Charging and Debt Recovery Policy

Introduction

In accordance with the Education Reform Act of 1988, all education during school hours is free. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum, with the exception of some individual or small-group music tuition. School hours are defined as those when school is actually in session (see school Prospectus) and do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Voluntary Contributions

Educational Visits

When organising school 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 we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, we may cancel the visit. If a visit goes ahead, it may include children whose parents/carers have not paid any contribution. We do not treat these children any differently from any others.

If a parent/carer wishes their child to take part in a school visit or event, but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, we allow the child to participate fully in the visit or activity. Sometimes the school pays additional costs in order to support the visit.

Residential Visits

If the school organises a residential visit in school time, or mainly in school time, which is to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum, we make a charge for the child's board and lodge, the educational activities and travel expenses.

It is expected that all parents will meet the full cost of the residential trip. To spread the cost phased payments will be facilitated. For a few families in receipt of Income Support, we may be able to negotiate a reduction up to 50% of the cost.

Extra-curricular activities

Staff, out of school hours, provides many optional activities for which parents have given their consent in advance voluntarily. These are provided free of charge. Where costs are incurred, parents will be asked to contribute to the total so that each activity is self-funding. If funds received are insufficient, the activity may be cancelled.

The school offers many different coaching of sporting activities after school. If a qualified coach, who is not a member of the school staff, runs and organises these sessions, we ask parents/carers to cover the cost incurred. We also ask for contributions to cover the cost of transport to and from sporting fixtures.

Visiting Speakers & Performers

Where visiting experts or performers have been invited to support the curriculum parents/carers will be asked to contribute so that each occasion is self-funding.

Instrumental Music Lessons

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. We do not charge for this. There is a charge for individual or small group music tuition, since this is an additional curriculum activity, and not part of the National Curriculum. These individual or small group lessons are taught by visiting music teachers form Hampshire Music Service. We make a charge per term which covers the total cost divided by the number of children who attend for each academic year. This is paid termly and in advance. Pupils joining part way through the year will be charged on a pro-rata basis.

No refunds will be available, due to the school's commitment to Hampshire Music Service. We give parents information about additional music tuition at the start of the academic year.

Where school or county owned instruments require regular maintenance parents will be asked to pay a proportional charge, notified in advance.

School Lunches
Payment is encouraged in advance for a week, month or half term period. Outstanding payments are followed up weekly. Should payments exceeding £20 not be forthcoming then the school lunch option will be removed from the family and the family will be required to provide a packed lunch for the child.

Materials
Where craft, DT, cookery and other practical lessons result in finished products, pupils may keep the items if the cost of materials is less than 50p. Where the cost is 50p or more, parents/carers may be asked to contribute the full cost of materials. In such cases, notification will be in advance of the lesson, with confirmation that pupils will not be excluded from the lesson itself in the event of non-payment.

Loss & Breakage
We maintain the right to recover the full cost of any damage to and/or loss of school property or equipment from the parents/carers of the children involved. The initial decision to seek recovery of costs shall be at the discretion of the Head Teacher, having due regard to the circumstances of the loss or damage.

General Considerations
In all cases where costs are involved, the school will endeavour to meet these in respect of pupils where parents personal difficulties, subject to prior agreement by the Head Teacher.

Debt Recovery
- The first step to recover a debt is to send a reminder after it is outstanding for 10 days.
- If the debt remains outstanding after a further 10 days a final demand will be issued.
- When no payment is forthcoming after the above reminders providing the debt is less than £50 the Governing Body may consider whether to write it off.
- If the debt is over £50 the Governors will refer it to the County Treasurer's Debtors Group where appropriate action will be taken.
- When a debt is written off an explanatory record giving the reasons must be written, signed and dated by the Head Teacher. This Record must be kept for inspection.

Retiring staff or staff leaving the school
When a member of staff has served the school a number of years a party to celebrate their departure may be considered appropriate by the Head Teacher. Guests invited to the party will be asked to contribute to the cost of the party and any gifts presented.

Monitoring and review
This policy is monitored by the Governing Body, and will be reviewed annually in the Spring Term.

In all cases, references to "Parents/carers include those with Parental Responsibility.

Revised: September 2022