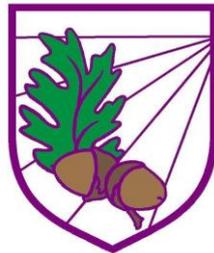


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OAK VIEW PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL



CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

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1. Purpose

We believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra curricular) independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

Main ECM outcome: Enjoy and achieve

2. What was consulted?

The policy has been informed by *A Guide to the Law for School Governors* and the DCSF guidance "*Planning and Funding Extended Schools*" and "*Charging for School Activities*" (January 2009).

3. Relationship to Other School Policies

This policy complements the school's equality policy, curriculum policy, educational visits policy and the teaching and learning policy.

4. Roles and Responsibilities of Headteacher, Other Staff and Governors

The headteacher, staff and governors will ensure that the following applies:

4.1. No charges will be made for

- education provided during school hours (including the 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 a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education

- tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school*
- examination re-sit(s)* if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school
- education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours
- education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip
- transport provided in connection with an educational trip.

* If a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus a charge will be made.

4.2. Activities for which charges may be made

a) Activities outside school hours

Non-residential activities (other than those listed in 1 above) which take place outside school hours, but only if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside school hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours).

b) Residential activities

Board and lodging costs (but only those costs) of residential trips deemed to take place during school time. However, pupils whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (see point 3 below) may not be charged for board and lodging costs.

Residential trips deemed to take place outside school time (other than for those activities listed in 1 above).

Is a residential trip in or out of school time?

If the number of school sessions on a residential trip is equal to or greater than 50 percent of the number of half days spent on the trip it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into two sessions. A "half day" means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

When any trip is arranged parents will be notified of the policy for allocating places.

c) Music tuition

Music tuition for individuals or groups of up to four pupils.

The following is a form of words that could help to explain to parents and carers what may/may not be charged for.

Charges will (or may) be made as indicated below. Parental agreement will be obtained before a charge is made.

Activities which can be charged for (with the exception of board and lodging for residential trips) are regarded as "optional extras". Charges will not exceed the actual cost (per pupil) of provision

Activity or thing which will or may be charged for	Notes	Remitted or help available
Charges will/may be made for any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where a parent wishes their child to own them	For example, a clay model - a charge to cover the cost of the clay.	A reduced charge will/may be offered depending on individual circumstances Costs subsidised by the school.
Charges will/may be made for music tuition	The cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument or singing, where the tuition is an optional extra for an individual pupil or groups of up to four pupils	A reduced charge will/may be offered depending on individual circumstances Costs subsidised by the school.
Charges will be made for the board and lodging component of residential trips	The charge will not exceed the actual cost	Remission for category A (see below)

4.3. Families qualifying for remission or help with charges

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the governing body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances. This remissions policy sets out the circumstances in which charges will be waived. If remission or help is available in relation to a particular charge it is indicated in the right hand column of the table above. Criteria for qualification for remission are given below.

Category A

Parents in receipt of

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit, (providing you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190) provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs) does not exceed the sum given in the Revenue and Customs rules
- Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

Additional categories of parents may claim help with some costs in some circumstances

4.4. Additional considerations

The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- where possible we shall publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the school year so that parents can plan ahead
- we have established a system for parents to pay in instalments
- when an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip
- we acknowledge that offering opportunities on a "first pay, first served" basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

4.5. Voluntary Contributions

When organising a school event, trips or visits which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school will invite parents to contribute towards the cost. All contributions are voluntary. If insufficient voluntary contributions are received the event, trip or visit may not go ahead.

If an event, trip or visit goes ahead, it may include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. No child will be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay.

The governing body or head teacher will also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

5. Arrangements for Monitoring and Evaluation

The Finance Committee of the governing body will monitor the impact of this policy by receiving on a termly basis a financial report on those activities that resulted in charges being levied, the subsidies awarded (without giving names) and the source of those subsidies. It will seek to evaluate the impact of the school's extended services on those children most in need of additional support.

5.1 Policy for Bad Debts

1. First reminder letter - after two weeks of the debt becoming outstanding, the first informal reminder letter from the office staff will be sent through the post or via the pupil in school.
2. If within two weeks of the initial letter, payment has not been received, a second more formal letter from the office staff will be sent through the post.
3. If no payment is received after two reminders, a letter is drawn up in the name of the Headteacher detailing a request to contact the school with regard to non-payment
4. If after the third letter there is a failure to respond, the Headteacher has the authority to write off a debt up to £100 using his/her knowledge of the circumstances and previous record of payment.
5. If the debt is greater than £100 the Headteacher will refer to the resources committee of the governors, who will decide in the light of

previous history of payment, whether to write off the debt or to refer the matter to the Law and Administration section of County Hall. The resource committee may write off a debt up to £500.

6. Copies of all reminder letters and correspondence will be kept in school.

7. Non-payment of school dinner money. If a debt of £20 occurs a letter outlining the debt and if they would like to discuss any payment plan or financial difficulties. If there is no contact and non-payment after this letter then the parent will be asked to provide a packed lunch until the time when the debt is cleared.

5.2 Refunds

At the end of each journey or visit, the surplus or deficit will be calculated and confirmed against the ledger records.

If the journey or visit makes a surplus, then parents and guardians will be offered a refund where the sum involved per pupil might reasonably be expected to be refunded. This relates to any surplus of 5% or more of the contribution per head (or proportionate amount where full per head costs are not paid). Five pounds will be regarded as a reasonable threshold to warrant refunds.

The school may ask for parental permission in advance of the journey to treat any surplus below a given sum as a contribution to school funds. Any refunds will be made as soon as possible after the visit, either to pupils or parents by cheque or cash against signed receipts.

5.3 Policy for Disposal of Equipment

The Governing Body will authorise all write offs and disposals of surplus stocks and equipment with a value greater than £1500. The headteacher may authorise disposal of items worth less than £1500. The disposal of the equipment must be recorded in the school's inventory, with reason for disposal, the headteacher's decision to declare the item disposable, the means of disposal, (usually through sale, auction, theft), and the proceeds of the sale or auction where appropriate. The school will take reasonable steps to ensure that any one interested in purchasing any item for disposal, has an opportunity to offer to pay for it, before the final decision is made. Disposal by theft will be reported to the Police, and appropriate insurance claims made.