Charging and Remissions Policy

Responsible Person	Toby Butler, Chair of Governors
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Purpose

The Governors of Madginford Primary School wish to ensure that ALL pupils have equal access to every area of school life and the curriculum, regardless of the parents' ability to pay. In order to provide a high-quality learning experience beyond the curriculum there may be extra activities or trips offered.

In the case of activities organised during school hours involving the need for payment to be made, voluntary contributions are sought from the parents to cover the cost of these events. The principles of best value are applied during the planning of such events which incur additional costs. Whilst the amount asked of parents is voluntary, it is reflective of the actual cost of the event and if insufficient contributions are received then the event may not go ahead.

The Headteacher and Governors will consider sympathetically cases of genuine financial need and remit contributions where appropriate. In some situations, it may be appropriate for Pupil Premium to be called upon to assist with financing an event.

In the case of activities partly during the school day and partly out of school hours, voluntary contributions will be requested for the time within school hours. The school reserve the right to apply charges for optional extra activities provided outside of the school day, or as part of the extended school day, which are not part of the National Curriculum or Religious Education. Charges will be made for teaching an individual or group to play a musical instrument or sing where this is not an essential part of the curriculum.

The law regarding what may, and may not, be charged in respect of activities provided by the school within and outside the school day has always been difficult to interpret and apply fairly to all pupils. The Government has set out the law on charges for school activities in Sections 449-462 and of the Education Act 1996. DFES Circular 2/89 explains and provides guidance on those sections.

The Local Authority set down its charging policy in April 1989. In accordance with the requirement of the 1996 Act, Governors are required to state their policy with regard to charges and their policy in respect of any circumstances in which their purpose to remit (in whole, or in part) any charge which would otherwise be payable to them in accordance with their charging and remissions policy that apply in the school.

All visits, journeys and trips should be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authority's regulations and guidelines.

Aims

The aims of the charging policy are to:

- Maintain the right to free school education
- Enable all pupils to take full advantage of the activities provided by the school

Objectives

The objectives of the charging policy are to:

- ensure that activities offered in school time should be available to all pupils regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost
- identify those activities for which charges may be levied
- determine which charges will be remitted for parents experiencing hardship
- invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school in support of any activity organised by the school either during or outside school hours
- ensure that the responsibilities for the charging policy are clearly and appropriately allocated

- ensure that the operation of the policy is systematically reviewed and the findings acted upon.

Policy Statement

For all school activities, voluntary contributions will be requested from all parents for those in or out of school time, which can only be provided if there is sufficient voluntary funding.

For activities during school hours, it is the policy of the Governing Board:

- to levy a charge for ingredients or materials in practical subjects if the parents indicate at the beginning of each school year that they wish to keep the finished product
- to levy a charge for the provision of music tuition to pupils, either individually or in groups (of four or less) except where it is provided to fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus for a prescribed public examination, or specifically to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum
- to levy a charge for the board and lodging element of a residential activity; Governors will remit such charges to parents in receipt of income support family credit, an income based job seekers allowance or disability working allowance in respect of any period wholly or partly comprised in the time spent on the trip where the education provided on the trip is education in respect of which no charge may be made

For activities outside school hours, it is the policy of the Governing Board to levy a charge for all activities provided outside school with the following exceptions:

- no charge will be made if the activity is an essential part of the basic curriculum the board and lodging element of a residential activity will be remitted to parents in receipt of income support, family credit, job seekers allowance or disability working allowance
- that education outside school hours, other than education which is an essential part of the curriculum, is defined in the Education Act as an 'optional extra' and participation will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet such charges as are made, therefore the agreement of the parents is an essential prerequisite for the provision of optional extras for which charges are made

The school reserve the right to retain fees in the event of a cancellation at short notice.

Remission

It is the policy of the Governing Board:

- to remit charges for board and lodging to parents in receipt of income support and working tax credits
- to delegate to the Chair and the Headteacher the determination of any individual case arising from the implementation of the policy

The Governing Board may remit in full or in part the charge for music tuition in respect of parents experiencing hardship.

During school hours

Parents may make a voluntary contribution to:

- individual music tuition except where it is provided to fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus for public examination; or specifically to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum
- the board and lodging element of all residential trips and visits except in the case of pupils whose parents are in receipt of income support or family credit

- the cost of transport direct from home to an activity sanctioned, though not provided by the Local Authority or school, such as work experience
- the cost of ingredients or materials if parents have indicated in advance that they wish to own the finished product

Outside school hours

Charges may be made for 'optional extras' defined as falling wholly or mainly outside of school hours provided that the activities are not:

- to fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus for a prescribed exam
- specifically, to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum
- specifically, to fulfil statutory duties relating to religious education

Participation in the optional extra activity is on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. The provisions above do not prohibit charging for board and lodging except where parents are in receipt of income support or working tax credit.

Any charges may include an element for:

- travel costs
- board and lodging costs, except where the parents are in receipt of income support or family credit, job seekers allowance or disability working allowance
- materials, books, instruments and other equipment
- non-teaching staff costs
- entrance fees to museums, castles, theatres, etc.
- insurance costs
- engagement of teaching staff specifically for providing the activity, and supplying such staff with travel, board and lodging, providing that if they are employed by the Local Authority or Governors, they are employed to provide individual music tuition and engaged on a separate contract for services to provide the optional extra

The contract may take the form of a letter inviting the teacher to provide certain services for a specific activity taking place at a specified time, in return for payment of expenses and, where appropriate, a fee.

Charges for individual pupils may not:

- exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity divided by the number of pupils willing participate
- include an element of subsidy for pupils whose parents wish them to participate but are unwilling or unable to pay
- include the cost of alternative provision for more pupils who do not wish to participate, where a small part of the activity takes place in school hours.

Voluntary contributions

The school may seek voluntary contributions from parents for the benefit of the school or any activities to include the costs for accompanying teachers but:

- such contributions are genuinely voluntary and there is no obligation on a parent to make any contribution
- pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not parents have made a contribution
- parents/carers will be informed of the level of contribution and whether the activity would take place if parents were reluctant to support it.

There is no limit on the level of voluntary contributions sought.

The statutory minimum remissions policy should provide for complete remission of board and lodging charges to pupils whose parents receive income support, job seekers allowance or working tax credits if an activity takes place during school hours; or is out of school hours but covered by requirements relating to prescribed examinations syllabuses or duties relating to the National Curriculum or duties relating to religious education. The remissions policy should be kept under review by the Governing Board or Local Authority.

Responsibilities

Authority for the day-to-day management of the fund will be devolved to the Headteacher who can determine the proportion of costs of an activity which should be charged to public or non-public funds.

Staff organising activities should do so within the provisions of this policy. Plans, at the draft stage, should be submitted to the Senior Leadership Team for consideration and approval.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher should monitor the implementation of the policy and provide the Governing Board with a financial report as part of the normal termly reconciliation of the school budget. Every two years the implementation of the policy will be evaluated, and the views sought from key stakeholders.

_____	_____	_____
(Signature)	(Role)	(Date)