



Charging, Remissions and Refund Policy

Updated: April 2021

Reviewed by Full Governing Body: 22/03/21

Next Review Date: Spring Term 2022

1. POLICY STATEMENT:

This policy has been formulated in accordance with the following DfE guidance:

- Education Act; 2011
- Charging for School Activities, May 2018
- Model Agreement: Early Years provision and free of charge and free childcare, March 2017
- Early years entitlements: operational guidance 2020-21, December 2019

This policy is monitored by the Governing Body, and will be reviewed annually or earlier if necessary.

2. AIM

The aim of this policy is to set out what the school will charge for trips and activities that occur inside and outside of the school hours, including fees for wrap around care provision and the school nursery. The policy also outlines the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested from parents.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body of Bridgewater Primary School is responsible for determining the content of the policy and the Head teacher for implementation. Any decisions with respect to individual parents will be considered by the Governing Body.

4. ACTIVITIES FOR WHICH THERE IS A CHARGE:

In line with DfE guidance, the Governing Body makes the following charges:

Residential trips during school time:

The school charges parents for the full cost of board and lodging of these trips and request a voluntary contribution to cover the cost of activities and transport.

Children who are registered, at the time of (or at any point in the 6-month period prior to) the visit, for Free School Meals will not be charged for board and lodging but will be asked for a voluntary contribution to cover the cost of activities and transport. Where children are not registered for Free School Meals and parents-/carers are in receipt of the following benefits, parent/carers will be signposted to the local authority website where they will be able to apply for Free School Meals and therefore qualify for assistance from the school.

- Income Support;
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, (provided you're not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit – if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits your get);

Those exempt from paying the charges for board and lodging will be asked for a voluntary contribution to cover the cost of activities and transport.

If the school does not receive sufficient voluntary contributions the residential may be cancelled.

Residential trips outside of school hours:

The full cost of any trip and overnight stays, organised by the school, that take place outside of school time (for example at weekends and during school holidays) will be charged for as these are deemed to be 'optional extras'.

Out of School Club:

Wrap around care for pupils is considered to be an 'optional extra' for which there is a charge. Fees are calculated taking into consideration a number of factors which include equipment, consumables, accommodation and staffing costs. In addition, to the core costs for regular advanced bookings the following additional charges are made:

- 'ad-hoc' sessions
- late collection (after 5.45pm)
- late payment and debt recovery
- supplement for nursery children

These incur additional staffing costs and charges to the school for extending the opening hours of the school building.

Charges are reviewed annually.

Charges are invoiced monthly in advance and payment must be received before the commencement of the first session in the period invoiced. Sessions may be withdrawn if payment has not been received.

All charges are non-refundable.

Any changes to regular booking or cancellations must be made in writing and will incur a 30 day notice period. The notice period starts from the day written notification is received.

Ad-Hoc sessions must be paid for at time of booking

In all circumstances, parents/-carers are required to sign a contractual agreement with the school to secure Out of School provision for their child.

The school also accepts Childcare vouchers and subscribes to the Government Tax Free Childcare scheme for payment of the Out of School Club fees.

Current Fees

| Current Fees | | |
|--|--|------------------------------|
| | Regular bookings | Ad-hoc sessions |
| Breakfast Club (includes breakfast) | £4.50 per session per child | £5.50 per session per child |
| Afterschool Club (includes snack) | £8.50 per session per child | £10.50 per session per child |
| Penalty Fees: | | |
| Late collection (5.45 -6.00 pm) | £20.00. | |
| Late and non-payment fees: | | |
| Payments received after due date | £15.00 (administration charge) | |
| ‘Chase up’ of late payments after 10 days | £25.00 (administration charge) | |
| Debt Recovery: Where fees are 30 days in arrears | Costs incurred with debt recovery will be charged to the parent/carer plus the debt amount | |

Nursery School:

Free Entitlement:

From the term following a child's third birthday parents/carers are entitled to a maximum of 570 hours free childcare per year (15 hours per week over 38 weeks). No charge will be levied for parents/carers claiming their Free Entitlement only.

Parents/carers may claim their entitlement from more than one provider at the same time but must not exceed a total of 570 hours over 3 funding periods. Where parents/carers have claimed at a different setting the school reserves the right to charge the parent/carer for any funding shortfall at the rate of the Free Entitlement funding for that child under the Local Authority single funding formula plus any deprivation supplement applicable.

Working parents/carers who meet the national eligibility criteria may access up to 30 hours free childcare at Bridgewater Primary Nursery School subject to availability.

