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Charging and Remissions Policy

Approval Date: October 2023

Review Date: October 2024

1. Aims

The Governing Body of Dovecotes Primary School recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including trips, clubs and residential experiences can make towards pupils' education.

Our school aims to:

- Have robust, clear processes in place for charging and remissions
- Clearly set out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will and will not be made
- Offer a range of activities and visits whilst minimising the financial barriers that may prevent some pupils from taking full advantage of these opportunities

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.

This policy shall be made available to parents or carers on the school website and will be reviewed annually.

2. Definitions

Charge: a fee payable for specifically defined activities

Remission: the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

3. Role and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Board

The governing board has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor or the headteacher.

The governing board also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

3.2 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the charging and remissions policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

3.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently
- Notifying the headteacher of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies

The school will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

3.4 Parents

Parents are expected to notify staff or the headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding the charging and remissions policy.

4. Where Charges Cannot Be Made

Below we set out what we **cannot** charge for:

4.1 Education

- Admission applications

- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of:
 - The National Curriculum;
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school;
 - Religious education.
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent.
- Entry for a prescribed public examination if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school.
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school.

PLEASE NOTE THAT all children study music as part of the normal School Curriculum and, when they are in Year 4, receive whole class tuition from specialist music teachers from Wolverhampton Music School. We do not charge for these. The school also organises swimming lessons for children in Key Stage 2. These take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum. We make no charge for this activity.

4.2 Transport

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport.
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing board or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated.
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he or she has been prepared for that examination at the school.
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit, such as swimming lessons.

4.3 Residential Visits

- Education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours.
- Education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of:
 - The National Curriculum;
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school;
 - Religious education.
- Supply teachers, covering for teachers who are absent from school, accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

5. Where Charges Can Be Made

Below we set out what we **can** charge for:

5.1 Education

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him or her to own them;
- Optional extras; (see section 5.2 below)
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances; (see 5.3 below)
- Certain early years provision;

- Community facilities;
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school **and** the pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus.
- Paying for Information where parents or members of the public request copies of information within the scope of the Freedom of Information Act. Please refer to our Freedom of Information Policy for further details of charges.

PLEASE NOTE THAT although no charge will be made for materials, books or equipment needed for lessons, the only exception to this is where wilful damage to the equipment by the child has taken place. A contribution towards the cost of replacement shall be requested.

5.2 Optional Extras

We are able to charge for activities known as 'optional extras'. In these cases, schools can charge for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. The following are optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not part of:
 - The National Curriculum;
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school;
 - Religious education.
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority or governing board has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education);
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit;
- Extended day services offered to pupils (such as breakfast clubs and after-school clubs).

When calculating the cost of optional extras, an amount may be included in relation to:

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- The cost of buildings and accommodation;
- Non-teaching staff;
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra (including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra);
- The cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not be greater than the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating.

Any charge will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils who wish to take part in the activity but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate.

Parental agreement is necessary for the provision of an optional extra which is to be charged for.

5.3 Music Tuition

Schools can charge for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of pupils, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent.

Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff giving the tuition.

Charges cannot be made:

- If the teaching is an essential part of the National Curriculum;
- If the teaching is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 instrumental and vocal tuition programme;
- For a pupil who is looked after by a local authority.

5.4 Residential Visits

We can charge for board and lodging on residential visits, but the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

5.5 School Trip and Residential Visit Cancellation Policy

Once tickets or places have been purchased by the school for any visit, we regret we are unable to make any refunds unless there is a waiting list and the place has been allocated to another child or there is medical evidence provided to explain why the child is unable to attend.

Please be aware that the initial deposit for any trip is always non-refundable once the trip has been secured and the deposit deadline reached. For residential trips subsequent payments to the initial deposit, will attract cancellation charges, usually on a sliding scale of days before departure, and in these circumstances will not be refunded.

6. Voluntary Contributions

As an exception to the requirements set out in section 4 of this policy, the school is able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents to fund activities which would not otherwise be possible.

Some activities for which the school may ask parents for voluntary contributions include:

e.g. fund raising, sporting activities which require travel expenses and costs associated with school trips.

All contributions are voluntary. There is no obligation for parents to make any contribution, and no child will be excluded from an activity if their parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay.

However, if the school is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit then the school may be left with no choice but to cancel the visit. Parents or carers who have contributed would then receive a refund.

If a parent/carer has reserved a place on a school trip and a pupil is then unable to take part in the visit the school will attempt to fill the child's place, however, it is at the schools discretion as to whether a part or full refund can be given.

7. Activities We Charge For

The school will charge for wraparound care: Breakfast Club and after-school Dove Club.

The school's Breakfast Club is administered by the Local Authority Catering Department. The session is free but pupils must purchase a breakfast (food and/or drink) on arrival. Charges for breakfast items are determined centrally by the Local Authority's Catering Department and are displayed in the school hall.

After School Club charges £3.50 for the whole session 3:15 pm – 4:30 pm (children may wish to bring their own snack; water bottles are provided by the school for children to access fresh drinking water). Sessions must be booked and paid for via the main school office on a weekly or monthly basis and can be paid for by cash, cheque or childcare vouchers. If a child does not need to attend a booked session at Dove Club, parents and carers need to give 48 hours notice so that the session can be offered to another child. If this notice is not given, then the session will need to be paid for. If non-attendance is due to the child being absent from school, the payment can be credited to future sessions.

8. Remissions

We have set aside a small fund to enable families in financial difficulty to send their children on visits/activities. The funding is limited and there is no guarantee that all requests can be met. Assistance will be allocated on a need's basis. To request assistance, parents should contact the school office.

8.1 Remissions for residential visits

Parents who can prove they are in receipt of any of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging for residential visits:

- 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 guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit – provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit – if you apply on or after 1 April 2018, your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

9. School Meals

Under the Education Act 2011 schools are permitted to charge up to the maximum cost of a school meal. The Governing body have agreed to continue to pass on only part of the cost of a school meal onto parents/carers. The Governors have agreed to charge parents/carers £2.50 per meal, £2.00 per discounted/flexible meal and £3.50 for staff meals. Any payments made in advance will be carried forward if a child does not have a meal. If a child forgets their packed lunch and is given a school meal, parents/ carers must pay for the meal as soon as possible.

At the end of each week arrears are checked to see which parents/ carers owe dinner money. If an account has fallen into arrears:

- A text is sent to parents/ carers showing meals taken and money owed;
- After 4 weeks, if no payment is made, a letter is sent informing that the child must switch to sandwiches;
- If the debt remains unpaid, the debt will be referred onto the Local Authority;
- If the payment is still not received then it will be referred onto the Civic Centre to commence formal debt proceedings

To be eligible for a discounted/flexible charge meal, parents/carers must meet a certain criteria of being a low-income family in receipt of working tax credit as permitted under the flexible charging framework (Education Act 2011).

Children in Early Years Education are eligible to receive a free meal under the Universal Infant Free School Meal Scheme currently in place. We do ask that families who are eligible for free school meals still apply for them as the premium attached to this benefit comes in to school and helps provide

children with additional benefits such as free milk, extra help in lessons, reduced costs for some school trips, sports coaching and pastoral/welfare support etc.

To be eligible for a free school meal where no charge is made for the provision of a school meal (separate to the UIFSM) parents/carers need to be in receipt of support payments (as listed previously).

10. Monitoring & Review

The headteacher monitors charges and remissions, and ensures these comply with this policy.

This policy will be reviewed by the headteacher every year.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board.