



Charging and Remission Policy

December 2020

1. Introduction

Blakesley Hall School is committed to providing quality education based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. In practice, this means the children have an entitlement to benefit from all educational activities and to:-

- *participate fully in school curriculum;*
- *contribute to all aspects of school life;*
- *be a valued partner in the process of education.*

These objectives must be seen to inform educational activities, whether in or outside the school and are therefore integral to the process of charging for school activities and to the remission which is available to parents/guardians who are on a low income. We aim:

- *To make school activities accessible to all regardless of family income;*
- *to encourage and promote external activities which give added value to the curriculum;*
- *to provide a process which allows activities to take place at a minimum cost to parents, pupils and the school;*
- *to respond to the wide variations in family income while not adding additional unexpected burdens to the school budget.*

The development of a range of activities forms part of the school's forward planning process and is linked to the annual budget cycle with a particular emphasis on the identification of specific resources to support such activities. It includes a number of key factors:-

- *the value of certain activities in relation to the age/needs of pupils;*
- *the cost of activities set against their educational value;*
- *how the activity will be paid for;*
- *the appropriate process for raising funding;*
- *an assessment of whether the educational aims can be met in any other way;*
- *an understanding of the various types of activities involved – for example, educational visits, music tuition, materials for practical work;*
- *reference to additional or hidden costs - for example, lunch money and pocket money;*
- *assessment of support for local facilities.*

2. Legislation – Education During School Hours

The DfE in its guidance to school governors states that, "Education provided during school hours must be free. The definition of "education" includes materials, equipment and transport provided in school hours by the LA or the school to carry pupils between the school and an activity." It goes on to advise that, "Although schools cannot charge for school time activities, they may still invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions (in cash or in kind)... the essential point is that no pupil may be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind."

3. Education Outside School Hours

"Parents can only be charged for activities that happen outside school hours when these activities are not a necessary part of the national curriculum or religious education. No charge can be made for activities that are an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination. Charges may be made for other activities that happen outside school hours if parents agree to pay. The Education Reform Act 1988 described activities which can be charged for as 'optional extras'. It is up to the LA or governing body providing the activities to decide whether to make a charge."

4. Residential Activity

"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 costs of travel. However, charges can be made for board and lodging in these circumstances." DfE

5. Remission Policy

To ensure that access to activities is a reality and that outcomes reflect intentions, Blakesley Hall Primary School will implement the following Remission Policy. The fundamental aim of this policy is to ensure that all pupils gain fully from everything that the school is able to offer them and is based on an understanding of the relationship between low income, entitlement and access. The policy takes into account the very real and persistent difficulties which people on low income have in meeting the costs of educational activities for their children.

Curriculum Related Visits and Visitors

Such visits are planned to develop or illustrate the curriculum and as such should be an entitlement for all pupils. During the academic year costs for this type of visit will be met in part from the School Budget Share and a voluntary contribution will be requested from parents towards the cost of travel. After April a decision will be taken about whether the policy can be maintained into the following financial year.

Non-Curriculum Visits

Full payment will be requested in respect of these visits which are additional opportunities occasionally planned out of school hours (e.g. theatre visits)

Residential Visit (Primary Guarantee)

The LA Charging and Remission Policy for each of the Birmingham Education Authority Residential Centres will be followed. This policy will also be implemented in any Blakesley Hall organised residential visit or residential visits.

Music Tuition

Individual or group instrumental music tuition which is additional to the National Curriculum, is not part of an exam syllabus and is voluntary, will be charged for. Parental agreement will be obtained before tuition is given. Charges will reflect but not exceed the cost of provision and be levied depending on the size of the group of pupils taking part.

6. Informing Parents

Blakesley Hall Primary School will follow the DfES Guidelines which state that "The LA or governing body may not charge for anything unless it has drawn up a statement of General Policy on charging... A Policy Statement will take account of each type of activity that can be charged for, and explain when charges will be made...."

Parents need to know how the charges will be worked out and who might qualify for help with costs (or even get it free). A summary of "this information" must be included in the prospectus published by the school."

"If a charge is made for each pupil, this should not exceed the actual costs. If further funds need to be raised...this must be by voluntary contributions or general fund raising."

7. Implementation

Planning, as part of the process of budget building is essential to developing a charging policy at Blakesley Hall Primary School which recognises equality of access. We will endeavour therefore to introduce a programme of activities based on a clear set of priorities identified by the school and taking into consideration the projected number of children (including known remissions), cost per head and a breakdown of transportation costs, entry fees, discounts, teacher costs etc.

Such a process however, should not inhibit flexibility and the capacity of the school to take advantage of opportunities which arise during the course of the year. These will be implemented in a way which is consistent with the school's overall policy.

8. Statement of General Policy on Charging

The Governing Body of Blakesley Hall Primary School will charge for documents requested under the Freedom of Information Publication Scheme that are marked with £ sign.

The amount is to cover photocopying and administrative costs and will initially be set at 50p per sheet –this amount to be reviewed annually with the rest of this document.

Charges for parental request for copies of their child's school records will be set at 50p per sheet.

Charges for parental request for information relating to their child for outside agencies will be set at £2.00 per letter. Letters will take seven working days to be completed.

Reference to this statement will be published in the School Prospectus.

9. Passport Applications

The Governing Body strongly suggests that no member should be required to authenticate passports by signing the applications for passports of parents and pupils.

Date of review by Governing Body _____

Chair of Governors Signature _____