In order to qualify for free entitlements parents / carers must, by the head count day set by the council each term, have:

- provided proof of address and the child's birth certificate,
- signed the LA free entitlement form and
- had their eligibility (if claiming 30 hours) -verified by the school and provided a valid DERN code
- produce their valid DERN code for revalidation prior to each chargeable block

Fee-paying nursery places:

Fees for any additional hours used by the child and family over and above any free entitlement will be charged at an hourly rate (currently £4.50), which will be rounded up in half hour increments. Children must be signed in for full sessions, i.e. if a child is booked into afternoon (3 hours) and after school club (30 minutes) sessions for 5 days per week they will be using 17 ½ hours. Deducting 15 hours free entitlement will result in 2 ½ hrs.

Additional hours are offered in line with the following criteria:

- The school will prioritise the offering of Free Entitlement places where children are eligible and on the school application list
- Places that might otherwise be unfilled following the admissions process (ie when all eligible applicants have been offered), and before the termly census date, can be offered for a fee
- Part time fee paying places for rising threes may be offered where the child will have their third birthday in that term but is not yet eligible for the Free Entitlement. For example a child who turns 3 on the 6th September would be eligible for the 15 hours Free Entitlement from the following January. However, where this is an unfilled place they could pay for their additional hours and take up a place from their third birthday.
- Fees will be invoiced each monthly in advance for additional hours and payment must on a monthly basis but always in advance. Ad-hoc sessions may be available and will incur an additional supplement for administration. Ad-hoc sessions must be paid for at booking.

- If fees are persistently paid late, the child's place for additional hours may be withdrawn.

In addition, to the core costs for regular advanced bookings the following additional charges are made:

- meals
- 'ad-hoc' sessions
- late collection from a session
- late payment and debt recovery

Charges are reviewed annually by the school and Governing Body

Charges are invoiced monthly in advance and payment must be received before the commencement of the first session in the period invoiced. Sessions may be withdrawn if payment has not been received.

All charges are non-refundable.

Any changes to regular booking or cancellations must be made in writing and will incur a 30 day notice period. The notice period starts from the day written notification is received.

In all circumstances, parents/ carers are required to sign a contractual agreement with the school to secure additional hours for Nursery provision.

The school also accepts Childcare vouchers and subscribes to the Government Tax Free Childcare scheme for payment of the Nursery fees.

Lunch and After School Club:

The Lunch Club excludes the provision of lunch but includes drinks. Parents/carers can request, in advance, a hot lunch from the school menu for which there will be an additional charge or can bring in a packed lunch. Advice will be given to parents/carers on the importance of providing a healthy and nutritional packed lunch.

The After School Club runs from 3.30pm – 4pm.

Current Fees

| Current Fees | | |
|--|--|-----------------------|
| | Cost if out of funding | Total for session |
| Morning Session 0830-1130 | £4.50 per hour | £13.50 |
| Lunch 1130 - 1230 | £4.50 per hour | £6.80 including lunch |
| Afternoon Session 1230 - 1530 | £4.50 per hour | £13.50 |
| OSC 1530-1600 | £4.00 | £4.00 |
| Penalty Fees: | | |
| Late and non-payment fees: | | |
| Payments received after due date | £15.00 (administration charge) | |
| 'Chase up' of late payments after 10 days | £25.00 (administration charge) | |
| Debt Recovery: Where fees are 30 days in arrears | Costs incurred with debt recovery will be charged to the parent/carer plus the debt amount | |

Music tuition:

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. In addition, the school also subscribes to the government's First Access programme. This provides whole class instrumental sessions in Key Stage 2 delivered by staff from the Independent Music Solutions (IMS). The school does not charge for these lessons.

From Year 2 children are given the opportunity to receive instrumental music tuition, provided by peripatetic teachers from Northampton Music & Performing Arts Trust (NMPAT), in individual or small group lessons. These lessons are provided at the request of parents and the arrangement is between NMPAT and parents. The school is not involved in any administration or payments and all payments are made directly to NMPAT. Parents are required to give at least 6 weeks' written notice to NMPAT should they wish to terminate music lessons and will be required to pay the music fees for this period unless the vacancy can be filled. Pupil Premium children may apply to the school for financial assistance for music lessons. (See Pupil Premium Voucher scheme)

Costs may be subsidised, in part, by the school and subsidy is reviewed on an annual basis by the Governing Body. The Governing Body reserves the right to withdraw the subsidy if music fees are not paid promptly.

Lost school equipment, books etc.

