

# Ben Jonson Primary School



## Charging and Remissions Policy

**Date reviewed:** November 2024

**Date due for review:** November 2025

# CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

## 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.

The policy has been informed by the LA policy and the DFE guidance and compliments the school's Charging for School Activities Policy and Pupil Premium Grant Policy.

## Definition

The school day is defined as: 8:55 am – 3:30pm. The midday break does not form part of the school day.

## Policy statement

During the school day all activities that are a necessary part of the National Curriculum plus religious education will be provided free of charge. This includes any materials, equipment and transport to take pupils between the school and the activity. It excludes charges made for teaching an individual pupil or groups of up to four pupils to play a musical instrument.

Unless the teaching is an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil(s), we will make a charge in the form of voluntary contributions.

## Voluntary contributions:

The school may invite parents to make voluntary contributions for:

1. Their child participating in out of school hours activities. Where a parental contribution is necessary for an activity to take place, this will be fully explained to parents during the activity planning stage.
2. Their child participating in trips and visits in school hours.

The school may ask for voluntary contributions towards the cost of school-time activities to assist with funding, subject to the following conditions:

1. Any children of parents who do not wish to contribute will not be treated any differently.
2. Where there are insufficient contributions to make the activity viable, the activity will be cancelled.

The terms of request for contributions will be clear that:

1. There is no obligation to contribute; and
2. That registered pupils at the school will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution

## Activities for pupils during school hours

A charge can be made to cover the cost of ingredients or materials where parents/guardians have indicated in advance that they wish to own the finished product.

## Optional activities outside of the school day

Schools may choose to charge for other activities that take place outside school hours. Where a charge is made, the total collected must not exceed the cost of providing the activity. Parents must not be asked to subsidise cost to other pupils – they should only pay the cost of the activity per head (the total cost divided by the number of the pupils participating).

### Costs that may legally be recovered are:

1. teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra; this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra
2. non-teaching staff
3. any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra
4. transport to an activity outside school hours.

We will charge for optional, extra activities provided outside of the school day, for example

1. Breakfast club.
2. After School Club

## Before and after school clubs and extended school activities

Parents/carers may be asked to pay a charge for their child to attend a before or after school club or to take part in extended school activities.

Adults and young people in the community may also be asked to pay a charge if they participate in extended school activities.

The Headteacher is responsible for determining the charges for attendance at before or after school club activities or extended school activities subject to approval by the GOVERNING BODY. Such charges will be reviewed by the GOVERNING BODY annually.

The level of charges will be set to cover some of the cost of the provision of the activities, but never set to make a profit. All club & childcare charges may be reviewed at staff discretion.

The current charges applying for before and after school activities and for extended school activities are as follows:

Daily charge for children for breakfast club	<b>£2</b> per child
Daily charge for after school clubs:	<b>£3</b> per club per child
Children collected late from clubs <b>after 5 p.m.</b> (Monday-Friday)	£5.00 per child (At this stage the school may start to follow Child Protection procedure for non-collected children)
Children collected late from clubs on more than 3 occasions.	Club membership will be forfeited for the following term.

For the events below, voluntary contributions will be sought.

#### Curriculum trips

Refreshments on trips e.g. Pantomime, Seaside, Zoo etc.

#### 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 will be made. When such activities are arranged parents will be told how the charges were calculated.

#### Clothing

Parents/carers are asked to provide the official school uniform. Where they encounter difficulties, the School will attempt to assist where possible, through our second-hand clothing supply. The School will supply essential protective clothing when necessary, e.g. safety goggles.

#### Damage or Loss of Equipment

A charge may be made for damage or loss caused by a pupil, at the discretion of the Headteacher.

#### Extended Leave

Parents taking their children out of school during term-time, often for extended periods is a significant problem for the school. These pupils' academic progress is often substantially impeded and so, in order to dissuade parents from this practice, the School has adopted the LBTH Penalty Notice Scheme Protocol.

#### Residential Visit

Charges may be made to cover the full unit cost of board and lodging per pupil on a residential, whether it is classified as taking place within or outside school hours. Parents will be given a terms notice of this charge in order to enable parents pay in instalments if they so wish. Subsidised charges will be made for board and lodging. This will be reviewed on an annual basis. Other charges will be made to cover costs when the number of school sessions missed by the pupils totals half or more of the number of half-days taken up by the activity. In such cases parents will be told how the charges were calculated.

### Calculating charges

There are a number of things to take into account when looking at charging for a residential trip:

1. whether it is classified in law as taking place within or outside school hours
2. charging for board and lodging
3. charging for transport
4. charging for activities

### Classification of Residentials

By law, residentials are classified as being within school hours if the number of school sessions missed by the pupils is at least half of the number of half days spent on the trip. Each school day is divided into two sessions. A half day is a twelve hour period starting at noon or midnight.

Example 1: A residential trip leaving school at 12pm on Wednesday and returning at 9pm on Sunday, counts as nine half days and five school sessions, and is therefore classified as taking place within school hours for charging purposes.

Example 2: A residential trip leaving school at 12pm on Thursday and returning 9pm on Sunday, counts as seven half days and three school sessions, and is therefore classified as taking place outside school hours for charging purposes.

