

Mason Moor Primary School

Policy Document

Policy for:	Charging remissions and lettings
Overarching Area:	School organisation
Other policy links:	Off-site visits
Governors' Ratification Date:	11 January 2018
Revisions and Amendments:	Reviewed to ensure compliance with DfE Guidance and the School Governance Handbook

1 **Statement**

The purpose of this policy is to explain the school position in respect of charging for school activities and visits (defined as “optional extras”) which we believe will enrich the curriculum and learning of our pupils.

In writing this policy the governing body is compliant with the following legislation and guidance:

- DfE Charging for school activities. Departmental advice for governing bodies, school leaders, school staff and local authorities. October 2014.
- Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996.
- Section 12.5 of the Governance Handbook. November 2015.

2. **What schools can charge for**

Primary schools and local authorities can charge for:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child’s parent wishes him/her to own them, cookery ingredients or materials to use in technology.
- Music and vocal tuition, where it is an additional curriculum activity and not part of the National Curriculum, including examinations, or other extra-curricular activities.
- Community facilities.
- Optional extras.

Optional extras are defined as:

- Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority/governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education) such as for swimming lessons.
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit, as long as parents are not in receipt of benefits that qualify their child to receive free school meals.
- Extended day services offered to pupils (for example breakfast club, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions).
- Education provided outside of school time that is not:

Part of the national curriculum;
Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school; or
Part of religious education.

In calculating the cost of optional extras schools may take into account the following expenditure:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra.

- The cost of buildings and accommodation.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff.
- 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.

The following is a list of examples of optional extra activities organised by the school, for which we will invite voluntary contributions from parents and carers.

Visits to museums.
 Sporting activities which require transport expenses.
 Outdoor adventure activities.
 Visits to or by a theatre company.
 School trips.
 Musical events.

3. **Requests for voluntary financial contributions from parents**

The school reserves the right to invite voluntary contributions for activities/trips organised by the school and we will make clear to parents, from the onset, whether the activity is dependent upon parental contributions to go ahead. There may be cases where, if we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, it is possible that we may cancel a trip.

If, however, we decide that a trip can go ahead, every child who would like to attend will be allowed to do so and information relating to which parents have contributed and which have not will remain confidential. Parental contributions will not subsidise children whose parents have not made a contribution, these costs will be met from school funds.

This reflects one of our pupil premium principles, which is to enrich the curriculum for these pupils.

When we contact parents about an optional extra activity we will ensure that parents on low incomes and in receipt of qualifying benefits are clear about what steps to take if they require support with the invited financial contribution.

As a school, we are committed to:

- Giving parents as much advance warning as possible for any activities when we will be inviting a voluntary contribution towards the cost.
- Offering, wherever possible, a payment plan so that parents can pay their contribution by instalments which should also support parents with more than one child so that they can then spread the cost.
- Providing the best value for money possible.
- Providing transparent information to parents so they are aware of the subsidy provided by the school and can understand that they are not faced with meeting the full cost of any trips/activities.

4. Community Facilities

The school can let facilities in compliance with our safeguarding duties towards our pupils and appropriate insurance arrangements being in place. The governing body will be notified of any lettings.

Where the hirer is providing a service directly to the children of the school, for example an extra-curricular club, we may make no charge to the hirer.

5. Damage to School Property

The school will cover accidental breakages of school property.

Deliberate or wilful acts which result in breakage or damage to school property may be charged for at a rate appropriate to replacement costs.

6. Music

Music and singing tuition is currently taught within school curriculum therefore there are no charges. In the future if music is taught through a 3rd party, for example Southampton Music Services, charges may be appropriate, for example to hire musical instruments. Parents will be informed beforehand in all circumstances.

7. Dinner Money

Dinners are charged for at the rate set by City Catering and the full cost passed on to parents. For children eligible for Free School Meals, no charge is made. Since September 2014, we have provided a free school meal for all children in Years R, 1 and 2 under the universal infant free school meals initiative.

8. Breakfast Club

We work closely with the YMCA Millbrook who provide a breakfast club to pupils. Costs and payment are therefore made directly to the YMCA following their charges policies and procedures. School may contact the YMCA on behalf of a parent where financial consideration needs to be given, the YMCA, at their discretion may then adjust payment or waive costs.

9. Other Charges to Parents

The Headteacher or Governing Body may levy charges for miscellaneous services up to the cost of providing such services, e.g. for providing a copy of an OFSTED report.

The school charging policy will be subject to change if there are new Local Authority or Department for Education policy changes, or changes in the law.

10. **Debt Recovery**

Parents

- Parents owing money will be informed by the school office of their debt
- The school will follow the debt recovery procedure, developed with the LA Finance department (Appendix A)

Appendix A – Debt Recovery Procedure

1	Initial Reminder	Initial reminders may be informal and made either in person (when a parent comes to collect/drop off the child) or by phone or text.
2	First Reminder	A formal reminder letter should be issued after two weeks from any informal reminder and/or from the date of the event.
3	Second Reminder	A second reminder letter will be issued within two weeks of the date of the first reminder letter.
Phone calls can be made, the date and outcome of the call will be recorded and kept with any letters.		

Using reminder letters

If a debt is taken past two reminder letters formal written evidence may have to be produced. It is therefore important that the reminder letters are sent and retained. Details of all reminders, whether verbal or in writing, should be maintained. Where a letter is issued a copy should be kept.

Failure to respond

If no response is received a letter will be sent to the debtor advising them that the matter will be referred to the Local Authority.

At the discretion of the Headteacher the debtor may be advised that they will be required to pay in advance for future events. Regarding a dinner debt, the debtor may be requested to provide a packed lunch for their child.

Negotiation of Repayment Terms

Debtors are expected to settle the amount owed as soon as possible after receiving the first reminder.

If a debtor asks for repayments terms these may be negotiated at the discretion of the Headteacher. A record of all such agreement shall be kept. A letter will be issued to the debtor confirming the agreed terms. The settlement period should be the shortest that is judged reasonable.