

**Charging and
Remissions
Policy and
Guidelines**



This policy sets out Moorlands Primary School Charging and Remissions Policy and Guidelines.

Signed by Head Teacher

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be a stylized 'D' followed by a horizontal line.

Signed by Chair of Governors

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Review Date: March 2024

Next Review: March 2025

Policy Statement: Charging

This policy should not be read in isolation but in conjunction with all other school policies, DfEE Circular 2/89 (Charges for School Activities) which is available from the school office and advice given by Southampton City Council in correspondence. Particular attention should be paid to the school's Aims.

We acknowledge that the school must meet the statutory requirements laid down in the 1996 Education Act relating to charging for educational activities.

We concur with the objectives behind this aspect of the Act which are detailed below.

The objectives of the charging provisions in the 1996 Education Act are:

- a) to maintain the right to free school education
- b) to establish that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching times should be available to all pupils regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost
- c) to emphasise that there is no statutory requirements to charge for any form of education or related activity, but to give the LAs and schools the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours
- d) to confirm the right of LAs and schools to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school, whether during or outside school hours.

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In order to meet the above objectives, we have agreed the following statements of principle:

1. General Education

There will be no charge for the general education provided during normal school hours.

2. Instrumental Tuition

A charge will be made for individual instrumental tuition which is additional to the requirements of the National Curriculum. In accordance with the Education Act we do expect parents to purchase or hire the musical instrument their child needs to undertake this individual tuition. Charges for individual tuition will be made via Southampton Music Services.

In cases where a musical instrument is hired or lent by the Local Authority, parents must ensure that they pay into and comply with the terms and conditions of the Local Authority's insurance policy.

3. Design and Technology

No charge will be made for materials for design and technology activities. However, when a parent has indicated in advance that they wish to own a finished product, a charge may be levied to cover the cost of the items that could otherwise be reused. In cases of genuine financial difficulty, parents will be invited to see the headteacher who may remit part or all of the charges. The headteacher will agree the contribution the parent makes, having due regard to the family's financial situation. No charge will be made for ingredients for cookery.

4. Visiting Groups and Individuals

Parents may be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of a particular activity within the school such as a visiting group. Where an activity cannot take place unless sufficient parents make a voluntary contribution, this will be made clear to the parents at the time of asking for financial support. No child will be excluded from this type of activity because their parents are unable or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution.

In cases of genuine financial difficulty, parents will be invited to see the headteacher who may remit part or all of the charges or offer a longer payment term.

The headteacher will decide if an activity is financially viable and may cancel visiting groups if there are insufficient voluntary contributions.

5. Educational Visits

Parents may be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of an educational visit which occurs either wholly or mainly during school hours. Where a visit cannot take place unless sufficient parents make a voluntary contribution, this will be made clear to parents at the time of asking for permission to take their child on the visit. No child will be excluded from a visit because their parents are unable or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution.

In cases of genuine financial difficulty, parents will be invited to see the headteacher who may remit part or all of the charges. The headteacher will agree the contribution the parents make, having due regard to the family's financial situation.

The headteacher will decide if an educational visit is financially viable and if it seems likely that a visit may have to be cancelled due to insufficient voluntary contributions, the headteacher will advise the parents.

6. Residential Visit

If the school organises a residential visit in school time, or mainly school time, which is to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum, we do not make any charge for the education element. However, parents are obliged to at least pay for the residential expenses of such trips, and we also ask parents to contribute to the full cost of the travel and activity expenses as these are beyond the scope of our main school budget.

We would not seek to exclude any child whose parents are unable to fund the costs of the visit due to genuine financial hardship. In cases of genuine financial difficulty, parents will be invited to see the headteacher who may remit part of the charges or arrange for payment to be made over a longer payment term.

7. Damage to School Property

There is no reference to breakages or fines in the Act's charging provisions. In accordance with our behaviour policy, where a child has wilfully damaged school property the headteacher will decide, after carefully considering the context in which the damage took place, whether parents should be asked to contribute to all or part of the cost of replacing the damaged item.

8. Clubs and Activities

There will sometimes be charges made to parents for extra-curricular clubs and activities held by teachers outside school hours. These charges will be made to cover the costs involved with running the activity. There may be charges made for one-off events such as taking the children ice-skating or bowling. These one-off events that the school promotes on occasions must break even. Parents will always be advised of the cost of such an event when their permission is sought for the child to participate.

Clubs run by outside agencies are financially independent of the school and are not covered by this Charging Policy.

The headteacher will decide if a club or activity is financially viable and may cancel visiting groups if there are insufficient voluntary contributions.

9. Dinner Money

Dinners are charged for at the rate set by City Catering Southampton and the full cost passed on to parents. Payment for meals can be made via cash, cheque or via the online payments system. Meals should not be booked without upfront payment and debts should not be left to occur. The school office will let parents know if their child's dinner money is in arrears by telephone call, text message or email. If payment for school dinners is not paid, parents may be asked to supply a packed lunch for their child until the arrears are cleared. For children eligible for Free School Meals or Universal Infant Free School Meals, no charge will be made.

10. Charges for Debit/Credit Transactions

Southampton City Council does not currently pass processing charges for card payments onto schools. If this policy were to change, the governors have agreed that the full transaction charge will be passed on to parents. The Online Payments system allows for this to be calculated and charged automatically.

11. Other Charges to Parents

The headteacher or Governing Body may levy charges for miscellaneous services up to the cost of providing such services e.g. for providing a copy of an OFSTED report.

The schools charging policy will be subject to change if there are new Local Authority or Department for Education policy changes, or changes in the law.

Value for Money

We believe that we should always seek to maximise the value for money we obtain from any activity. We are committed to keeping costs as low as possible whilst maximising the educational or social benefit of any of the above activities. This statement should be borne in mind by any member of staff seeking financial contributions from parents.

Informing Parents of this Policy

This policy will be mentioned in the School Prospectus. Parents will be informed that copies of the full policy are available from the school office and on the school's website.

Monitoring this Policy

The headteacher will monitor all letters which go out seeking financial contributions to ensure they meet the statements of principle set out in this policy.

The policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Governing Body. When reviewing the policy, the headteacher will report to governors on how the policy has been operating and whether it has been successful. In particular, the headteacher will report on the numbers of parents seeking remissions of charges due to financial hardship, the percentage of parents who are unwilling or unable to make voluntary contributions, whether children are being disadvantaged because their parents are unwilling or unable to make financial contributions and whether activities are being unduly affected because of financial considerations.

The headteacher will also report to the Governing Body annually when the forward budget is being drawn up on the likely contribution the school will have to make towards the above activities. The financial and premises committee will monitor the actual expenditure against the budget allocation throughout the year.