Charging & Remissions Policy

POLICY OWNER

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Head of Operations

DELEGATION
RCC

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Introduction
At East Reading Federation, we believe the children benefit from outside visits, journeys, visitors and extra-curricular activities in sport and the creative arts. We follow government regulations on charging. When an event takes place during school time, we ask families of children benefiting to share the cost. Legally, we are requesting voluntary contributions, but if we do not receive enough to cover the cost, plans may be cancelled.

All education during school hours is free, with the exception of some individual or small group music tuition. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum,

Voluntary Contributions
When organising school trips or events to enrich the curriculum and the educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to contribute to the cost. All contributions are voluntary. If the school does not receive sufficient voluntary contributions to cover the cost, the trip or event may be cancelled. If a trip or event goes ahead, it may include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. These children will not be treated differently from any others.

The 1988 Education Act draws a distinction between the term 'charges' which are considered to be an obligatory cost and 'voluntary contributions' which are self-explanatory.

Subsidies from various sources will be considered to cover deficits, for example, the School Fund, Alfred Sutton Primary School Parent Teachers Association or voluntary organisations. Surplus finance will be used via the School Fund for the benefit of the children.

Whenever possible, the school will give sufficient notice to allow parents/carers to pay by instalments.

If a parent wishes their child to take part in a school trip or event, but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, we do allow the child to participate fully in the trip or activity. Sometimes, the school will pay additional costs in order to support the visit.

The following is a list of additional activities, organised by the school, which require voluntary contributions from parents. These activities are known as 'optional extras'. This list is not exhaustive:

- Visits to museums
- Sporting activities
- Outdoor adventure activities
- Visits to or by a theatre company

- School trips
- Musical events
- Transport

Residential visits
If the school organises a residential visit in school time, or mainly in school time, which is to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum, voluntary contributions will be requested for the education and travel costs and a charge will be made to cover the cost of board and lodging.

Parents of children entitled to a remission of charges (see below) do not have to pay the charge for board and lodging.

Music Tuition
All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum and the school does not charge for this.

There is a charge for individual or small-group tuition, since this is an additional curriculum activity and not part of the National Curriculum. These individual or small-group lessons are taught by peripatetic music teachers who charge for these lessons. Information about additional music tuition is available from the school office.

Swimming
The school organises swimming lessons for all children in Key Stage 2. These take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum. We therefore make no charge for these lessons but may request voluntary contributions towards costs such as pool hire. We inform parents when these lessons are to take place and ask for written permission for their child to take part.

Lunchtime and After School Sport and Creative Activities
The school offers additional activities after school and during lunch breaks. We reserve the right to request nominal contributions for these sessions, to cover the cost of resources purchased such as art supplies or food. Children in receipt of Pupil Premium are given one free club per term.

Malicious Damage
The school may make charges for breakages and damage to property, including damaged reading books, broken windows and removal of graffiti.

Remission of Charges
No child is barred from attending a trip or event because his/her parents have not contributed. Families eligible for benefits and others the Headteacher determines are having financial hardship are not expected or pressurised to pay. We keep such information confidential and handle situations discretely.

Parents who are in receipt of the following benefits are exempt from paying charges:

- Universal credit in prescribed circumstances
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Any support under part 6 of the Immigrations and Asylum Act 1999

- Child Tax Credit, provided that working Tax Credit is not also received, or the family's income as assessed by HM Customs and Revenue does not exceed the limit in the particular financial year
- The guarantee of State Pension Credit
- Any income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27th October 2008.

Refunds
Where a child does not attend a trip or other school event due to sickness or other valid reason for absence, the school may attempt to obtain a refund from the service provider. Refunds of any voluntary contribution or charge will be limited to the refund obtained by the school. However, the payment of a refund will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

It should be noted that refunds from some service providers decrease as the date of the event approaches. Parents will be notified of refund arrangements at the earliest opportunity.

Refunds cannot be expected for coach travel.

Free School Meals
When parents apply successfully for their child/ren to receive free school meals they are advised that for the period of roll out of the Universal Credit scheme their child will continue to receive Free School Meals regardless of the financial status of the family. After the period of roll out of Universal Credit has ended, updated Government guidance will be followed.