

THE FEDERATION OF NETTLESTONE & NEWCHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOLS



CHARGING & REMISSIONS POLICY

Date Agreed: July 2019

Review Date: July 2020

DMF Botlett

Signed: _____

Chairman Board of Governors

The Federation of Nettlestone & Newchurch Primary Schools

Revision No.	Date Issued	Prepared By	Approved	Comments
1	July 2016	DJR	FGB	Policy drafted
2	July 2017	DJR	FGB	Revision of Policy to add reference to musical instrument hire scheme.
3	July 2018	DJR	L&M	Reviewed policy against DfE guidance.
4	July 2019	DJR	F&W	Added sections 4 on Debt Management and revised section 5 on Remissions.

All the governors and staff at the Federation of Nettlestone & Newchurch Primary Schools are committed to sharing a common objective to help keep the children and staff of the Federation safe. We ensure that consistent effective safeguarding procedures are in place in order to support families, children and staff of the Federation.

1. Policy

The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including clubs, visits and residential experiences can make towards pupils' personal and social education.

The Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils at the school and as additional optional activities.

2. Voluntary Contributions

When additional enrichment activities are planned during school time parents may be invited to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the activity.

The school reserves the right to cancel the activity if the total of voluntary contributions does not meet the cost of the activity e.g. visiting theatre groups, artists, writers or musicians, sports fixtures, visits to places of educational value, hire of films, the travel and activity elements of residential visits held largely within school time.

2. Charges

The Governing Body reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances for activities organised by the school.

Activities in school hours: Charges may be made for the board and lodging element of residential activities that take place during school hours e.g. annual school journeys.

Activities out of school hours: A charge will be made to cover the full cost of each pupil of the activities deemed to be optional extras taking place outside school hours e.g. board and lodging for residential visits; activities and trips that are not part of the National Curriculum; activities taking place mainly out of school hours; theatre visits; sporting and musical events, club activities held at lunch time or after school.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges.

Clubs: A set termly charge will be made for all after-school clubs which will be used to offset expenditure incurred by these clubs.

Music Tuition: Charges for music tuition delivered by peripatetic teachers are invoiced directly from the teacher to the parents. The school is not involved in the collection or holding of payments.

The school offers a musical instrument hire scheme. Parents may be asked to cover the cost of minor repairs to loaned instrument and case, and such items that need replacement on account of wear and tear or misuse.

Parents will also be expected to pay, in full, any examination fees and transport children to the examination centre, or to lessons elsewhere, at their own expense.

Materials: Charges may be made to cover the cost of materials used to produce a finished article, which parents have indicated in advance that they wish to own, i.e. for Food and Textiles, Design and Technology, Art and Design.

Breakages: Parents will be asked to pay the full cost or a reasonable amount towards the cost of replacing a broken window or repairing damage to furniture and fittings, fire extinguishers, defaced, damaged or lost books/materials where this is the result of poor pupil behaviour.

4. Debt Management

- **First written 'overdue payment' reminder**

If a payment has not been received by the allocated date, a member of the Admin Team will contact the parents by email within 5 working days. A copy of the email will be kept securely on the school's network or in a school file.

- **Second written 'overdue payment' reminder**

If payment has not been received within 5 working days of the First Written Reminder, a Second Written Reminder will be sent to parents confirming the balance owed and setting a new deadline for payment. A copy of this letter and email will be kept securely on the school's network or in a school's file. At this point parents will be offered the opportunity to talk to the Head of School or Executive Headteacher about the remissions procedures.

- **Failure to settle the debt**

Should the balance remain outstanding by the extended deadline the child will not be able to attend any paid activities or receive a (paid for) school lunch. A letter will be sent to parents from the Executive Headteacher informing them of this and a copy of the letter will be kept securely in the school's files. In these circumstances the Finance Committee of the Governing Body will be informed.

- **Difficulties with payment**

Debtors are expected, whenever possible, to settle the amount owed by a single payment as soon as possible after receiving the first 'overdue payment' reminder.

As part of our charging process, parents are offered an opportunity to discuss difficulties with making a payment with the Executive Headteacher. It may be possible for the school to break the payments down into more manageable chunks through a payment plan. In all cases, a letter will be issued to the parents/debtor confirming the agreed terms for repayment. The settlement period should be the shortest that is judged reasonable.

A sensitive approach to debt recovery will be carried out, taking the following factors into account:

- Hardship: where paying the debt would cause financial hardship;
- Ill health: where our recovery action might cause further ill health;

- Time: where the debt is so large compared to the person's income that it would take an unreasonable length of time to pay the debt in full;
- Cost: where the value of the debt is less than the cost of recovering it;
- Multiple debts: where someone owes more than one debt to the School. In this situation an attempt to agree one repayment plan to include all debts will be established.

5. Remissions

5.1 Remissions

Remissions are payments made by The Federation to meet the cost of the charges where parents of the child are unable to pay and/or are subject to financial hardship. Remissions are made to try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some children taking full advantage of the opportunities offered by the Federation.

Parents can apply in confidence to the Executive Headteacher for the remission of charges in part or in full. The Executive Headteacher, in consultation with the Governing Body will make authorisation of remission.

5.2 Writing Off of Bad Debts

The Governing Body may not write-off any debt. The Governing Body will refer any such sums to the Local Authority's Director of Finance for approval of write-off.

Debts greater than £10,000 can be written off only by the Local Authority's Executive Member for Finance on advice from the Director of Finance.

A formal record of any debts written off will be maintained and this will be retained for 7 years (the form of this record is specified above).

The Federation will not initiate any legal action to recover debts. The Governing Body will refer any debts which the pre-school has not been able to collect to the Local Authority's Legal Services Department to consider taking legal or other action to collect the debt.

The Federation will not write off any debt belonging to the Local Authority or other party. If in doubt as to the appropriate action to collect any such debts, the pre-school will seek prompt advice from Officers of the Local Authority.

5.3 Reporting of outstanding debt levels

The Headteacher will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is monitored each term. Records will be maintained to detail individual debts and the total value of debt to the school in order that it can be determined at any time.

These details will be reported to the Governing Body together with any action that has been put in place to recover the debt.