



# Oswald Road Primary School

## Charging and Remissions Policy

**Policy ratified by Governing Body: March 2018**

**Headteacher:** Deborah Howard

**Chair of Governors:** Richard Price

**To be reviewed in 2 years: March 2020**

## **1 GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

- a. The Governing Body acknowledges the right of every student to receive free school education and understands that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching time must be made available to all students regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.
- b. The governors also recognise the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, trips and residential experiences can make towards pupils' education and aim 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.
- c. Under the terms of the Education Act 1996, the Governing Body of Oswald Road Primary School must have a policy on charging students to participate in school activities. By law, school governing bodies, subject to the limitations provided in this document, cannot charge for education provided during school hours. Parents may be asked for voluntary contributions but if they are unable to 'contribute', their child should not be prevented from participating should the activity go ahead.

## **2 LEGAL POSITION**

- a. Under the terms of the Education Act 1996, the Governing Body of Oswald Road Primary School must have a policy on charging students to participate in school activities.
- b. School governing bodies and local authorities cannot charge for:
  - an admission application to any state funded school;
  - education provided during school hours (including the supply and use of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
  - education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of 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;
- c. School governing bodies and local authorities can charge for:
  - any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes to own them;
  - optional extras (see below);
  - music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances;
  - community facilities
- d. Charges may be made for some activities known as '**optional extras**'. Where an optional extra is provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. Optional extras are:
  - education provided outside of school time that is not part of the National Curriculum, or part of religious education.
  - transport that is not required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education.
  - board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit

- e. Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

### **3 VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS**

- a. There is nothing in the legislation that prevents a school governing body 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 Headteacher should make this clear to parents at the outset. The governing body or Headteacher must also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.
- b. 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, or the school cannot fund it from some other source then it must be cancelled. Schools must ensure 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.

### **4 OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES & ASSOCIATED CHARGING POLICY**

- a. As a result of the above guidance, the Governors have agreed the following charging policy:
- b. **Admissions** – no charge shall be made in respect of admission.
- c. **Provision of education** – no charge shall be made in relation to the education of registered pupils where education is provided during school hours. Where education is provided outside of the normal school hours, no charge shall be made provided it is required as part of the syllabus/curriculum. The school may charge persons who are not registered pupils at the school for education provided or for facilities used by them belonging to the school.
- d. **Musical Instrument tuition** – the school will charge a contribution towards musical instrument tuition either individually or for a group of pupils provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. Tuition will be provided free of charge where it is considered to be an essential part of the National Curriculum. Tuition will also be provided free of charge for any pupil who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(I) of the Children Act 1989).
- e. **Visits during the school day** – A voluntary charge will be made to cover the cost of educational visits and other activities. Where the level of non-payment renders a trip financially unviable consideration will be given to cancellation.
- f. **Residential visits** – Where at least half of the time away from home is not normal school time or where the work undertaken is not an integral part of the examination course, the trip can be classified as optional. Any charge in respect of an optional extra requires parental agreement and willingness to meet the charges. Parents should be made aware that the activity might be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received. If the visit is deemed to have taken place during the

school day, or is part of the national curriculum then only the cost of board and lodging can be passed onto parents and this cannot exceed the actual cost. All parents will be informed of the right to claim a minimum of free board and lodging if they are receiving particular benefits (see Remissions section below). A voluntary contribution will be requested for the balance of the costs.

- g. **Optional extra visits** – Visits that take place beyond the school day or as part of an extra-curricular activity can be charged and parents are expected to meet the full cost of the trip.
- h. **Breakages** – The financial cost relating to breakages/damage/fines are recoverable from parents and can be pursued as a civil debt. A charge will also apply for loss or damage to school property which is placed under the responsibility of the student and may be taken off the premises.

## **5 REMISSION OF PARENT/STUDENT CHARGES**

- a. According to guidance correct as of January 2014, parents in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging for residential trips deemed to take place during school hours:
  - i. Income Support
  - ii. Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
  - iii. Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
  - iv. Child Tax Credit provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and that the family's income (as assessed by HMRC) does not exceed £16,190 (financial year 13/14)
  - v. the guarantee element of State Pension Credit
  - vi. an income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008
- b. The school will follow the latest DfE guidance in the event that the above list of eligible benefits changes.
- c. The above list of benefits is in line with the eligibility for Free School Meals, therefore reference to the free school meals list will be made in order to validate claims.
- d. If a parent wishes to claim remission of charges, they should contact the Finance Office who will confirm eligibility and the total remission provided.
- e. The Governors have agreed that although legally the school is only required to provide remission for board and lodging for residential trips deemed to take place during school hours, a request for remission of charges will be considered from eligible families in relation to the full cost of any trip within school hours. Requests may be refused, however, depending on the number of parents requesting financial support, or alternatively the trip may be cancelled if it is not financially viable.
- f. For high cost optional extra trips, such as a ski trip taking place in the Easter holiday, it is highly unlikely that remission for charges can be provided as the school would be unable to subsidise the high cost of an individual place.
- g. The Governors acknowledge that on occasion, a family may be experiencing short term financial difficulties but is not in receipt of Free School Meals. Families in this situation should contact the school if they are struggling to fund the cost of a trip

and the school will review if they are able to provide any financial assistance towards the costs.

## **Appendix A – wording for trip letters**

To be included as standard in letters to parents for trips taking place during school hours:

*A contribution of £... to help cover costs would be appreciated. If we do not receive sufficient contributions, the trip may have to be cancelled.*

*Please return your slip and payment to the school office in an envelope with your child's name, class, and what the slip/payment is for.*

*If your child is eligible for Pupil Premium, you are entitled to the trip being funded by school.*

To be included as standard in letters to parents for optional extra trips that are wholly outside of school hours:

*The cost per student for the trip is £X. This trip is provided as an optional payment extra. The full amount must ultimately be paid in order for your child to be eligible to attend.*