

Bushey Heath Primary School

Charging for School Activities

A vibrant school inspiring children to realise their potential

(Based on the guidance provided in the 'Governors' Guide to the Law')

We believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits independent of their parents' financial means. This charging policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils from taking full advantage of the opportunities.

The Local Authority or Governing Body may not charge for anything unless they have drawn up a statement or general policy on charging. The Governing Body's policy may be more or less generous than the Local Authority's, as long as it meets the requirements of the law.

No charge can be made for admitting pupils to maintained schools. Where education is provided wholly or mainly during school hours, it must be free. However, the school may charge for activities outside of school hours where these are not a necessary part of the national curriculum.

Voluntary Contributions

The Headteacher or Governing Body may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

- Any activity which takes place during school hours.
- School equipment.
- School funds generally.

The contribution must be genuinely voluntary, though, and the pupils of parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute will not be discriminated against. **Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, or there is no way to make up any shortfall, then it will be cancelled.**

Residential Trips

Schools are permitted to charge for the cost of board and lodging during residential school trips, even if they occur mainly during school time. This cost must not exceed the actual cost of the provision.

Where the trip takes place wholly, or mainly, during school hours, children whose parents are in receipt of the following support payments will, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, may also be entitled to the remission of the charge for board and lodging:

- Universal Credit.
- Income Support.
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and that the family's income is assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, does not exceed the sum given in Revenue and Customs Rules.
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit.
- An income related and support allowance that was introduced in 27 October 2018.

Instrumental and Vocal Music Tuition

A charge is permitted for instrumental and vocal music tuition undertaken in school hours.

School Meals Debt

With effect from 1 September 2012, Bushey Heath Primary School became responsible for any unpaid school meal debts owed to Herts Catering Limited. This money must be paid from the general school budget and therefore reducing money available for other, vital, school expenditure. This policy is designed to keep such costs at nil, wherever possible.

By requesting paid school meals, parents are entering into an agreement to meet the cost of this provision.

If a child qualifies for benefit related Free School Meals, advice of how to claim can be sought from the school office. This benefit is a statutory entitlement and this funding is beneficial to both families and the school.

Meals must be paid for, in advance, via School Gateway. If it is necessary to pay by cheque, this must be sent into school (cheques made payable to HCL) in a marked envelope via childrens' book bags.

If after two weeks or if, after a request from the school for settlement in full, your school meal account for your child remains in debt, your child will not be provided with a school lunch unless it is paid for and you must either provide a packed lunch or take your child home for lunch. The school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against parents to recover this debt. If you continue to send your child to school, after being notified without making arrangements for their lunchtimes, social services will be informed that you are not carrying out your responsibility to care for your child by not providing them with food at lunchtime.

Financial Assistance

In cases of family hardship which makes it difficult for pupils to take part in particular activities for which a charge is made or voluntary contributions requested, the Governing Body will invite parents to apply in confidence for assistance with charges in part or full. The Headteacher, in consultation with the Chair of Governors, will authorize the financial assistance.

On all documents requesting contributions for school trips, parents will be made aware that this assistance may be available.

The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible we shall publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the school year so that parents can plan ahead
- We have established a system for parents to pay in instalments
- When an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip
- We acknowledge that offering opportunities on a "first pay, first served" basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

Please see Attendance Policy and Nursery Policy for additional information in for further charges.

Refunds

Monies paid to the school in respect of residential visits/other visits

All initial deposits are non-refundable and this is stated in initial parents' letters informing details of the forthcoming visit.

If a child is unable to attend at the last moment through illness, then a refund of cost can be given upon receipt of a doctor's certificate. The initial deposit still remains non-refundable.

If a child/parent changes their mind or moves school and withdraws from the trip, then no refund can be given. Charges are made by providers upon receipt of the first deposit so the school will be charged in full for the place reserved.

Following the trip if parental contributions have exceeded the costs incurred a refund will be offered to parents. Parents are given the option of claiming the refund or donating the amount to the school. This will be carried out by letter to all participants.

Any refunds due may be offset against any debit balances owed to the School or else to utilise credits towards paying for siblings still at the School in the case of the latter, we will make a refund if requested due to exceptional circumstances.

Dinner Monies

If monies have been paid in advance any dinner money unused at the end of the school year will be refunded.

Date Policy Reviewed/Amended:	July 2020
Chair of Governors:	James Hughes
Headteacher:	Penny Barefoot
Review Date:	June 2021
Reviewed by:	Full Governing Body