

Parental Voluntary Contributions Policy

January 2025

Bushmead Primary School



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1. Aims

The aim of this Policy is to follow the basic principle – that education should be free of charge if it takes place during school hours. Parents and others have the right to information about school hours, and this information is detailed on our website, Our School Day.

[Our School Day | Bushmead Primary School](#)

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on [charging for school activities](#) and [the Education Act 1996](#), sections 449-462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England

3. Definitions

- **Charge:** a fee payable for specifically defined activities
- **Remission:** the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The head teacher

The head teacher will:

Work with staff, parents and governors to determine the strategic development of the Parental Voluntary Contributions Policy and provision in the school.

4.2 The Governor/s

They will:

Work with the head teacher and the Finance Manager to determine the strategic development of the Parental Voluntary Contributions Policy and provision in the school.

The Governing Body will review this policy in line with the Policy review schedule at the FPP committee meetings

5. Voluntary Contributions

Although we do not charge for most of our school-time activities, we invite parents to make a contribution to help school funds go further. If a particular activity cannot take place without some help from parents, this is explained to parents during the planning stage. The essential point is that no pupil will be left out of an activity because his/her parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind. It may be necessary to state that the activity will not take place if parents are reluctant to support it.

Contributions must, however, be genuinely voluntary. The terms of any request for contributions must clearly state that:

- There is no obligation to contribute
- Registered pupils at the school will not be treated differently according to

whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request.

There is no limit on the level of voluntary contribution, which parents or others can make to school activities, nor is any restriction placed upon the use, which can be made of such contributions. A request for a contribution towards the cost of a particular activity could, for example, include the cost of subsidising pupils from low-income families, or the cost of travel for accompanying adults. Alternatively, parents could be asked to contribute towards part of the cost at the time of the visit or activity, and the rest could be met from other sources.

6. Musical Instrument Tuition

There is an exception to the rule about not charging for activities in school hours. Charges may be made for teaching either an individual pupil, or pupils in a group of up to four, to play a musical instrument, if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil.

7. Education Partly During School Hours

Sometimes an activity may happen partly during and partly outside school hours. If most of the time spent on a non-residential activity occurs during school hours, that activity counts as taking place entirely in school hours and no charge can be made. Time spent on travel only counts as being during school hours if the travel takes place during school hours.

As an example, a long distance trip might involve much travel before and after normal school hours, but if the time spent at the destination fell mainly within school hours, the trip would count as happening in school time and be free of charge.

By contrast, a trip which involved leaving school an hour or so earlier than usual in the afternoon, but then went on until quite late in the evening, would be classified as taking place outside school time. Charges would then be allowed.

8. Residential Activities

Special rules apply for residential activities. The following need to be considered:

- A trip counts as falling within school time if the number of school sessions missed by the pupils amounts to half or more of the number of days taken up by the activity.
- Each school day is normally divided into two sessions and each 24 hour period is divided into two half-days beginning at noon and midnight. Therefore, for example:
 - A term-time trip from noon on Wednesday to 9 pm on Sunday, would last for nine half-days, including five school sessions, and would count as taking place in school.
 - A trip from noon on Thursday to 9 pm on Sunday would count as seven half-days, including three school sessions, and would therefore be classified for charging as taking place outside school time.
- For a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or essential to the education provided at the school, no charge may be made either for the education or the cost of travel.

- However, charges can be made for board and lodging in these circumstances, except for pupils whose parents are receiving Income Support or Family Credit.
- The Headteacher will advise parents of the right to claim free activities if they are receiving these benefits.

9. Remission

Parents who have contributed voluntarily may have a refund if their child is unable to take part in the trip through illness.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy and information report will be reviewed by FPP committee every year . It will also be updated if any changes to the information are made during the year.

It will be approved by the governing board FPP.

11. Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to our policies on:

Educational Trips and Visits

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