

# WOODHAM WALTER C of E (V/C) PRIMARY SCHOOL

‘Nurturing Lifelong Learners’



Introduction

This policy has been formulated in accordance with Essex County Council and DfE guidance on Charging for School Activities.

## **Aim**

The aim of this policy is to set out the charges that will be levied for activities, what remissions will be acceptable and the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested from parents.

## **Responsibilities**

The Governing Body of the School is responsible for determining the content of the policy and the Executive Head and/or Head of School for implementation. Any determinations with respect to individual parents will be by the Executive Head and/or Head of School and in line with this policy.

## **Prohibition of Charges**

The Governing Body of the School recognises that the legislation prohibits charges for the following:

- 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, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- Tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours;
- Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip;
- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local education authority has arranged for pupils to be educated;
- Transport provided in connection with an educational trip although a voluntary contribution may be requested.

## **Publication of Information**

This policy is published on the school website.

## Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body or local authority from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the governing body or Executive Head and/or Head of School should make this clear to parents at the outset. The governing body or Executive head and/or Head of School **must** also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, then it must be cancelled. Schools must make sure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. Schools should make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

When making requests for voluntary contributions to the school funds, parents must not be made to feel pressured into paying as it is voluntary and **not compulsory**. Schools should avoid sending colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments into the school or maintenance funds. Schools should also ensure that direct debit or standing order mandates are not sent to parents when requesting for contributions.

Parents unable to make voluntary contributions for financial reasons are asked to discuss their particular situations with the Executive Head and/or Head of School or School Business Manager. Parents/Carers are asked to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

A. Board and lodging on residential visits (not to exceed the costs)

B. The proportionate costs for an individual child of activities wholly or mainly outside school hours ('optional extras') to meet the costs for:

- (i) Travel
- (ii) Materials and equipment
- (iii) Non-teaching staff costs
- (iv) Entrance fees
- (v) Insurance costs

Parental agreement is a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

C. Individual music tuition.

D. Any other education, transport or examination fee unless charges are specifically prohibited

E. The costs of consumables for subjects such as design or food technology

where in most cases children will be in possession of the finished product

F. Breakages and replacements as a result of damages caused wilfully or negligently by pupils

G. Extra-curricular activities.

H. Swimming lessons.

I. Visiting performers, activities.

Contributions will not be set at such a level that paying parents subsidise those unable or unwilling to pay.

### **Remissions – ‘release from a payment’**

- Remission of a percentage of musical instrument tuition fees may be obtained under the Essex County Council scheme. No further remission is permitted from the school.
- No remission against the cost of breakages and replacements as a result of damages caused wilfully or negligently by pupils.

### **Residential Visits**

The school **cannot** charge for:

- 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, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education; and
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Schools **can** charge for:

- Board and lodging and the charge must not exceed the actual cost. When a school informs parents about a forthcoming visit, they should make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging:
- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by HMRC) does not exceed £16,190;
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit; and
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit – provided the household income after tax and not including any benefits is less than £7,400

In respect of the Child Tax Credit, account will be taken of any revision to the amount advised by the relevant authority. Parents who inform the Executive Head and/or Head of School that they are in receipt of one of the above benefits will be advised of their right to claim free activities.

### Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as 'optional extras'. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment.

1. Optional after school clubs, run by a sports coach where parents pay directly to the provider.
2. Optional after school clubs run by a member of school staff attract a nominal charge of £2 per session, booked in term blocks

### Determination of Charges

The responsibility for determining the level of voluntary contribution is delegated to the Executive Head and/or Head of School in consultation with the School Business Manager. The governing body requires that the contribution be calculated to cover the proportionate cost as accurately as is reasonably possible, i.e. to the nearest 50p. These charges are agreed by Governors following discussion at policy reviews. The terms of any request made to parents will specify that:

'The cost of this trip will be £xx.xx to cover the cost of the entry fee and transport. In line with the Education Reform Act of 1988 (Section 118 (2)), this amount can only be asked for as a voluntary donation and will not prejudice any child's attendance'. However, it must be stressed that if enough donations are not received then the trip will have to be cancelled. The school does not receive funding for trips of this nature.'

### Current Charges:

- School Meals - £2.50 per meal for KS2, preferably paid via cash or cheque to Woodham Walter Primary School.
- Trips – amount depends on coach costs and any entrance fees.

It is stated in the Finance Regulations that the School Business Manager can authorise minor write offs and system corrections up to a value of £25. The Executive Head and/ or Head of School is able to authorise the writing off of bad debts up to a value of £250. Requests for write offs above this amount are to be referred to the Governors. However, all bad debts written off by the School Business Manager or Executive Head and/or Head of School will be reported to the Governors at the next meeting.

### **Equality and Diversity statement**

Woodham Walter C of E (V/C) Primary School, Maldon is committed to treating all members of the community with fairness and respect regardless of their ethnic background, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation or their socio-economic background. This policy has been written to assist the school community and ensure that as far as is reasonable no child or adult shall be unfairly treated, discriminated against or disadvantaged as a result.

- Keeping the costs to the minimum needed, or proportional cost recovery, and for the remissions for those on lower income, so that those from different socio-economic backgrounds are not disadvantaged.
- Selection of children for trips and events is not based on the ability of parents to pay, once again ensuring parity between those of different economic backgrounds.