

WESTFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Charging and Remissions Policy



May 2024

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CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Legislation & Guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on charging for school activities and the Education Act 1996, sections 449 to 462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England. Academies are required to comply with this Act through their funding agreements.

Introduction

The Local Advisory Committee recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including clubs, practical activities, trips and residential experiences can make towards pupils' personal and social education. The Local Advisory Committee aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

Westfield Primary School aims to value each pupil as an individual and enable them to achieve their full potential through a wide variety of opportunities and experiences. This document sets out the school's policy for charging for the provision of this wide variety of opportunities and experiences. Any charges made by the school must meet the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1996. The Local Advisory Committee endorse the guiding principles contained in this Act, in particular the principle of free education, where no child should have his or her access to the curriculum limited by charges.

Charges

No charge can be made for education during school hours or education outside school hours, which forms part of the National Curriculum requirements.

However, the Local Advisory Committee reserves the right to make a charge for activities organised by the school in the following circumstances:

Day Trips

Charges levied for day trips will represent the reasonable cost of providing the trip and parents will be asked for a voluntary contribution to cover the cost of their child's participation. Every effort will be made to ensure that the voluntary contributions are made, but if insufficient funding is received, the school reserves the right to cancel the trip and reimburse parents who have contributed.

Once a trip has been paid for, there will be no reimbursements for absentees on the day.

Where a child may be prevented from participating in an outing because of financial hardship, consideration should be given to reducing the voluntary contribution expected (see Pupil Premium section below).

Where sponsorship or donations have been received towards the cost of a trip, it is for the school to decide how to use them. Contributions may be offset against the cost of the trip as a whole or used to reduce or remit the charge for individual children who would be unable to participate because of financial hardship.

Children will be treated equally regardless of the amount of voluntary contribution made by their parents.

Activities during School Hours

The Local Advisory Committee may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of any activity that takes place during school hours. When sending out a request to parents for a voluntary contribution, the school must:

- Make it clear to parents that the contribution is voluntary.
- Make it clear at the outset that the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions and that if there is insufficient support it may be necessary to cancel the activity and reimburse any parents who have contributed.
- Ensure that children are not treated differently or discriminated against if their parents are unable or unwilling to contribute. All children must be given an equal chance to take part.
- If there are limited spaces then the school's policy for allocating places must be made clear at the start.

Activities outside School Hours

Activities deemed to be optional extras, taking place outside school hours may be fully recharged to parents of pupils.

This includes residential visits, which require pupils taking part to spend one or more nights away from their usual overnight accommodation. In these circumstances, the school may charge for the cost of board, lodging and travel costs (subject to statutory exceptions) but the charge must not exceed the actual cost of provision for each pupil.

Any non-educational activities should be optional and parents should agree to their child taking part and commit to paying for these activities before a chargeable activity is arranged.

An initial deposit is usually required for residential activities, with the remaining cost paid in subsequent instalments. This initial deposit is non-refundable should a child subsequently not participate in a trip. A request for refund of any further payment must be made in writing by the parent and, if the cancellation is due to illness, a medical certificate may be required.

Music Tuition

The school may charge for individuals or groups of two or more to receive instrumental or vocal tuition, which takes place during the school day, in instances where the parent or carer has requested the tuition. This charge may also include an element for hire of any instruments.

However, instrumental or vocal tuition, which is part of the National Curriculum or is delivered to the whole class as part of the school's timetable, cannot be charged.

Provision of Materials

The school may charge for the cost of materials or ingredients (or request the provision of them by parents) for practical subjects where the parents have indicated in advance that they wish to own the finished product.

Breakages

In cases of wilful or malicious damage to equipment or breakages, or loss of school books or equipment on loan to pupils, the Headteacher, in consultation with the Chair of the Local Advisory Committee, may decide to make a charge. Each incident will be dealt with on its own merit and at their discretion.

General

The Local Advisory Committee may, from time to time amend the categories for which a charge may be made.

The Local Advisory Committee reserve the right to review the Charging and Remissions Policy as necessary.

Pupil Premium

Parents of Pupil Premium pupils may request assistance with charges in instances where parents are asked to contribute towards the cost of a school trip or activity. Any parent who thinks they may qualify for Free School Meals and therefore Pupil Premium should contact the school office who can provide them with an up to date list of the criteria and provide further support in completing the necessary paperwork.

Parents of non-Pupil Premium pupils, who are in need of financial assistance are invited to contact the Headteacher in confidence to discuss possible partial or full remission of charges.