



Charging Policy

Agreed by Governors: 6/3/15 by the Resources Committee

To be reviewed: Annually

CHARGING POLICY

1. Introduction

At George Tomlinson, we believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra- curricular) independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that there is clarity over those items/activities which the school will provide free of charge, those for which the school will make a charge, and those where charges may be waived.

1.2 Definition of the school day

The school day is defined as: 8.50 am (for Phases 1 and 2) and 9.00 am (for Foundation Stage) to 3.15 pm (excluding the midday break). The midday break does not form part of the school day. This starts at 11.30 pm for the Foundation Stage and ends at 12.45. Phases 1 and 2 starts at 12.00 pm and ends at 1.05 pm.

1.3 Responsibilities

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

The governors will review the policy annually as part of the annual budget setting cycle.

2. Activities for which no charges will be made

During the school day all education or activities that are a necessary part of the National Curriculum will be provided free of charge. This includes the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment, and transport (if necessary) to take pupils between the school and the activity.

Education provided outside of the school day will also be provided free of charge if it is part of the National Curriculum

2.1 Swimming lessons

The school organises swimming lessons for each class at some point during their time at the school. These take place within the school day and are part of the National Curriculum. We therefore make no charge for this activity. We do however inform parents when these lessons are to take place.

3. Educational visits and school trips

When organising school trips, visits or activities which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school may seek voluntary contributions towards the cost of these trips and activities in order to offer the widest possible variety of experiences to pupils.

All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that pupils of parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have.

The law states that:

- If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the parents will be notified of this from the outset.
- No child will be excluded from an activity because parents are unable to pay.
- If insufficient contributions are raised, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled.
- If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay their child will be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

Therefore, if insufficient funds are available within the school's delegated budget and the school does not receive sufficient voluntary contributions from parents it may be necessary to curtail or cancel the planned activity. If the activity goes ahead, it may include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. We do not treat these children differently from any others.

Parents have the right to know how each trip is funded. The school will provide this information on request.

The following, non-exhaustive list, gives examples of types of additional activities which may be organised by the school within the school day and for which the school may request voluntary contributions from parents:

- visits to museums for which there is an entrance fee; transportation or workshop costs;
- sporting activities which require transport expenses;
- outdoor adventure activities;
- visits to the theatre;
- musical events, including whole class musical instrument tuition;
- visiting drama groups;
- visiting storytellers.

The school recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible we shall publish a list of visits, giving parents as much notice as possible.
- We shall establish a system for parents to pay in instalments where the cost of the trip is in excess of £8, where this is more convenient to them.
- We acknowledge that offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid this method of selection where possible.

4. Activities for which charges may be made

4.1 Activities outside school hours

Charges may be made for non-residential activities which take place outside school hours, but only if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside school hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours). When such activities are arranged parents will be told how the charges were calculated.

4.2 Residential activities

For residential trips deemed to take place during school time no charges may be made for any part of the trip other than for the board and lodging costs of that trip. However, pupils whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (see 7 'Remissions' below) may not be charged for board and lodging costs in those circumstances.

4.3 Music tuition

All children study music as part of the National Curriculum.

The school may engage peripatetic music teachers to teach individual lessons for which there is a charge. We give parents of eligible children information about additional music tuition and its associated costs at the start of each school year.

4.4 School meals

All children attending the school may opt to take a cooked lunch during the midday break; the cost of the lunch is based on the Borough charge applying at the time and may be slightly subsidised by the school.

Children who qualify for Free School Meals and pupils in year 1 and year 2 who qualify for Universal Free School meals are exempt from this charge.

The School reserves the right to reduce payments on a temporary basis for a family in crisis at the Headteacher's discretion.

5. Late collection charges

The school will charge parents for late collection of their children from school. If your child(ren) is/are persistently collected late you will be fined per child for each occasion. If you are late collecting your child(ren) five times or more in a month that charge will increase.

Fines will be:

Each child left between 3.20 -3.30 pm £4.50 per child.

Late collection five times in a month or more will result in the charge being increased to £8.50 per child.

All fines must be paid at the beginning of the following week or your child will not be able to attend any extra-curricular clubs as you will be deemed to be in arrears. Any money received for these late charges will be allocated to the school budget and used for the benefit of all the children in the school.

Please be aware that in respect of children who are persistently collected late the relevant authorities will be contacted.

6. Extended services at the school

6.1 Breakfast Club

The school offers a Breakfast Club from 7.30am Monday to Friday, which is run by the school and staffed by qualified school staff, at a cost to the school. A charge is made for attendance at Breakfast Club in line with Section 6 below.

6.2 After School Club

The school offers an After School Club from 3.15pm to 6.30pm Monday to Friday. After School Club is run by the school and staffed by qualified school staff, in line with Ofsted requirements, at a cost to the school. A charge is made for a place at After School Club in line with Section 6.3 below.

Charges for both Breakfast Club and After School Club should be paid at the beginning of the week. The school will be unable to continue to offer a place at either club if parents fall into arrears with payment.

6.3 Charging levels

Where charges apply, these will be levied as appropriate to fully cover the costs on a non-profit making basis.

7. Waiving of school charges

Children whose parents are in receipt of the following support payments may, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, also be entitled to the remission of other school charges:

- Income Support;
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- 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 £15,575
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008
-

In respect of family income referred to above, the amount taken into account will be revised periodically in line with changes to the amount published by the DfE.

All decisions regarding waiving of school charges will be taken by the Headteacher, and reported to the Finance Committee.

8. Monies owed to the school

The school will provide parents / carers with regular statements of account for school meals, Breakfast Club and After School Club.

Where there is a debt of £10.00 the parent / carer will be asked to pay the balance owing within one week. If arrangements are not in place for the payment of

monies owed, the service to which the debt relates (i.e. school meals, Breakfast Club or After School Club) will be withdrawn until such time as the balance has been paid. This is to prevent the accumulation of further debt.

Parents / carers will be offered the opportunity to meet with school office staff and agree a regular repayment scheme for any monies owed.

In exceptional circumstances it may appropriate to waive a debt to the school. All decisions to waive monies owed must be agreed by the Headteacher and the Chair of the Finance Committee out of session, and are to be reported to the next meeting of the Finance Committee.

9. Monitoring and review

The application of this policy will be monitored by the Finance Committee of the Governing Body and will be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting cycle.

Charges in respect of school lettings will be covered in the Lettings Policy