

Godstone Primary and Nursery School



Charging and Remissions Policy

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REVIEWED BY: Governing Body

NEXT REVIEW: September 2024

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Introduction

This policy has been compiled in line with the DFE 'Charging for School Activities' document May 2018, 'Education Act 2011' and the 'Schools Admissions Code 2014'. In this policy a charge is defined as a fee payable for specifically defined activities and a remission defined as the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable.

This policy statement will take account of each type of activity that can be charged for and explain when charges will be made. If a charge is to be made for a particular type of activity, for example optional extras, parents will be informed how the charge will be worked out and who might qualify for help with the cost.

The remissions policy sets out any circumstances in which the school or local authority propose to remit (wholly or partly) any charge which would otherwise be payable to them in accordance with the charging policy. For example, a school may decide to provide an Italian language evening class as an optional extra. The governing body may decide to reduce the cost for those children whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits.

Support for parents on low income

If parents are experiencing financial difficulty they are invited to write in confidence to the Headteacher. There are always opportunities for support and we would encourage parents to contact the Headteacher if they have concerns about the charging and remissions policy.

What the school can/cannot charge for

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 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
- 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

Schools and local authorities can charge for:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them
- Optional extras
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities

Voluntary Contributions

When organising school activities trips or visits which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to contribute to the cost of the trip. All contributions are voluntary. If an activity trip or visit cannot be funded without voluntary contribution, the Governing Body or the Headteacher will make this clear to parents at the outset. At the same time it will be made equally clear that the activity trip or visit may not take place if parents are reluctant to support it. If an activity trip or visit trip goes ahead, it may include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. We do not treat these children differently from any others.

If a parent wishes their child to take part in a school trip or event, but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, we do allow the child to participate fully in the trip or activity. Sometimes the school pays additional costs in order to support the visit. Parents have a right to know how each trip is funded. The school provides this information on request.

The cost of ingredients, materials, equipment etc., needed for practical subjects such as craft or food technology must be budgeted for and borne by the school. Parents may be requested to provide a voluntary contribution on the understanding that any finished product will be available to the child.

Additional activities may be organised by the school from time to time. These are activities which take place wholly or mainly outside school hours, but which are not provided as part of the national curriculum or syllabus and are known as 'optional extras'.

Lettings

The school will make its premises available to outside users at a charge of at least the cost of providing the facilities. The scale of charges will be determined annually by the Governing Body in line with Surrey CC recommendation. Individual room hire, hire of facilities for clubs, and use by FRIENDS will all be available. Please refer to the schools lettings policy for more detailed information.

Music Tuition

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. We do not charge for this. There is a charge for individual or group music tuition if this is not part of the National Curriculum. The peripatetic music teachers teach individual or small group lessons. We make a charge for these lessons. If parents are experiencing financial difficulty, they are invited to write in confidence to the Headteacher. We give parents information about additional music tuition at the start of each academic year.

Residential Visits

If the school organises a residential visit in school time or mainly school time, which is to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum, we do not make any charge for the education. However, we do make a charge to cover the costs of board, lodging and travel expenses. Once committed to, any payments made are non-refundable even if the trip or visit is

not attended by the child/children. If parents are experiencing financial difficulty they are invited to write in confidence to the Headteacher.

Damage or Loss of School Property

A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of school property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or material), the charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide.

Remission

Parents who are in receipt of Universal Credit or Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999) are eligible for remission of charges. Remission of charges only applies to board and lodgings charges which are levied directly by the LA or the school and where they relate to activities deemed to take place wholly or partly in school hours.

Remission will not apply to such charges when they relate to activities wholly outside school hours, except if the activity is prescribed in a syllabus for a public examination, if it is prescribed by the National Curriculum or fulfils duties relating to Religious Education.

The Headteacher or Governing Body may decide not to levy charges in respect of a particular activity, if it feels that this is reasonable in the circumstances.

Arrangements for re-gaining debt from parents

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that procedures are in place for the recovery of any outstanding debt. Any money owed to school has an impact on the budget and may affect the resources we can provide to all children. We hope that parents understand this and will make every effort to avoid owing the school money.

Payment will be obtained as and when goods and services are provided wherever possible; in particular where the value of the goods and services is relatively small, i.e. less than £50. Where payment is not received at the time when the goods or services are delivered a reminder will be sent out by the school office as soon as possible but normally within 10 school days after a debt becomes due. Reminders will require payment within 10 school days from the date of issue.

Final reminders will be issued by the Headteacher or School Business Manager if no payment is received within 20 school days from the initial due date. Any final reminder will make it clear that legal action may be taken if payment is not received within a further 5 school days.

At each Governors Committee meeting, the Headteacher is required to inform the Governors of any debt that is still outstanding after the 14 day period following the final reminder, together with any proposed action. This may be a referral to our solicitors for legal action.

The school may reduce or cancel a debt in certain circumstances. A sensitive approach to debt recovery will be carried out, taking the following factors into account; hardship – where paying

the debt would cause financial hardship, ill health – where our recovery action might cause further ill health, time – where the debt is so large compared to the person's income that it would take an unreasonable length of time to pay it all off, cost – where the value of the debt is less than the cost of recovering it & multiple debts - where someone owes more than one debt to the school. In this situation an attempt to agree one repayment plan to include all debts will be established.

Complaints:

For details on the full complaints' procedure see the complaints' policy. The complaints policy is available on the school website and in the school office. Parents are encouraged to take any complaint or concern to a staff member in line with this policy. The school will work towards resolving complaints and concerns as fairly and as quickly as possible.