



THE FEDERATION OF HACKBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL & SPENCER NURSERY SCHOOL

CHARGING, REMISSIONS AND DEBT POLICY

Introduction

This policy has been drawn up to conform with the charging arrangements for maintained schools as set out in the Education Act 1996, Governors Handbook 2020 and the DfE guidance 'Charging for School Activities' 2018.

The Governing Body recognises that the act prohibits charges for school activities that take place within school hours and/or are part of the curriculum. This policy reinforces that principle, whilst setting out those activities for which a charge may be made or a voluntary contribution requested, and those circumstances in which charges may be remitted.

Income due will be collected before or at the time the relevant sale or service is provided.

Educational activities taking place during school hours

- School hours are defined as those during which the school/s are in session.
- No charge will be made for books, materials or equipment deemed necessary to meet the requirements of the curriculum.
- Voluntary contributions may be requested to enable the school to run extra activities (including trips and visits) which are deemed educationally desirable. The school/s will make clear in communications to parents that these contributions are voluntary and that no pupil will be treated differently according to whether or not his or her parent/carer has contributed. If insufficient funds are received to cover the cost of the activity, it may be cancelled.
- Where a non-school or Local Authority organisation arranges an activity to take place during school hours and parents/carers give their consent to their child/ren to take part in the activity, the organisation may make a charge.
- **HPS:**
 - School hours exclude the midday break.
 - Education provided during school hours will be free of charge.
- **SNS:**
 - Children in Fireflies will receive 15 or 30 hours Free Education Funding per week, term time only.
 - Childcare hours will be chargeable as per the school's fee structure.
 - Children who do not normally attend on the day of a planned trip / activity, will be invited to attend with their parent/carer if space allows, including transportation.
 - If the trip / activity involves public transport, children who do not normally attend on the day, will be invited to meet the school party at the venue.
 - Detailed information will be provided to all families in advance of any trips / activities planned, including times, dates and methods of transport to be used.

- Permission slips will be obtained from parents/carers in advance of trips taking place.

Educational activities taking place outside of school hours

- For all activities taking place outside of school hours, the charge will be set to cover the cost of such items as:
 - Transport / travel costs
 - Board and lodging
 - Entrance fees
 - Insurance costs
 - Any materials required for the activity
 - Incidental expenses
 - Incremental building costs
- The charge should not subsidise any other pupil participating.
- Any remission of charges for individual students, should be met by the school/s.
- If insufficient funds are received to cover the cost of the activity, it may be cancelled.

School meals

- **HPS:**
 - Charges are made for school meals for pupils in Key Stage 2 only.
 - If pupils are eligible for free school meals (FSM) then the school will ensure that parents/carers are provided with advice on how to apply.
- **SNS:**
 - The cost of school meals is included in the daily rates for all children and charged according to the school's fees structure.

KS2 meal payments

- **HPS:**
 - The school has adopted a strict no debt policy relating to the school meals service. If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents/carers. Parents/carers will agree this is unacceptable and we request that all parents give this policy their full support.
 - If parents/carers believe their child may qualify for FSM they should contact the Local Authority or school office for more information. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important it is used if a parent qualifies. FSM applications are made by the parents/carers via the Local Authority and the school are notified of any entitlements. This information is kept confidentially.
 - The school uses a cashless system introduced by the London Borough of Sutton to collect dinner money. All money for school dinners must be paid in advance so accounts must always be kept in credit.
 - Parents/carers must pay in advance for school dinners, using one of the following methods:
 - Credit/debit cards online using ParentPay
 - Paypoint cards at local shops displaying the paypoint symbol
 - Children will not be provided with a meal unless they qualify for a FSM or the meal has been paid for in advance. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that their child's account is kept in credit at all times. If the account goes into debit the following procedure will apply:
 - We recognise that parents/carers may forget to pay for their child/ren's school dinner. In such circumstances we will continue to provide a school dinner and a debt letter will be sent as soon as the account is in debit. This is initially a gentle reminder.

- Further action will be taken once the debt reaches 3 days of school dinners. Contact will be made by telephone and a letter home. A request will be made to clear the debt immediately or send the child in with a packed lunch from the next school day until the debt is cleared. We will demand the debt is cleared and to credit the dinner account with a week of dinner money.
- If the payment of the debt is not received, despite reminders from the school, the school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to recover the debt. We may also inform children's services of those parents/carers who are failing to provide food for their child/ren at lunchtime.

Uniform

- **HPS:**
 - A variety of items, including sweatshirts and book bags, bearing the school logo are available from our uniform provider – Schoolwear Inc. School uniform can be purchased directly from their website at <http://www.schoolwearinc.co.uk> – just click on the logo link for our school.
 - We regularly have uniform sales after school in the KS2 playground – dates will be advertised on the school website.
 - All uniform ordered can be delivered to the school and usually takes 2 days to arrive during term time.
 - Please refer to the Federations Uniform Policy for further guidance
- **SNS:**
 - Spencer Nursery school keeps a stock of various uniform items which can be purchased from the school office.
 - All children are provided with a book bag and spare clothes bag free of charge when they are first admitted to the school.
 - Replacement bags will be charged for according to the price information found in the school office.

Photographs

- **HPS:**
 - Individual and class photographs taken by the school's appointed photographer or by the school are offered for sale.

Loss of or damage to school property

- Loss of, damage to or breakage of school/s property e.g. books, windows, furniture, scientific equipment etc. will be charged for if caused by carelessness, negligence or deliberate act. The charge will be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide.
- Similarly, a charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of property belonging to a third party, where the cost has been recharged to the school.

Other Charges

- The School may levy a charge for miscellaneous services up to the cost of providing such services e.g. for providing a copy of an Ofsted Report.
- The School will levy a charge for non-school based lettings as per the schedule of rates in force at the time of the letting. Any letting is considered and agreed in accordance with the Lettings Policy.

Voluntary contributions to the school fund (HPS)

- Parents/carers may be invited to make a financial contribution to the School Fund. Implementation of this will be subject to Governing Body approval.

- The School Fund will be used to:
 - Acquire educational resources and fixed assets or provide services which would otherwise be unaffordable from the School's mainstream budget.
- It will be made clear in all correspondence to parents/carers inviting contributions to School Fund that such contributions are wholly voluntary.

Remission of charges

- Any charge may be remitted in whole or in part in response to a request by the parent/carer in writing to the Headteacher.

Families qualifying for remission or help with charges

- In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the school will offer some activities and visits at a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances. Families who need assistance with charges must first speak to the Headteacher who will authorise any remissions. Any discussions or decisions made will be confidential. This remissions policy sets out the circumstances in which charges will be waived. Criteria for qualification for remission are given to parents in receipt of:
 - Income support
 - Income-based job seekers allowance
 - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - Child Tax Credit, provided the parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and family gross income is no more than £16,480
 - The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
 - Income related employment and support allowance
 - Universal credit in prescribed circumstances

Refunds

If the school/s have over-charged or there are any amendments to the cost of a trip / event, the school/s will reimburse the parents as long as the sum is greater than £3 per pupil. Parents / carers will be informed from the outset in writing, if any deposits paid for extracurricular school trips are non-refundable.

This review: November 2021

Review: November 2022