

Bicton C.E. Primary School

Learning for a Lifetime



CHARGING, REMISSIONS AND DEBT POLICY

This policy was adopted by the Governing Body of Bicton C.E. Primary School in March 2017 (approval delegated to the FGP committee)

This policy is due for review in March 2018.

Signed Head teacher

Signed Chair of Governors/FGP Committee

Introduction

Bicton C.E. Primary School and the Governing Body recognise the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including clubs, practical activities, trips and residential experiences can make towards pupils' personal and social education. We aim 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. We believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits irrelevant of their parents'/guardians' financial means. This policy outlines how we will do our best to ensure that a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers that may prevent some pupils from taking full advantage of the opportunities provided.

Charging and Remissions Policy

Any charges made by the school must meet the requirements of the Education Act 1996. The Governing Body endorses the guiding principles contained in the Act, particularly that no child should have his/her access to the curriculum limited by charges.

Charges

There are two types of financial contributions for which parents and guardians can be asked in relation to educational activities:

- Voluntary contributions
- Permitted charges

The Governing Body reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances:

Voluntary Contributions

Visits and Activities within School Hours

- If a visit takes place in school hours, the Governing Body will ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of any activity and the contributions will not exceed the actual cost. Parents are under no obligation to make any contribution and pupils of parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute will not be discriminated against. However, in the event of insufficient voluntary contributions being made the visit/activity may have to be cancelled and refunds will be given.

Permitted Charges

Activities outside school hours

- The full cost to each pupil of any activities deemed to be optional extras taking place outside school hours. This includes residential visits where a charge will be made for the cost of board and lodging and travel costs (subject to statutory exceptions) and the cost will not exceed the actual cost of provision. Where the parents of a pupil are in receipt of state benefits, which would entitle their child to receive Free School Meals, the Governing Body will remit in part the charges for board and lodging for any residential activity (classified as optional extras taking place outside school hours.) In other circumstances, parents are invited to apply in confidence to the Head teacher for the part remission of charges. The Head teacher, in consultation with the Chair of Governors, may make authorisation of remission.

Individual/Group Music Tuition

- The cost of providing individual/group music tuition where the charge will not exceed the cost of provision. Children who are eligible for Free School Meals and Looked After Children (CLA) are currently entitled to free instrumental tuition. Parents on low income/in receipt of certain benefits may be entitled to part remission of fees (proof required.)

Before-school Clubs

- The school offers extended schools provision from 7:45 to 8:45am. The current cost is: £1:50 for Breakfast Club and 50p for 8:30 Club. There is full remission of fees for pupils who are entitled to Free School Meals, Looked After Children and those children who were previously Looked After.

After-school Clubs

- The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities which take place after school every day until at least 4:15pm. The majority of these are run by Bicton staff and most are currently free of charge. We also offer additional sporting clubs after school and these are funded from the P.E. and Sport Grant funding. There is full remission of any fees for pupils who are entitled to Free School Meals, Looked After Children and those children who were previously Looked After.

Uniform

- The school sweatshirt, cardigan and optional PE shirt can be purchased from School Shop Direct. Other items of school uniform can be bought from supermarkets and other stores.

School Dinners

- Parents are responsible for providing a lunch for their child/children which may be in the form of a paid school dinner, application of a free meal entitlement or a packed lunch from home. The current cost of a school dinner is £2:10.

Our school has a clear set procedure for the payment and collection of school dinner money and any arrears that occur.

- Dinner money should be paid in advance in all instances at the start of the week.
- Reminders will be sent to parents who have not paid for school dinners, on Wednesday and Friday each week
- No pupil is permitted to take more than 3 days of lunches without any payment being received, which will limit the debt for any one parent/guardian. We will not provide a child with a school dinner on the 4th day until the arrears have been settled.
- If your child is absent from school and dinners have been paid for, these will be carried forward as credits and the following week's payments will be adjusted accordingly.

Pre-school Additional Sessions

- Parents/guardians can request additional paid sessions during the school day which are over and above the 15 hour free entitlement. These additional sessions are charged at £3.60 per hour. Children are also able to order a school dinner at a cost of £2:10.

If you are late collecting your child from Pre-school, we reserve the right to make an additional charge to cover staffing costs. In the event of non-payment of fees, the school reserves the right to withdraw any additional hours.

Charging in Kind

- The cost of materials, ingredients (or provision of them by parents) for practical subjects, if the parents have indicated in advance that they wish to own the finished product.

Damage/Loss to Property

- A charge may be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of school property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials.) The Head teacher, in consultation with the Chair of the Governing Body, may decide to make a charge and each incident will be dealt with on its own merit and at their discretion.

Bad Debt Policy

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents/guardians. We are sure that every parent/guardian will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents and guardians give this policy their full support.

If payment is not received at the school office within two weeks of the due date, the following will apply:

- The service may be withdrawn and will not be reinstated until the debt is cleared.
- Non-payment will be followed up by issuing reminders as outlined below.

1st reminder:

These are made by phone or letter and notes of the conversation/call and outcome.

2nd final reminder:

If a debt is outstanding after 1 month, the Head teacher will contact the parent/guardian to agree how and when the debt will be cleared.

Throughout this process, our intention is to discuss the situation amicably and ensure that payment is made without causing distress on either side.

Persistent Debt

The school purchases Legal Support from the Local Authority which includes debt recovery. The school has the option to involve the LA's Legal Services Department who will write to the parents/guardians and expect payment within 7 days. Legal Services have the ability to issue legal proceedings should the family fail to pay by the deadline.

Writing off Debt

If after every effort has been made to collect the debt and legal action is considered impractical or has been unsuccessful, individual bad (irrecoverable) debts may be written off in accordance with the following procedures:

Debts up to a value of £100 are to be approved by the Head teacher and reported to the next meeting of the Governors' Finance Committee. Those exceeding £100 will be referred to the Governors' Finance Committee for approval.

General

The Governing Body may, from time to time, amend the categories for which a charge may be made and they reserve the right to review the Charging, Remissions and Debt Policy as necessary. This policy can be found on the school's website and paper copies are available from the school office.