

The Heights Primary School Policy for Charging & Remissions

Version 1.2

Responsible officer: Business Manager
Responsible Committee: Premises & Finance

Date of last review: January 2017
Date of next review: January 2019



The Governing Body of The Heights Primary School recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including clubs and visits, can make towards a pupil's education. The Governing Body aims, therefore, to promote and provide such activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 sets out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England. The Heights, as a free school is required through its funding agreement to comply with the law on charging for school activities.

This policy is also written in compliance with the DfE guidance booklet 'Charging for school activities' issued in October 2014. A copy can be downloaded from the DfE website.

A. Overriding Principles

- The Heights, subject to limited exceptions, cannot charge for education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment).
- Participation in any optional activity for which it is proposed to charge will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional activity where charges will be made.
- Nothing in legislation prevents the school from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the Governing Body or Headteacher will make this clear to parents at the outset. The Governing Body or Headteacher must also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.
- The school will ensure that it informs parents on low incomes and in receipt of those benefits which currently attract the Pupil Premium as listed in paragraph D of this document of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school activities.

B. Permitted Charges

The Heights reserves the right (at the discretion of the Headteacher) to charge for the following:

1. **Materials & Textbooks.** Where a pupil or parent wishes to retain items produced as a result of art, craft and design, or design and technology, a charge may be levied for the cost of the materials used. In the case of Food Technology, pupils usually provide their own ingredients, but if the pupil forgets, the school may provide the ingredients and levy a charge. Textbooks are provided free of charge, but in some subjects, additional revision guides are available, for which a charge will be made.
2. **Music Tuition.** The school may levy charges in respect of individual music tuition, and group music tuition up to and including 4 persons, if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil.
3. **Residential Activities/Activities Outside School Hours.**

If an activity is held outside school hours and is education other than non-chargeable education, then it is regarded as an “optional extra”. Residential Trips by the school are regarded as “optional extras” (see below).

A charge may be made for the full cost of the activity but must not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity. The charge may include the costs of travel, board and lodgings, additional staff costs, entrance fees, insurance, materials and equipment. However, the charge made to individual parents cannot include any cost added to subsidise parents of children who are unwilling or unable to pay the charge.

When is an activity held in school hours?

A day visit is in school hours if 50% or more of the total time (including travelling) occurs in school hours. As mentioned above school hours do not include the normal midday break.

A residential visit is in school hours if the number of school sessions missed is 50% or more than the number of half days spent on the visit (including travel). A school session equates to a registration session (i.e. 2 per day). A half-day is a 12 hour period ending at midday or midnight.

In the case of a residential trip where the school has to make a commitment in advance, any deposit received from parents may be non-refundable.

4. **Lettings.** The school may make its facilities available to outside users at a charge of at least the cost of providing the facilities. The scale of charges will be determined annually by the Premises & Finance Committee of the governing body.
5. **Play Therapy.** From time-to-time the Headteacher or SENCo may, in agreement with a parent, feel that a child would benefit from attending Play Therapy sessions with the school’s external provider. Any Play Therapy sessions requested, aside from any therapy which is part of an Educational Health Care Plan, will be subject to a charge equal to, but not exceeding 100%, of the total cost of the therapy session. The charge to be applied will be determined on a case by case basis, the charge and number of sessions required will be agreed with the parent prior to any sessions being attended.

6. **Other charges.** The Headteacher, Premises & Finance Committee or Governing Body may levy charges for miscellaneous services up to the cost of providing such services including for providing copies of documents published by the school under the Model Publication Scheme (charges for this are set out in the Freedom of Information Policy).

C Voluntary Contributions

When organising school trips, visits and activities which enrich the curriculum and educational experience for pupils, the school invites parents/carers to contribute to the cost of the trip/activity. Contributions to these activities are voluntary, however, in some cases it may be necessary to cancel a trip/activity if insufficient voluntary contributions are received. If an activity goes ahead it may include children whose parents have not paid a full contribution, we do not treat these children differently from any other.

Parents/carers have a right to know how each trip/activity is funded. The school can provide this information on request.

The following is a list of the types of activities/trips which may require support by voluntary contributions from parents in order for the activity/trip to take place:

- Visits to Museums
- Sporting activities which require transport expenses
- Outdoor adventure activities
- Visit to the theatre
- School trips
- Musical events
- Visits to the school by visiting experts/providers such as authors/poets/travelling farms etc

D. Damage to School Property

The school will normally seek voluntary contributions from parents when damage to school property is caused wilfully by pupils or when it arises from misbehaviour or other reckless conduct. The school also reserves the right to take legal proceedings in exceptional circumstances

E **Remissions**

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the governing body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at a reduced rate to parents in receipt of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit in prescribed circumstances (when published);
- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed the threshold to receive Child Tax Credit only
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
- an income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.

In particular, when a school informs parents about a forthcoming visit, they should make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of these benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging. In other circumstances the Headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body's Premises & Finance committee shall determine the level of assistance to be given. This may include the provision of assistance in exceptional circumstances to parents not in receipt of these benefits.

The assistance provided may also include payment in instalments in advance of a trip or visit, or, when an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice, arrangements to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip if the parent/guardian provides a written undertaking to pay in full by an agreed date.

F **Cashless Payment System**

The Heights Primary School uses, a cashless payment system (Parentpay) to collect monies owed as payments or voluntary contributions from parents. The calculation of any monies owed to the school will take into account the very small (circa 1%) transaction fee charged by Parentpay for each transaction.

For the time being cash and cheques can be accommodated where a parent is unable to access Parentpay, although a payment card for Parentpay can be made available on request. Such a payment card allows payments to be made in cash at shops that operate the PayPoint system. In the longer term the school plans to be completely cashless with all payments being made online.

Amendments:

<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Updated/reviewed</u>
1.1	November 2014	First version finalised
1.2	January 2016	Explicit inclusion of Play Therapy, expansion on voluntary contributions section, inclusion of reference to cashless payment system