

Stechford Primary School

Charging & Remissions Policy



Date of next review: November 2025

Signed by:

R Hatton

Headteacher

Date: 15th November 2024

D Menzel

Chair of Governors

Date: 15th November 2024

Charging Policy

Rationale:

Stechford Primary School is committed to providing quality education based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. In practice this means the children have an entitlement to benefit from all educational activities and to:

- Participate fully in school curriculum;
- Contribute to all aspects of school life; and
- Be a valued partner in the process of education

Principles

These objectives must be seen to inform educational activities, whether in or outside school and are therefore integral to the process of charging for school activities and to the remission which is available to parents/carers who are on a low income.

We aim:

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

Guidelines:

The development of a range of activities forms part of the school's forward planning process and is linked to the annual budget cycle with a particular emphasis on the identification of specific resources to support such activities. It includes a number of key factors;

- The value of certain activities in relation to the needs/age of the pupils;
- The cost of the activity set against their educational value;
- How the activity will be paid for ;
- The appropriate process for raising funding;
- An assessment of whether the educational aims can be met in any other way;
- An understanding of the various type of activity involved – for example educational visits, music tuition, materials for practical work;
- Reference to additional or hidden costs – for example, lunch money and pocket money;
- An assessment of local facilities

Specific examples:

- Music – No charge for instrumental group tuition but a charge from the LA will be passed on to parents for individual instrument tuition. There will be a charge for instrument hire, and insurance where the instrument is the property of the school. *Remission policy applies for pupils where parents are in receipt of income support or family credit.*
- Voluntary contribution – We request voluntary contributions from parents for school activities in or out of school time for which compulsory charges cannot be levied but which can only be provided if there is sufficient voluntary funding. No pupil should be excluded from activity because of inability or unwillingness to make a voluntary contribution.

- Breakages – Parents of pupils who wilfully break, damage or deface any part of the premises or equipment will be asked to pay for replacement or repair of the same. This also applies to books or equipment which are lost.
- Optional Activities Mostly of Outside School Hours – Residential and non residential (non related to curriculum). Charges will be levied for such activities. *The Remissions Policy does not apply.*
- Optional Activities Within School Hours – Where there is an optional activity within school hours for which leave of absence must be sought from the LA and the Governing Body (e.g. trip abroad) the charge will be levied by firm through which the booking is carried out.
- Residential Visits Outside School Hours – Charges are made for board and transport. *The Remissions Policy does not apply.*
- Residential Courses in School Time and School Based – A charge is made for board but there is no charge for transport. *Remission Policy applies for pupils where parents are in receipt of income support or family credit.*

Relevant Legislation

Education 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 material, equipment and transport provided in school hours by the LA or the 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 invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions (in cash or in kind)... the essential point is that no pupil may be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind.”

Education Outside School Hours

“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, which can be changed for as ‘optional extra’. It is up to the LA or governing body providing the activities to decide whether to make a charge.”

Residential Activity

“For a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or essential to the education provided at the school, no charge may be made either for the education or the cost of the travel. However, charges can be made for board and lodging in these circumstances, except for pupils where parents are receiving Income Support or Family Credit. The Head should tell parents of the right to claim free activities if they are in receipt of these benefits.”

Remissions Policy

Rational:

To ensure that access to activities becomes a reality and that outcomes reflect intentions, Stechford Primary School will implement the following Remission Policy. The fundamental aim of this policy is to ensure that all pupils gain fully from everything 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. Birmingham City Council defines people in receipt of Income Support and their dependants as living in poverty and people in receipt of Housing Benefit and their dependants as living on the margins of poverty.

Guidelines:

- As a minimum, children at Stechford Primary School from families in receipt of Income Support, Council Tax Housing Benefit or Family Credit are exempt from all charges.
- 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 factor in non-take up of Free School Meals. This will be accomplished by developing methods of collecting voluntary charges and school funds via School Secretarial Staff.
- Stechford Primary School will follow the DfE Guidelines which state that the LA or governing body may not charge for anything unless it has a statement of General Policy on Charging. A Policy Statement will take account of each type of activity that can be charged for, and explain when charges will be made. Parents need to know how the charges will be worked out and who might qualify for help with costs (or even get it free). 'If a charge is made for each pupil, this should not exceed the actual costs. If further funds need to be raised... this must be by voluntary contributions or general fund raising.'
- Planning as part of the process of budget building is essential to developing a charging policy at Stechford Primary School which recognises equality of access. We will endeavour therefore to produce a programme of activities based on a clear set of priorities identified by the school and taking into consideration the projected number of children (including know remissions), cost per head and a breakdown of transportation cost, entry fees, discount, teachers costs, etc. Most activities and visits are planned into Curriculum which occur once per half term and are set into the school calendar and pupil planners for the whole year.
- The school still retains the right to take advantage of opportunities as they arise during the course of the year. These will be implemented in a way which is consistent with the school's overall policy.

Specific examples:

- Music – With regard to charge for instrument hire and insurance, the Remission Policy applies for pupils where parents are in receipt of income support or family credit.
- Residential Courses in School Time and School Based – there is no charge for transport and the Remissions Policy applies with regard to board for pupils where parents are in receipt of income support or family credit.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

This policy is subject to annual review by the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the Governing Body of Stechford Primary School.