

# Marshlands Primary School



## Charging and Remissions Policy

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## 1 Charging Policy

Within this policy we aim to make a broad programme of activities and trips accessible to as many pupils as possible. Whilst no student should have access to the curriculum limited by charges, we do have to operate within the constraints of the school budget and must meet the requirements of the 1996 Education Act. It is the policy of the governing body to:

1.1 Levy a charge for board and lodging costs on residential visits, except where students are entitled to statutory remission. In this instance a reduced fee will be applied.

1.2 Levy a charge for activities wholly or mainly outside school hours which are NOT part of the National Curriculum, statutory religious education or in preparation for a prescribed public examination.

1.3 No Levy for instrumental tuition. This will be reviewed annually. Music tuition will be based on a first come, first served basis. If demand is greater than supply, we will follow the advice of the music specialist to decide on pupils. Music instruments will be loaned free of charge by the school.

1.4 Levy NO charge for examination entries, except where:

- The school has not prepared students for the examination in the year for which the entry is made, or
- A student has failed, for no good reason, to complete the requirements of the examination or to attend for it.
- The Governors reserve the right to charge for re-taking examinations or modules.

1.5 Levy NO charge in respect of books, materials, equipment, instruments or incidental transport provided in connection with the National Curriculum, statutory religious education or in preparation for prescribed public examinations or courses taught at the school, except where parents have indicated in advance that they wish to purchase the product.

1.6 Request voluntary contributions from parents in advance for school activities out of school time for which compulsory charges cannot be levied. The activity will only be provided if there is sufficient voluntary funding, whilst ensuring that no student is excluded by reason of inability or unwillingness to make a voluntary contribution. Any insurance costs will be included in charges for trips and activities (see section 4 for further details). Most 'in school' activities and visiting artists (such as theatre productions or history workshops) will be paid for by the school while ever the budget allows.

1.7 Seek payment from parents for damages to or loss of school property caused wilfully or negligently by their children.

1.8 Leave to the Headteacher's discretion, the proportion of costs of an activity which should be charged to public or non-public funds.

1.9 Delegate to the Chair of Governors and Headteacher the determination of any individual case arising from the implementation of this policy.

1.10 If information is requested e.g. under the 'Freedom of Information Act', then photocopying costs of 10p per sheet will apply.

## 2 Charges in Practical Subjects

2.1 In practical subjects, parents may be asked for the full or partial cost of materials or ingredients if they have said beforehand that they wish to keep the finished product e.g. in Design Technology.

2.2 Occasionally, the school will seek voluntary donations from events such as non-uniform days, sponsorship etc. The purpose for which the donation will be used is explained clearly to parents and visitors

## 3 Income from Lettings

3.1 Although not presently applicable, should the school receive any income from letting then the Finance Committee review annually and set charges for the use of school premises. These costs will be laid down in a School Letting Policy and include caretaking, insurance, VAT and energy costs.

## 4 School Visits

4.1 Charges in the form of voluntary contributions may be requested from parents for visits which take place mainly during school hours. Careful consideration is given to making up any shortfall in voluntary contributions from parents from the school's delegated budget. The full cost of the visit is made clear to parents, highlighting how much the school are also contributing towards the visit. Parents will be given, where possible, least 3 weeks notice of any chargeable school visit.

4.2 No student may be excluded from the visit because of inability or unwillingness to pay but the school is entitled to cancel the visit if the cost is not met by voluntary contributions.

4.3 Visits which take place mainly outside school hours are chargeable provided they are not part of an examination course.

4.4 Charges must not be more than the cost of the visit and can include: travel, board and lodgings, materials, books and other equipment, Support staff costs and Teaching staff costs (travel, board and lodging), a preliminary visit if required and insurance costs. We aim to charge parents no more than £15 per year for visits, with the exception of the UKS2 residential visits.

### 4.5 School Hours - The 50% Rule

There are two categories of visit when calculating the type of charge that can be levied.

- A visit mainly in school time - charge = voluntary contribution.
- A visit mainly outside school time = an optional extra.

Where LESS than 50% of the visit time is outside school hours (sessions) then it can be charged for as an optional extra requiring voluntary contributions but the board and lodgings can be charged in full. Where MORE than 50% of the visit is outside school hours (sessions) then it can be charged in full as an optional extra.

Visit organisers must decide whether the proposed trip is an optional extra or one requiring voluntary contributions. The appropriate following statement must be included in the letter to parents inviting the student to take part in the trip.

