



The Bramptons Primary School

Charging and Recovery of Debt Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 All education during school hours is free. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum with the exception of individual or group music tuition. Also, voluntary contributions are requested for some trips and visits and materials/ingredients.
- 1.2 This policy outlines the charging arrangements in relation to Music Tuition, Sports Clubs, Residential Trips and before and after school care. Also, it details the process to recover outstanding debts.
- 1.3 The School uses the School Money Payments System. Charges are added to the children's accounts as and when they are incurred and parents access their account to pay charges they have incurred or to add credit knowing it will be utilised to cover future charges. This is most likely to occur when paying for Before and After School Care.
- 1.4 It is important that we have effective debt recovery arrangements in place to recoup money owed to the school.

2.0 Voluntary contributions for School Trips

- 2.1 When organising school 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. However, if we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, it may be necessary to cancel the trip. If a trip goes ahead, it will include children whose parents have not paid any contribution.
- 2.2 Parents are expected to pay their contributions by the week before the trip is due to take place so, if some parents have not made contributions, the school can assess whether the trip is financially viable.
- 2.3 The school will give parents/carers as much notice as possible of trips and what the requested donation will be. Any parent/carer who needs assistance with making the donation is encouraged to discuss the matter with the Bursar or Head Teacher so a payment plan can be set up.
- 2.4 On the rare occasion when a case of genuine hardship means the parent/carer is still unable to meet the cost, we will allow the child to participate fully in the trip or activity. These children will not be treated any differently. Additional assistance may be available for children who are in receipt of Pupil Premium.
- 2.5 Parents have a right to know how each trip is funded. The school provides this information on request.

3.0 Residential visits

- 3.1 If the school organises a residential visit in school time or mainly school time a charge will be made to cover the cost of board, lodgings, activities and travel expenses.

- 3.2 The school will give parents/carers as much notice as possible of residential visits and what the cost will be. All parents/carers will be given the option to make stage payments over a period of time leading up to the visit. Charges will be added to School Money accounts in instalments. The School reserves the right to cancel the trip if there are insufficient children attending or insufficient payments have been received and the trip is therefore no longer financially viable. To enable the school to ensure the trips viability, payment of all instalments must be paid in full at least a month before the trip is due to take place.
- 3.3 The letter sent to parents relating to the trip will detail the cost of transport and will also encourage any parent/carer who needs assistance with making the payments to discuss the matter with the Bursar or Head Teacher so alternative arrangements can be made if necessary.

4.0 Music tuition

- 4.1 All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum and we do not charge for this.
- 4.2 There is a charge for individual or group music tuition if this is not part of the National Curriculum and the peripatetic music teachers teach individual or small group lessons.
- 4.3 Each September the school has to commit to paying for music lessons for the whole of the academic year based on the number of parents/carers that have requested that their child/children have lessons. Therefore, parents/carers are asked to commit to paying for lessons for the full academic year even if they decide to discontinue the lessons during the year. They are required to sign a letter confirming this commitment. The School gives the option to pay these fees as one payment or by 10 monthly instalments payable via School Money. If the direct debit is cancelled then the full amount owing is due.
- 4.4 If parents are experiencing difficulty in making the payments they can discuss the matter with the Bursar or Head Teacher so a payment plan can be set up.

5.0 Lunchtime/After School Activities

- 5.1 The school may offer additional activities after school and during lunch breaks. We reserve the right to charge for these activities provided by the school.
- 5.2 If the club is run by a third-party provider, parents will book places and pay the provider direct. Where clubs are run by the school, parents are required to pay and give consent for a term's worth of club sessions before the first session takes place.

6.0 School Meals

- 6.1 Hot meals are provided by Kingswood Catering. Parents/Carers are responsible for booking and paying for meals, where necessary, direct with Kingswood Catering.

7.0 Before and After School Care

- 7.1 Wherever possible, Before and After School Care is booked and paid for in advance. Parents have until midnight on the day before to book and pay. If parents want to book on the day they must contact the school to add their child to the

register, they must also ensure that there is enough money on their School Money account for the money to be drawn the same day. Parents are not permitted to book their child/children into Before and After School Care if they have payments outstanding for previous sessions.

8.0 Breakages and Losses

- 8.1 Parents may be expected to replace, or pay for the replacement of, items of school property that have been lost by their child.
- 8.2 Parents will be expected to pay for any repairs or replacements that are result from wilful damage to school buildings or property.

9.0 Recovery of Outstanding Debts

- 9.1 The school recognises the importance of ensuring that money that is owed to the school is collected efficiently.
- 9.2 A vast majority of the debtors are parents/carers and it is important to recognise the difference between those that choose not to pay and those that are finding it difficult to make payments due to their personal circumstances.
- 9.3 In cases where parents/carers are experiencing difficulties in paying outstanding debts they will be treated sensitively and compassionately. Every effort will be made to put an arrangement in place to repay the debt that is realistic and affordable for the parent/carer. In cases where parents/carers choose not to pay the recovery of the debt will be robustly pursued.
- 9.4 Debts should not accrue for residential trips or sports clubs as payment is required in advance of the trip or club taking place.
- 9.5 Procedure for Recovery of Outstanding Debts for Music Tuition
 - Once the debt is over 30 days old a letter will be sent by the Bursar reminding Parents of the debt and requesting that it be paid as soon as possible.
 - Once the debt is over 60 days old a letter will be sent by the Head Teacher seeking immediate settlement of the debt.
 - Once the debt is over 90 days old a letter will be sent by Registered Mail/Recorded Delivery from the Full Governing Body seeking immediate settlement of the debt or legal action may be taken to recover the debt.
 - If no response is received to this letter the Committee will consider pursuing the debt by taking legal action.

****At each of these stages parents/carers will be encouraged to speak to the Head Teacher or Bursar if they are experiencing difficulties paying so that a manageable and realistic repayment plan can be established.****

9.6 Procedure for the Recovery of Outstanding Debts for Before and After School Care

There are two circumstances in which debts can be accrued

1. Where care is booked on the same day and there is not enough credit on the child's School Money account to draw down payment. In these cases, the parents will be contacted via School Money to remind them to make payment. As parents cannot book Before and After School Care if they have payment outstanding, large debts cannot be accrued.
2. Where care is paid for using a Tax Free Childcare Scheme, parents typically pay in arrears. In this circumstance, there should be no more than one month's worth of debt accrued. If a debt becomes greater than one month old we will request that, going forward, payment is made in advance and the credit applied to the child's bookings as they are made. If this does not take place, access to Before and After School Care will be withdrawn.

10.0 Equality Implications

There are no equality implications in relation to this policy as all debtors are treated in accordance with the same procedure for charging and recovering debts.

11.0 Related Policies

Financial Management Policy.