

Downsell

PRIMARY SCHOOL



Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow

Charging & Remissions Policy

Date Adopted by GB:	11 March 2024
Review Date of Policy:	Spring term 2025



PURPOSE

The policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1996.

Where 'parent' is referred to this will include adults with a responsibility for the pupil.

Downsell Primary School aim's:

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

INTRODUCTION

The Head Teacher and Governing Body recognise the value of providing a wide range of experiences to enrich and extend pupils' learning and to contribute to their personal development. The Head Teacher and Governing Body aim to promote and provide such experiences for the pupils of the school, both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and as additional optional activities.

However, many of these activities have an associated cost and cannot be provided unless voluntary contributions are received or parents are charged for the cost.

This policy will set out the circumstances in which charges will or will not be made for school activities and when charges may be waived in order to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to benefit from school visits, curricular and extra-curricular activities.

LEGISLATION

Education during School Hours

The DfE in its guidance to School Governors states:

- Education provided during school hours must be free.
- The definition of "education" includes materials, equipment and transport provided in school hours by school to carry pupils between the school and an activity.
- Although schools cannot charge for school time activities, they still invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions (in cash or in kind).
- When additional costs are incurred by Downsell Primary School to enhance the curriculum opportunities for the pupils, parents may be requested to make voluntary contributions. However, no pupil will be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind.

Education outside of School Hours

The DfE in its guidance to School Governors states:

- 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 that happen outside school hours if parents agree to pay.
- The Education Reform Act 1988 described activities, which can be charged for as "optional extras".

REMISSIONS

- This Remissions Policy ensures that access to activities reflect intentions.
- The fundamental aim of this policy is to ensure that all pupils gain fully from everything that 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.
- Where parents are in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Support under part IV of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999 or Child Tax Credit (provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received), the Governing Body will observe its statutory requirement to remit in full the cost of board and lodgings for any residential activity that the school organised for the pupil if the activity is deemed to take place within school hours.
- There may be cases of family hardship which make it difficult for pupils to take part in other particular activities for which a charge is made.
- When arranging a chargeable activity the Governing Body will invite parents to apply in confidence for the remission of charges in part or in full.
- Authorisation of remission will be made by the Head Teacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors.
- 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 element in the non-take up of Free School Meals.
- This will be accomplished by developing methods of collecting voluntary charges or dinner money, which do not identify children who do not contribute.

CONTRIBUTIONS

- Voluntary contributions may be requested to help with providing activities even though they may be part of the normal school day or part of the National Curriculum.
- If voluntary contributions are requested for an activity it should be clearly understood that there is no obligation to contribute and that if the parent is unable or unwilling to pay, the child will not be excluded from the activity.
- Examples where a voluntary contribution may be asked for could include trips out of school (e.g. museum visits, theatre trips) and visitors into school (e.g. artists, story tellers, dancers, musicians, theatre groups).
- **If sufficient contributions are not received the activity may be cancelled.**

CHARGEABLE SERVICES

- The services provided by Downsell Primary School that require payment from parent are listed below. It should be remembered that all parents choose to buy these services from the school.
- In addition the state provides for Free School Meals for children of families on low income.
- **These chargeable services include but are not limited to:**
 - Provision of School Meals
 - Trips which are not part of the school curriculum or are outside the school day
 - Extended School facilities i.e. Breakfast Club and After school clubs
 - Damage to school property - the cost of replacing any item, such as a broken window, where this is a result of a pupil's behaviour
 - Damage to school books
 - Any photocopying that is requested by parents relating to their child, under the 'Freedom of Information Act' - these copies will be charged at 10p per black and white A4 sheet and 20p for any A4 colour printing.

- Any report or data that is requested on a child for the purpose of a third party private assessment requested by a parent (e.g. Mid-year pupil progress report for solicitors, private psychologist reports or solicitor reports) will be charged at an agreed rate by the Head Teacher in discussion with the Chair or Vice-chair of Governors. This rate will include a cost for staff time to sort and collate the relevant information as well as photocopying charges and postage.

PAYMENT FOR SERVICES

- Parents are required to pay for all services provided by the school in advance by making an online payment to their child's account using the school's online payment system.
- In the child's account, separate items are listed for every child, e.g. School Meals, Breakfast Club, Individual School Trips and After School Activities.
- Voluntary payments for school trips will usually be made as a one-off payment.
- Payments should be made in advance, this could be done termly, monthly or weekly.
- Remember: As with all online payment methods, there is a processing cost associated with every payment. This cost is met by Downsell Primary School. The fewer payments our parents make, the lower the charge for the system and the more funds are available for our children's education.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

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 the school will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- School will give parents as much notice as possible for trips where voluntary contribution is sought
- There will be a system for parents to pay in instalments
- The school acknowledges that offering opportunities on a "first pay, first served" basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and the school will avoid that method of selection.

APPLYING FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS

- If a parent believes that their children may qualify for Free School Meals, they should contact the school office in confidence in the first instance for more details and an application form.
- The school will help parents to complete the application form and produce the correct evidence.
- At the time of writing, an application for free school meals may be successful if the applicant is in receipt of any of the following:
 - Income Support
 - Income-based Jobseeker's allowance
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs) that does not exceed £16,190
 - Working Tax Credit 'run-on' – the payment received for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
 - This information is issued by the Government and is subject to variation. The up to date information can be located on the government website www.direct.gov.uk

APPLYING FOR REMISSIONS

- If a parent believes that their children may qualify for Remissions to certain charges, as per the Charging Policy, they are welcome to contact the School Business Manager or Head Teacher in confidence for more details.