#### 4.5.1 Optional Extra:

"The visit is an 'optional extra' under the 1997 Education Act and the school is allowed to make a charge in full. The visit will cost £ \_\_\_\_\_"

#### 4.5.2 Voluntary Contribution:

"A contribution of .....per pupil is requested to make the visit possible. Payment must be received in full by.....In line with the school's charging policy, unfortunately the trip may be cancelled if insufficient funds are collected. School is paying the outstanding costs of....."

4.5.3 The school can charge in full for board and lodging on all residential visits which involve students in nights away from home.

4.5.4 Visit organisers arranging a residential visit mainly in school hours should include the following statement in their letter to parents:

"Parents who receive 'Free School Meals' should contact the organiser of the visit for further information about remission of board and lodgings costs. You may discuss the matter in complete confidence."

4.5.5 All letters regarding visits need to include appropriate information from both the visits policy and this policy. Teachers should provide specific details of their visit to the School Admin Officer who will prepare the letter for them.

### 5 Charges for damages to or loss of school property.

5.1 If a student wilfully, or through negligence, causes damage to school property then payment will be sought from parents.

5.2 The appropriate teacher will fully investigate the incident. All who witnessed the incident will be required to provide written statements or if too young logged by an appropriate adult

5.3 The normal behaviour route should be followed remembering that the repayment is not a punishment but an incurred cost, so should be included along with other appropriate sanctions. The member of staff should write to parents informing them of the incident and saying that the student will be required to pay to repair the damage.

5.4 The School Business Manager should be informed so she can invoice parents. The invoice should be paid within four working weeks.

5.5 Parents will be given the option of contacting the school during the first week of receiving the invoice, to negotiate a regular payment scheme over an extended period of time.

5.6 In exceptional cases of financial hardship, the Headteacher may seek the permission of the Governing Body to set a nominal amount, rather than the real cost of repair or replacement.

5.7 If parents do not meet the agreed payments after two warning letters, then a formal letter will be sent by the Headteacher giving parents an agreed time to pay or to make an appointment to discuss a way forward.

## 5.8 Example letters

### 5.8.1 Re: Damage to school property

Dear

Please find attached an invoice requiring you to pay for the damage caused by ..... to school property.

We expect payment in full by ..... which will be four working weeks from the date of this letter.

You can pay small, weekly payments over a longer period but you must contact The Headteacher at school by....., one week from this date, to agree a payment plan.

Payment can be in cash by calling in at School office business hours or by cheque, payable to Marshlands Primary School. We take damage very seriously and trust the matter will be resolved promptly.

### 5.8.2

Dear

REMINDER: OUTSTANDING INVOICE £

a) We have not received any response to our invoice, ref.....

b) You have only paid £.....

In response to our invoice, ref..... The bill must be paid in full by....., which will be one working week from this date or further action will be taken.

### 5.8.3

Dear

FINAL REMINDER: OUTSTANDING INVOICE £

a) We have not received any response to our invoice, ref.....

b) You have only paid £.....

In response to our invoice, ref..... The bill must be paid in full by....., which will be one working week from this date or we may consider taking you to the small claims court.

## 6 Charges for use of school facilities

6.1 The school may make charges for personal telephone calls made through the school's telephone system. The use of school assets in the course of a commercial business is strictly prohibited unless this is associated with the school's curriculum.

6.2 The school may make charges for personal photocopying and printing. These costs all include VAT. Income raised from this is used to reimburse the relevant expenditure account

6.3 A voluntary donation for any missing library books will be sought. This will allow families to reflect their own personal circumstances, yet take responsibility for the lost school property.

6.4 Freedom of Information Act – Information published on our internet is free, although you may incur costs for your internet provider. If you do not have internet access, you can access our website using a local internet café or library.

Single copies of this information covered by this publication are free. For families that require a second copy, these should be requested and collected. If items need posting on a regular basis, we would request SAE are provided.

If we have to do a lot of copying or printing, or we will incur a large postal charge, or your request is for a priced item such as printed publication or video, we will advise you of the cost before fulfilling your request.

All charges will be fair and responsible.

6.5 Proper records will be kept of all income due.

6.6 Where invoices are required they are issued within 30 days.

6.7 The school always issues official, pre-numbered receipts. Copies of receipts are securely stored.

6.8 Cash and cheques are locked away to safeguard against loss or theft.

6.9 Collections are paid into the appropriate bank accounts promptly and in full. Bank paying-in slips must show clearly the split between cash and cheques.

6.10 Income collections cannot be used for the encashment of personal cheques or for other payments.

6.11 Sums collected with the sums deposited at the bank are reconciled monthly and checked.

6.12 Repeat invoices will be issued when payment has not been received within 30 days.

6.13 All transactions must be recorded after being sent to the office. All money must be handed in on the day collected and with no deductions. Under no circumstances should money collected be banked in personal accounts.