Charging and Remissions Policy

Burwell Village College Primary

Approved by:	Governing Body	**Issue date:**	September 2020
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Introduction.

The Head Teacher and Governing Body recognise the value of providing a wide range of experiences to enrich and extend pupils' learning and to contribute to their personal development. The Head Teacher and Governing Body aims to promote and provide such experiences for the pupils of the school, both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and as additional optional activities. However, many of these activities have an associated cost and cannot be provided unless voluntary contributions are received or parents are charged for the cost.

This policy will set out the circumstances in which charges will or will not be made for school activities and when charges may be waived in order to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to benefit from school visits, curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Statement:

The policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1996
Where 'parent' is referred to this will include adults with a responsibility for the pupil.

We aim:-

- To make school activities accessible to all pupils regardless of family income
- To encourage and promote external activities which give added value to the curriculum
- To provide a process which allows activities to take place at a minimum cost to parents, pupils and the school
- To respond to the wide variations in family income while not adding additional unexpected burdens to the school budget.

Legislation – Educational During School Hours
The DfE in its guidance to School Governors states that "education provided during school hours must be free. The definition of "education" includes materials, equipment and transport provided in school hours by school to carry pupils between the school and an activity." It goes on to advise that "although schools cannot charge for school time activities, they may still invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions (in cash or in kind)"

When additional costs are incurred by Burwell Village College Primary School to enhance the curriculum opportunities for the pupils, parents may be requested to make voluntary contributions. However, no pupil will be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind. The school does, however, reserve the right to cancel the activity should the costs incurred be too great and parental contributions too few.

Education Outside school hours

The DfE in its guidance to School Governors states that "Parents can only be charged for activities that happen outside school hours when these activities are not a necessary part of the national curriculum or religious education. No charge can be made for activities that are an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination. Charges may be made for other activities that happen outside school hours if parents agree to pay. The Education Reform Act 1988 described activities, which can be charged for as "optional extras".

Remissions
The fundamental aim of this policy is to ensure that all pupils gain fully from everything that the school is able to offer them and is based on an understanding of the relationship between low income, entitlement and access. This policy takes into account the very real and persistent difficulties which people on low income have in meeting the costs of educational activities for their children.

Where parents are eligible for Free School Meals (usually this means in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Support under part IV of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999 or Child Tax Credit (provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received), the Governing Body will observe its statutory requirement to remit in

full the cost of board and lodgings for any residential activity that the school organised for the pupil if the activity is deemed to take place within school hours.

There may be cases of family hardship which make it difficult for pupils to take part in other particular activities for which a charge is made. When arranging a chargeable activity the school will invite parents to speak to the Head Teacher in confidence for the remission of charges in part or in full. Authorisation of remission will be made by the Head Teacher.

Data Protection of pupils and families.
Teachers will ensure that these children are not publicly identified and stigmatised. This is particularly important as the fear of stigmatisation is often a key element in the non-take up of Free School Meals. Our current methods of registering and collecting voluntary charges or dinner money do not identify children who are in receipt of Free School Meals or those who cannot or do not contribute.

Contributions
Voluntary contributions may be requested to help with providing activities even though they may be part of the normal school day or part of the National Curriculum.

If voluntary contributions are requested for an activity it should be clearly understood that there is no obligation to contribute and that if the parent is unable or unwilling to pay, the child will not be excluded from the activity.

If sufficient contributions are not received the activity may be cancelled.

Residential Activity
The DfE in its guidance to School Governors states that "For a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or essential to the education provided at the school, no charge may be made for either the education or the costs of the travel.

However, charges will be made for board and lodging in these circumstances. The Head Teacher will make it clear to all parents of the right to claim free activities." A voluntary contribution will be requested by the school for such activities.

GDPR General Data Protection Act: see current policy for guidance on charges applicable for requests of information.

Freedom of Information Act:

Any applicable charges will follow the DfE guidance "Freedom of Information Act 2000: A guide for maintained schools January 2005"

This rate will include a cost for staff time to sort and collate the relevant information (not less than £10 per hour) as well as photocopying charges and postage.

