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John Fletcher of Madeley
Primary School

Charging and Remissions Policy



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John Fletcher of Madeley Primary School believes that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits regardless of their parents' financial means. This policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities are offered. In accordance with our Christian value of Equality, we will try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on charging for school activities and the Education Act 1996, sections 449-462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in maintained schools in England. The policy complements the information given in section 7.5 of the Governors Handbook.

Definitions

- Charge: a fee payable for specifically defined activities
- Remission: the cancellation or reduction of a charge which would normally be payable

Key Points

• School cannot charge for education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)

• Parents on low income and receipt of benefits are informed of any support available to them when being asked to contribute towards the cost of the school visits.

Operating the policy

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. As a school we plan our curriculum to offer real life experiences to children to extend their understanding of the world. We aim to provide a rich, broad and balanced curriculum where environmental visits arrangements for visitors into our school are given a key, integral role. This includes residential visits in order for us to do this.

Voluntary contributions

When organising school trips or visits to enrich the curriculum and the educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to contribute to the cost. All contributions are voluntary. If a trip goes ahead, it will include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. If a parent wishes their child to take part in a school trip or event, but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, the child will

participate fully in the trip or activity. 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:

- Visits to museums
- Sporting activities
- Outdoor adventure activities
- Visits to or by a theatre company
- Musical events

Charges

a) Extra-curricular activities

The school will endeavour to offer the children a range of optional extra-curricular activities to widen their experiences e.g. cricket, art, dance, music, football, gymnastics, cooking clubs. Parents may be asked for payment if outside specialist teachers or coaches are employed to run the clubs. These payments need to be paid in advance of the club starting. Children whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits may be supported by the school in order to allow their child to fully participate in the activity.

b) Breakfast Club / School Meals

These should be paid for **in advance** of the meal being taken or Breakfast Club attended. We understand there may be exceptional circumstances when this is not possible and parents are asked to discuss these with the school if necessary in order to make suitable arrangements.

c) Breakages and Lost or Damaged Books

Where a child's actions incur extra costs to the school, by breakage of equipment or damage to premises, parents may be requested to pay to cover the whole or part of the cost.

d) Late collection:

Unless in exceptional emergency circumstances (as agreed by school), in cases where a child is not collected within fifteen minutes of the end of the day or after school activity a charge of £5.00 will be made to the parent / carer for up to 30 minutes of non-collection and then £10.00 thereafter for each thirty-minute period that the child is not collected. The parent will be issued with an invoice and expected to pay within the date set on the invoice. Failure to pay will lead to further action being taken.

Charges for Residential Trips and Trips Outside of School Hours

a) Activities outside school hours

We will charge for residential and non-residential activities 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 visits during school hours
We are permitted to charge for the cost of board and lodging costs during residential trips. These costs will not exceed the actual cost of the provision. Where the trip takes place wholly or mainly during school hours, children whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (see remissions policy below) will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging.

If school offers opportunities for children, such as Leavers' hoodies, which are non-essential items, school reserves the right not to process any orders from families where debts to the school are outstanding for any of the above charges. These items would not be eligible for any remission.

Remissions

The school will set aside a fund to enable parents in financial difficulty to send their children on visits and activities. The funding will be limited and there is no guarantee that all requests can be met. Assistance will be allocated on a needs basis, and if the full cost of the trip or activity cannot be met through assistance funding and voluntary contributions, the trip or activity will be cancelled.

Remissions for residential visits

Parents in receipt of one or more of the credits below may be offered assistance in paying for the trip or a longer period of instalments will be made available to enable their child to access the activity:

- Universal credit in prescribed circumstances
- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance 7
- 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 the statutory limit
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- An income related employment and support allowance.

To request assistance, parents should contact the School Business Manager via A3152@telford.gov.uk

School trip refunds

All initial deposits for school trips will be non-refundable. Parents will be informed of this when they are provided with initial information about the trip. In the event that the school has to cancel a trip due to foreseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded.

In the event that a school trip is cancelled by a party other than the school due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents.

In the event that a pupil or their parents cancel the pupil's place on a trip, it will be at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school will take into account the reason for cancellation, whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip, and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

Where a pupil or their parents have previously cancelled a place on a trip and received a full refund, the school will have the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future trips and visits.
In the event that a pupil cannot attend a trip at the last minute, e.g. due to illness, it will be at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school will take into account whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

In the event that a school trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it will be at the school's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents. Once trip arrangements have been booked and confirmed, if contributions exceed the total cost of the trip, a refund will be given where the excess if greater than £1 per pupil. The school will deal with cancellations and refunds on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all pupils and their families are treated equally.

If a parent wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they will be able to do so via the Complaints Procedures Policy.

Out of Hours Provision
The school may provide sessions before or after school. This may take the form of extra-curricular clubs. The cost charged to parents for this provision may be higher than associated costs, in which case the school will make a small profit. Any profit generated through such provision will be used for the purposes of the school. All income from such provision is taken through school accounts and these accounts are signed off by the governing body, as per audit requirements.

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) as soon as we know 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