

Ludlow Junior School
Charging Policy
Reviewed: September 2017
Review due: September 2020

This policy should not be read in isolation but in conjunction with all other school policies, DfES 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 given to the school's aims.

We acknowledge that the school must meet its 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 time should be available to all pupils regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.

- c) To emphasize that there is no statutory requirement to charge for any form of education or related activity, but to give LAs and schools the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly outside 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 in principle:

1. General Education

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

2. Individual Instrument Tuition

A charge will be made for instrumental tuition which is additional to the requirements of the National Curriculum. In accordance with the Education Act we do expect parents to hire or purchase the musical instrument their child needs to undertake this individual tuition. This charge will be reviewed annually. This requirement will be made clear to parents when opportunities for individual instrumental tuition become available.

3. Design and Technology

No charge will usually 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 items that could otherwise be re-used. 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 for the family's financial situation. No charge will be made for the ingredients for cookery unless parents have been advised of this possibility and agree to supporting this aspect of the curriculum. In these cases we may request a voluntary donation. No pupil will be removed from a practical activity if a voluntary donation is not received.

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 theatre group. Where an activity cannot take place unless sufficient parents make a voluntary contribution, this will be made clear to 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. The headteacher will agree the contribution the parent makes, having due regard for the family's financial situation.

The headteacher will decide if an activity is financially viable. Where it seems likely that an activity may have to be cancelled, the headteacher will consult with the chair of governors.

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 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 parent makes, having due regard for the family's financial situation.

The headteacher will decide if an educational visit is financially viable. Where it seems likely that an activity may have to be cancelled, the headteacher will consult with the chair of governors.

6. Residential Visits

Charges will be made for board and lodgings in the case of residential trips. Residential trips may only be viable when the other costs incurred during the visit, for example, transport, entrance fees, costs of external coaches, etc. are met by voluntary contributions. 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 discuss other options with them or remit part or all of the charges. The headteacher will agree the contribution the parent makes, having due regard for the family's financial situation. In accordance with the act where a parent is in receipt of income support, family credit, disability working allowance or an income-based jobseeker's allowance, the school may remit the charges for board and lodgings.

The headteacher will decide if a residential visit is financially viable. Where it seems likely that an activity may have to be cancelled, the headteacher will consult with the chair of governors.

Requests for places on residential visits will only be considered where there is no outstanding debt. This means that an offer of a residential place will only be made where there are no other compulsory payments overdue. For example;

- Dinner money
- Childcare fees
- Other residential fees
- Music tuition fees owed to the school
- Other fee paying activities

This applies to individual pupils and any linked siblings who have a debt with the school.

If a residential place is offered, the guarantee of this place is based on the understanding that the pupil and linked siblings remain debt free, that all scheduled payments are made by the due dates as outlined in the offer letter, and that all other fees are up to date at the point of departure of the visit.

Should any debt remain outstanding at any point, then the school reserves the right to withdraw the offer of the place up to and including the date of departure of the visit. This may result in cancellation charges for the visit being applied to the parent for a withdrawn place.

In all cases where there is overdue debt, parental money paid for any activity will be applied to the oldest debt.

Pupil accounts

In the case where a pupil leaves the school and there is a credit remaining on the pupil account, this will be transferred to linked siblings if there are any. If there is

no linked sibling, this credit will be refunded if over the value of £10. For credits under this amount, there will be no refund made.

In the case where there is a debt on the account, the same principal will be applied in transferring the debt to a younger sibling. In the case where there is no sibling, then the school will aim to recover the debt independently by way of invoice.

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 willfully 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 all or part of the cost of replacing the damaged item.

8. Clubs and Activities

The school will make no charge for extra-curricular activities and clubs held outside school hours unless a professional coach has been recruited to facilitate an activity. There may however be charges made for one-off events such as taking the children ice-skating or bowling. These one-off events that the school may promote on occasions must break even. Parents will always be advised of the costs of such events when their permission is sought for the child to participate.

The headteacher will decide if a one-off event is financially viable. Where it seems likely that an activity may have to be cancelled, the headteacher will consult with the chair of governors. The chair of governors may agree that very specific events can be subsidized such as a year 6 leavers' function.

Some clubs such After School Club/Breakfast Club are independent from the school and are not covered by this Charging Policy.

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

A precis of this policy will be included within the School Prospectus. Parents will be informed that copies of the full policy are available from the school office.

Monitoring this Policy

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

The admin team will maintain a record of children who have paid for an activity. In cases where payment has not taken place, she will liaise with the headteacher, who

will apply the criteria in this policy with regard to remissions. 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 unable or unwilling to make financial contributions and whether activities are being unduly affected because of financial considerations.

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

Late Collection

Context - over recent school years there has been an increasing trend for unannounced or unplanned late collection of children from school without good reason.

We believe that unplanned and/or unannounced late collection can be stressful for the child and is an unreasonable burden on staff who could be deployed elsewhere

As a school we recognise there may be some times when unavoidable late collection of children takes place. In these situations we have a first late collection plan involving our staff team and the current nurture room. Later collections (post 4pm) require a further plan based on staff availability.

In order to raise the profile and importance of collecting children on time the school has devised a late collection protocol and charging framework as set out below:

Late collection between 3.20 and 3.40 pm - parent has contacted school, has a reasonable context for the late collection and is usually on time - no planned charge. Later than 3.40pm waived based on context or escalated as below

Late collection between 3.20 and 3.40pm - parent has not contacted school, no reasonable or plausible context and/or parent is often late - £7.50 charge

Late collection post 3.40pm and up to 4.20pm - parent has not contacted school, no reasonable or plausible context and/or parent is often late - £15 charge

Collection post 4.20pm a further £15 charge (maximum capped at £30)

A copy of the charges should be displayed in reception and parents notified they may be liable if fulfilling the criteria. Decision to be made in the next business meeting - held weekly each Wednesday. Charges to be added to parental/pupil financial record in school