Any photocopying that is requested by parents relating to their child, under the 'Freedom of Information Act', will be charged at 10p per sheet and 20p for any colour printing.

Private fees
Any report or data that is requested on a child for the purpose of a third party private assessment requested by a parent (eg. Mid-year pupil progress report for solicitors, private psychologist reports or solicitor; or reports or for private schools) will be charged at an agreed rate by the Head Teacher in discussion with the Chair of Governors. This rate will include a cost for staff time to sort and collate the relevant information (not less than £10 per hour) as well as photocopying charges (not less than 10p per sheet) and postage.

The Governing Body may, from time to time, amend the categories of activity for which a charge may be made.

ACTIVITY	POLICY
Residential Courses in school time	Parents are asked to meet the full cost of the residential visit. This usually happens in Year 6. If parents have financial difficulties then they can speak in confidence to and get prior agreement from the head teacher. For those children are eligible for free school meals, the cost (in part or in full) can be supported by the school. Parents who have financial difficulty will be asked to contribute something towards the trip and staged payment and / or part payment can be arranged depending on family circumstances. The school will not exclude any child from the trip because of financial difficulty or inability to pay. If the income for each activity does not meet the overall cost, such activities may be cancelled.
Off site school trips as part of the curriculum in school time • within walking distance • by coach	No charge if within walking distance and if no admission fee is required. Otherwise: parents will be asked for a contribution to cover the cost or transport and / or admission. If parents have financial difficulties then they can speak to and get prior agreement from the head teacher. For those who have financial difficulty including those children eligible for free school meals, the cost (in part or in full) may be supported by the school. If the income for each activity does not meet the overall cost, such activities may be cancelled.
Extra Curricular Activities • outside school hours not within the National Curriculum • Inside school hours (lunchtimes) • Summer Activity week	These often take the form of clubs which are run by staff or external companies who use the school hall and premises. Clubs are run after school, at lunchtime and in school holidays. Parents are required to meet the full cost of the club. Each club will have at least 1 place available for pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) or those with financial difficulties. If the income for each activity does not meet the overall cost, such activities may be cancelled.

Instrumental tuition • individual or group • arranged through the school, • outside of the National Curriculum requirements • in or outside of school hours	Where the school provides access to an 'outside' tutor, parents will be charged for the tuition. This is currently with 'outside private tutors' and parents have to agree to a term's. Subsidised places for pupils in receipt of Free School Meals may also be available. Charging is dealt with by the indidvidual tutor or company directly with the parent along will all correspondence. If the income for each activity does not meet the overall cost, such activities may have to be cancelled.
Visit by professionals (poet, author, artist, musician, dancer, athlete etc) Concerts, plays, theme days	The school will ask parents for a contribution towards the costs of the event. Visiting groups or events can only be sustained by parental contributions. If the income for each activity does not meet the overall cost, such activities may have to be cancelled.
Swimming	One year group in the school will take part in swimming lessons provided by the school. This is a curriculum based activity however there is a significant cost implication due to pool hire, swimming teacher engagement, life guard cost and travel. Parents are therefore asked to make a contribution to the cost of swimming lessons but this does not cover the whole cost incurred for swimming lessons usually somewhere in the region of £12 – £15 000 per year. All children in the identified year group will swim as this is a national curriculum expectation. Sports premium funding will be used to ensure that year 6 pupils have another opportunity to swim if they have not successfully achieved the national curriculum expectations.
Ingredients/materials for practical subjects	Usually the school provides such materials. Occasionally parents may be asked to provide materials for practical subjects or make a donation to cover the costs (for example for food or technology items which go home). No child will be disadvantaged because of parents' inability to pay.
Loss of school equipment, books, etc	Parents may be requested to replace school equipment, books, etc. which have been lost by their child or accidentally damaged whilst in their care.
Breakages and damages to school buildings, furniture or property	Wilful or negligent damage to school buildings or property by a pupil will be charged to parents by the school.

Under the terms of the Education Act 1996, the school is requesting a voluntary contribution for the activity described in this letter. The school reserves the right to cancel this activity if insufficient funds are available. Any parents with financial concerns should contact the head teacher or school business manager to discuss any support that can be provided by the school.