### Music Tuition

No charge will be made if the music tuition is an essential part of the national curriculum.

### Nursery places

From January 2022, we offer full time places to:

- Children who are fully funded by the Government's 30 hours per week scheme
- Through a top-up charge, parents can apply for a full time place by paying an additional £10.00 per hour (£150.00 per week for 15 hours) payable a minimum of two weeks in advance. The full-time place will cease after one week of non-payment.

Requests for additional sessions in the nursery will be considered in line with the number of children and staff ratio at the time of the request.

### Eligible benefits

Parents who are in receipt of the following benefits will, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, also be entitled to the remission of charges: · Universal Credit

## Lettings & Users of the premises

The Governing Body has no agreed policy for Lettings Regulations & Conditions of Hire and Use at present.

## Debt management arrangements

### Definition

To ensure that debt write offs are kept to a minimum by taking all reasonable steps to recover money owed to the school. However, there will be situations where the debt recovery process fails to recover all or some of the debt and in such cases, the debt needs to be recommended for write off. The writing off of debts, should only be considered where appropriate recovery action has been exhausted or a cost benefit analysis indicates this to be uneconomic.

### General requirements

The governing body and school will take all reasonable measures to collect debts as part of its management of public funds. A debt will be written off only after all reasonable measures (commensurate with the size and nature of the debt) have been taken to recover it. The school's charging policy will observe the relevant financial regulations and guidance set out in the Scheme for Financing Schools and any other legal requirements.

In particular:

1. The formal agreement of the Local Authority's Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer) will be obtained before a debt exceeding £1,000 is written off. (If any debtor has a number of debts, which together exceed the write-off limit, then these will be treated as a total amount).
2. Debts greater than £10,000 can only be written off by the Executive member for finance on advice of the section 151 officer.
3. A formal record of any debts above £1,000 written off will be maintained and this will be retained for 7 years (the form of this record is specified below).
4. The school will not initiate any legal action to recover debts, but will refer any debts which it has not been able to collect (unless a decision to write-off the debt is deemed a reasonable course of action) to the Council's Legal Services section to consider taking legal or other action to recover the debt.

### Acceptable 'credit period'

### Invoices

In general payment for all goods and services supplied by the School should be collected in advance or at least within 30 days upon receipt of an invoice.

### Breakfast and After School Care

As per the agreement and offer letter signed by the parent/carer, we recommend that payment is made a minimum of one week in advance and a credit balance is maintained at all times. Payment is required for all days booked even if the child does not attend, the exceptions being when school is closed. Should the child no longer require a place the parent/carer is to advise the School office at least

one week in advance, otherwise the parent/carer is still liable for charges. Should the parent/carer fall into arrears, the club will withdraw the child's place.

### Reporting of outstanding debt levels

The Headteacher/School Business Manager will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is regularly monitored. Suitable records will be maintained to detail individual debts and the total value of debt to the school.

### Debt Recovery Procedures

Where payment from the parent/carer has not been received within the above acceptable credit period the following process should be applied.

#### **First 'outstanding payment' reminder letter**

An initial reminder letter will be sent home requesting the account be credited with one week's full amount within 5 days. Warning that their child's club/lunch will be cancelled.

**Second 'outstanding payment' reminder letter** which invites parents in to discuss the outstanding debts with the Headteacher ASAP sent out after the initial 5 day period

### Negotiation of repayment terms

Debtors are expected to settle the amount owed by a single payment as soon as possible after receiving the initial 'overdue payment' reminder.

#### **However, if people are unable to pay;**

The School may reduce or cancel a debt in certain circumstances. A sensitive approach to debt recovery will be carried out, taking the following factors into account:

1. Hardship – where paying the debt would cause financial hardship.
2. Ill health – where our recovery action might cause further ill health.
3. Time – where the debt is so large compared to the person's income that it would take an unreasonable length of time to pay it all off.
4. Cost – where the value of the debt is less than the cost of recovering it.
5. Multiple debt – where someone owes more than one debt to the School.

In this situation an attempt to agree one repayment plan to include all debts will be established. If a debtor requests for 'repayment terms' these may be negotiated at the discretion of the Headteacher. A record of all such agreements entered into, will be retained. In all cases, a letter will be issued to the debtor confirming the agreed terms for repayment. The settlement period should be the shortest that is judged reasonable. The Headteacher will decide whether any debtor who has been granted extended settlement terms will not be offered any further 'credit' and in future will be required to pay in advance.

### Costs of debt recovery

Where the school incurs material additional costs in recovering a debt then the Headteacher will decide whether to seek to recover such costs from the debtor. The debtor will be formally advised in writing that they will be required to pay the additional costs incurred by the school in recovering the debt. This decision and its basis will be recorded and reported to the Resources Committee.

### Responsibilities

The Headteacher will ensure that staff are familiar with and correctly apply the policy.

### **Monitoring of policy**

This policy will be monitored by the School Business Manager and Headteacher.

### **Evaluation of policy**

This policy will be evaluated by the Governing Body. This evaluation will also inform school priorities.