

Dean Valley Community Primary School



Dean Valley
Community Primary

Charging Policy

Person responsible for Policy
Written/Reviewed

Date for next Review

Governing Body, Vicky McPherson and Stacie Booth

Authorised by Governors December 2018

Reviewed November 2023

November 2027

Charging Policy

Document created November 2018

Introduction

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that there is clarity over those items which the school will provide free of charge and for those items where there may be a charge. This policy is subject to the Law which was set out in the Education Act 1996: Sections 449–462. Any changes in Law could over rule this policy. The policy will be maintained to comply with changes in the Law. The ninth edition of A Guide to the Law for School Governors dated January 2010 was used in preparing this policy.

Definitions

The school day is:

As defined in the School Prospectus. The midday break does not form part of the school day.

Eligible Benefits are:

- Income Support;
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 ;
- Child Tax Credit (providing that they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, that does not exceed the current annual amount*);
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit.
- An income-related employment and support allowance

* This amount changes annually, the current annual amount will apply.

Standard Education is:

The education provided by the school to meet the needs of the National Curriculum, religious education or other parts of the syllabus defined by the school to be necessary for a full and rounded primary education.

School Delegated Education Budget is:

The financial budget delegated by government (central and local) to the school governors. The ways that this budget can be spent is prescribed in law and is described in the guide to the law mentioned in the Introduction. In summary the governors will control the spend of this budget to ensure it is only spent on things for the educational benefit of the schools' pupils.

School Funds are:

All the monies that the school has from all sources except the School Delegated Education Budget and money devolved from government for capital projects (Devolved Formula Capital).

Headteacher

The term Headteacher is used throughout this policy, meaning the Headteacher or the Assistant Headteachers if the Headteacher is absent.

Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The governing body has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy, but can delegate this to a committee or an individual governor. The governing body also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy. In our school, responsibility for approving the Charging and Remissions Policy has been delegated to the Resource and Finance FGB.

- Governors will consider how to help financial hardship cases brought to their attention by the Headteacher. Families will not be identified to them.
- The Governors will review this policy every three years.

The Headteacher

- The Headteacher will advise parents of charges / voluntary contribution amounts well in advance of any activity requiring them.
- Parents who are having financial difficulties in meeting charges levied by the school should alert the Headteacher to their difficulties.
- The Headteacher will require proof that a family is in receipt of Eligible Benefits when a family claims that this is the case.

Staff

Our staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the Charging and Remissions Policy consistently when planning trips
- Notifying the Headteacher of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies

Parents

Parents are expected to notify staff or the Headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding the Charging and Remissions policy

Activities within the school day

- During the school day all activities which are part of the Standard Education will be provided free of charge. This includes any materials, equipment and transport to take pupils between the school and the activity.
- Charges made by made for activities which are not part of the Standard Education. This includes teaching either an individual pupil, or groups of up to four pupils, to play a musical instrument.
- Voluntary contributions may be sought for activities during the school day which entail additional costs. This may include activities which are part of the Standard Education. In these circumstances no pupil will be prevented from participating because his/her parents cannot or will not make a contribution.
- If insufficient funds are available it may be necessary to curtail or cancel activities.

Optional activities outside of the school day

School may charge for optional, extra activities provided outside of the school day, for example, school clubs, sports activities, theatre trips. Such activities are not normally part of the Standard Education.

Standard Education partly during the school day

If a non-residential activity happens partly inside the school day and partly outside of it, there will be no charge if most of the time to be spent on the activity falls within the school day.

Conversely, if the bigger proportion of time spent falls outside of the normal school day, charges may be made.

Residential Activities

If a residential activity takes place largely during school time and is determined by the school to be part of the Standard Education, no charge will be made either for the education or for the cost of travel.

Charges will be made for board and lodging, except for pupils whose parents are in receipt of Eligible Benefits. The cost of providing cover for staff to attend the residential trip will also be included in the cost to parents.

Calculating charges

Charges made for any activity, whether during the school day or not, will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating.

There will be no levy on those who can contribute to support those who are exempt or those who can't or won't contribute

If sufficient funds are not available, from all sources, to cover the cost of the activity, it may be necessary to curtail or cancel it.

