart phone. These are not encouraged in school. Where a parent allows their child to walk to and from school the child may have a mobile during this journey. However, when they reach school the phone must be handed to the office staff. It must be labelled and switched off.

The parent and the child must sign the 'mobile phone agreement' prior to any mobile being in school. This outlines the conditions of use. The parent agrees that the school does not take responsibility in the event of damage or loss of the phone. This responsibility remains with the parent and child. Termly audits checking the parental mobile phone forms will be carried out by the office.

Uniform and lost property

The school has a uniform to encourage a sense of belonging and to give all pupils a clear identity. However, the school works hard to ensure that the cost of uniform is not prohibitive to those on low incomes.

Where appropriate the school will support through school uniform grants.

The school works with Skoolkit to provide uniform with the logo. However, parents are free to choose clothes from any retailer and then school has chosen colours that are readily available in low cost retailers. See prospectus for current uniform guidance.

The Friends PTA hold a stock of quality second hand uniform at a very reasonable cost.

Lost property

The school encourages all items to be clearly labelled. Where items are not labelled they are currently stored in tubs in the medical room. Only unnamed items will be placed in lost property. Parents and children are able to access the 'lost property' to check for lost clothing. There will be hand gel available to clean hands before and after checking the box.

A display of items will take place every Parents' Evening. Items left unclaimed at the end of the year are recycled.

Staff, parent and visitor personal belongings in school

- All staff will have access to lockable storage for valuable personal items. Teacher cupboards are not locked but can also be used at the discretion of the adult. Every adult is responsible for their own belongings and should not leave valuable items unattended in classrooms or in the staff room.
- Visitors will be offered secure storage in the office as appropriate. Parent helpers will be asked not to leave bags unattended or can leave them in the office.
- Electrical items bought from home **must not** be used unless they have been PAT tested in school. Where the school is aware of a personal electrical item being used in school the owner may be liable for the cost of PAT testing the item. (Please refer to fire training – electrical causes of fire)
- All visitors and staff use the car park at their own risk. The car owner will take full responsibility for any damage that occurs whilst the car is parked on school premises and agree to follow the 'Use of the Car Park' guidance.
- Every staff member is required to wear their ID card in school. Where this is repeatedly lost, a charge will be made for a replacement.

These guidelines will be reviewed alongside the charging policy.

Appendix1. Procedure for non-payment of funds to school (Dinner money/ breakfast club fees)

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

- A text will be sent out each day for any dinner debts on the system.
- If payment is not received and the outstanding balance reaches £10.00, a second text will be sent to chase any outstanding payments each Friday.

- If payment is still outstanding at the beginning of the following week, then the office will phone the parent/carer to discuss the matter.
- In the 2nd week of arrears and / or the balance is over £20.00, we will write to the parents / carers to invite them to a meeting with the School Business Manager or Headteacher to discuss the outstanding amount.
- Should arrears total three weeks and /or the balance is over £30.00 the school will write to the parents / carers to confirm that the parents / carers will be required to send packed lunches for their child(ren) until the debt is cleared. In this case, if a school meal is booked, then parents will be contacted and will be expected to bring a packed lunch to school that day. If the debt has reached this stage a late payment charge of £10 will be added to the outstanding amount to cover our administrative costs.
- If the debt remains outstanding at the end of the half term and the debt is not recovered and packed lunches are not provided from home, school will notify the Local Authority of the debt and instruct them to begin debt recovery proceedings.