Parents will be expected to pay or replace lost items of school equipment.

Breakages, damage to school property and equipment

A charge may be made to recover part, or the whole cost, of damage to buildings or school property and equipment which is the result of willful damage or neglect by a pupil.

5. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS:

When organising school trips or visits, or visitors into school e.g. theatre groups, which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to contribute to the cost of this. Children eligible for Free School Meals or facing hardship can approach the school for assistance. The following is a list of some of the additional activities organised by the school, which rely on voluntary contributions from parents. This list is not exhaustive:

- for class trips to locations outside of school that requires a fee to be paid. For example:
 - visits to museums and topic related visits;
 - outdoor adventure activities;
 - sporting activities which require transport expenses;
 - visits to the theatre;
 - musical events.
- for the cost of a coach to and from the school.
- pay for the cost of an educational visitor to run a programme in school.

The terms of any request made to parents will specify that the request is for a voluntary contribution and in no way represents a charge. In addition, the following will be made clear to parents.

- that the contribution is genuinely voluntary and the parent is under no obligation to pay
- if the school does not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, it may cancel the event.
- That the registered pupils at the school will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request.

The responsibility for determining the level of voluntary contributions is delegated to the School Business Manager.

Voluntary contributions will be used to:

- cover the admission fee for groups of children on trips
- cover the cost of coach transport to and from school
- cover the cost of employing an educational visitor into the school to run programmes.

6. REFUNDS:

Refunds for day trips and activities will only be offered under exceptional circumstance (eg if a school visit has to be cancelled) or if the surplus collected for an activity exceeds the cost of that activity by £5 per pupil. Income of less than £5 per child will be paid into the main school account. Any surplus generated less than £5 will be used to cover any deficits on any under-recovered activities.

Should the amount collected per pupil exceed £5, parents/carers will be offered the refund in writing, with a reply slip attached to the letter stating whether they wish to take up the offer, or decline it, where the surplus will be placed (see below), along with a deadline by which a response is required. If no reply is received by the deadline, the school will assume that the parent/carer intends for the school to retain the funds. All refunds should be made via cheque payment or parentpay to the parent/guardian concerned.

Deposits paid by parents and carers for residential trips will be non-refundable unless another pupil takes up the place, or the school can be refunded by the third party organisation. All letters asking for deposits will inform parents of this policy through the wording: *"To secure a place on a residential visit a deposit will be required. This deposit will be non-refundable unless another pupil can be found to take up the place. However, if the trip is cancelled by the school, for example for reasons outside our control, we will try to make a full refund wherever possible."*

Where trips are cancelled the school will refund all money, except where deposits have been paid by the school and cannot be redeemed from the third party.

Refunds are not issued for 'optional activities' including music tuition, pre-booked wrap around care and nursery provision.

7. REMISSIONS POLICY:

Should the estimated cost to parents or carers make it financially impossible for any pupil to take part in any activity they should contact the school. All discussions relating to individual family's financial circumstances will be confidential. Under exceptional and legitimate financial circumstances the governing body may agree to provide some financial support for activities.

Children of parents who are defined by the government as 'on a low income' are encouraged to register for 'Free School Meals' (FSM), even if their child is already receiving Free School Meals as part of the government's Universal Infant Free School Meal programme. The school uses the FSM register to identify and to provide additional support to these children.

Parents of children who are on the FSM will not be charged for the cost of board and lodging for residential trips.

Children could qualify for Free School Meals and Pupil Premium funding, if parents are in receipt of the following entitlements:

- Income Support;
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, (provided you're not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit – if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits your get);

Parents can register or check their eligibility online using the following link:

<http://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/schools-and-education/Pages/pupil-premium.aspx>

8. PUPIL PREMIUM VOUCHER SCHEME (EYFS TO YEAR 6):

To encourage parents to register for Free School Meals the school will supply each successful applicant with a one off voucher to the value of £35 which can be spent at The School Uniform Shop (Schools current uniform provider).

In addition each child eligible for Free School Meals will have the opportunity to attend any one of the following extra curriculum activities;

- Small Group Music Tuition (to the value of £80 per term)
- Outside Providers Sports Club (e.g. Pacesetters, Hotshots)

The cost of these activities will be funded by the school, however the Governors reserve the right to withdraw funding due to regular non attendance or in the case of music tuition, if the child ceases to show commitment.

The Governing Body also reserve the right to withdraw or amend the Pupil Premium Voucher scheme at any time, but will always endeavour to give parents a minimum of one terms notice.

This policy will be reviewed annually.