Parent Communications

The Headteacher will advise parents well in advance of any planned activity which will require charges or voluntary contributions.

Letters to parents will contain the appropriate standard text from the Appendix to this policy.

Parents may wish to see the calculations of charges for specific events if they wish.

Financial Hardship

The Governors desire that no child will miss out on an event because of financial hardship, though this cannot be guaranteed.

Priority for financial support will be given to those families who are in receipt of Eligible Benefits. The source of funds to support these families will be the School Designated Education budget

Families who are excluded from being in receipt of an Eligible Benefit through being entitled to Working Tax Credit may be given financial support. This will be at the discretion of the Headteacher who will make the decision based on proof provided by the family and knowledge of their situation. The source of funds to support these families will come through voluntary contributions and fundraising such as income from third party organisations but not from the School Designated Education budget.

Financial support may be provided for other families:

Financial support may be authorised by the Headteacher up to a limit of £50 per pupils per year. An example might be to cover the cost of theatre trips.

Above £50 the Headteacher will seek authorisation from the Chair of Governors and the Governor in charge of Finance. The decision will be at the sole discretion of the Governors based on the advice of the Headteacher. An example might be for music tuition for pupils who the Headteacher advises will benefit from such tuition. The Headteacher will not provide names of families.

The source of funds for this category of support will come through voluntary contributions and fundraising such as income from third party organisations but not from the School Designated budget.

Distribution of Limited Funds

Each year, the Governors will endeavour to agree with the Local Authority a Designated Education budget that will be sufficient to cover the forecast cost of full support for families in receipt of Eligible Benefits.

Where funds, of whatever source, are insufficient to cover the cost of an event and meet the approved claims for financial support from families, one of the following courses may be taken:

- The Headteacher may curtail or cancel the event concerned.

- Partial support funds will be offered to the families being supported, the level of support for each pupil affected will be the same. If this shortfall causes a family to withdraw their child or children from an event, the Headteacher will alert the Chair of Governors and the Chair of the Finance Committee who will review the situation with the Headteacher.

Appendix

Standard texts to be included, without alteration, in letters to parents advising on charges to be made for an activity:

Text 1: For non residential activities which are part of the Standard Education

Our charging policy can be seen at school or on the school website. This activity is part of the Standard Education (defined in our charging policy) which we provide for your child and as such we cannot levy a charge for this, however if the activity goes ahead the school will incur specific extra costs. To help the school meet these costs we are requesting that a voluntary contribution of £XX per participating child is made by their family. If you do want your child to participate in this activity and are in receipt of eligible state benefits or are unable to contribute, please let me know. If you do not want your child to participate in this activity, they should attend school as normal. If sufficient funds are not available to cover the cost of the activity it may be necessary to curtail or cancel it.

Text 2: For residential activities which are part of the Standard Education

Our charging policy can be seen at school or on the school website. This residential trip is part of the Standard Education (defined in our charging policy) which we provide for your child and as such we cannot levy a charge for the educational or travel costs, however if the activity goes ahead the school will incur specific extra costs in these areas. To help the school meet these costs we are requesting that a voluntary contribution of £XX per participating child is made by their family. The cost of board and lodgings will not normally be met by school. The cost of board and lodgings will be £XX per pupil. If you do want your child to participate in this activity and are in receipt of eligible state benefits or are unable to contribute, please let me know. If you do not want your child to participate in this activity, they should attend school as normal. Families in receipt of eligible state benefits have a right to have all trip costs met by the school from its budget. If sufficient funds are not available to cover the cost of the activity it may be necessary to curtail or cancel it.

Text 3: For activities which are not part of the Standard Education

Our charging policy can be seen at school or on the school website. This activity is NOT part of the Standard Education (defined in our charging policy) which we provide for your child and as such school is not required to fund the cost of this activity. If the activity is to go ahead the cost will need to be met by voluntary contributions or donations. The cost of this activity will be £XX per participating pupil which school expects will be met by their family. If you do want your child to participate in this activity and are in receipt of eligible state benefits or are unable to contribute, please let me know. If you do not want your child to participate in this activity, they should attend school as normal. If funds are insufficient to meet the costs of the activity it will be probably be cancelled.