



Freegrounds Infant School Policy for Charging and recovery of debt

1 Introduction

The 1988 Education Act requires any activity taking place wholly or mainly in school time, (for Freegrounds Infant School 8.50am to 12.10pm and 1.10pm to 3.10pm), to be free. All school time activities therefore will be free of charge but parents remain responsible for providing suitable clothing for particular activities e.g. physical education.

2. Voluntary contributions

Activities are sometimes arranged for the children which are wholly outside school times and participation is by parental choice. As these are optional extras a charge will be associated with these activities.

When we participate in external trips or educational visits which wholly or mainly take place in school time, e.g. school visits, cookery or a visit to or by a theatre company this will entail parents being asked for a voluntary contribution, not exceeding the actual cost for the child.

The total contributions will not exceed the total cost of the trip and must be genuinely voluntary. Pupils of parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute will not be discriminated against. However, where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, the trip will be cancelled.

At Freegrounds Infant School we are mindful of the fact that for some families contributing towards trips and different events can be costly. As such we try and take this factor into consideration when planning trips and events and always look for the best value for money. As such when organising trips and events, where possible, we obtain several quotes, (for example for coaches), to ensure best value for money.

When pupils are in receipt of Pupil Premium Funding, this will be used to fund the cost of voluntary contributions for school trips and other educational activities.

3. Music tuition

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. We do not charge for this. However, in Year 2 children learn to play the recorder. Although these lessons are not charged for and a recorder is provided, parents are asked to provide a recorder for their children to practise at home if they wish.

4. Photocopying

Personal photocopying is charged at 5p per copy for black and white and 10p per copy for colour.

In line with our Data Protection and Freedom of Information Policy, parents are entitled to obtain a copy of their child's school record under a Subject Access Request or put forward a Freedom of Information request. If this is the case, the school will only charge parents the equivalent of our basic costs. (i.e. the cost of photocopying and paper).

5. Remission

Parents who have contributed voluntarily may have a refund if their child is unable to take part in the activity through illness.

The governing body delegate to the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher the power to decide on any particular case arising from the implementation of this policy.

6. Debt

Credit should not generally be extended to parents, staff or companies by the school as no budget is held to cover this. Efforts should be made to monitor payments to prevent debt from accumulating and steps taken to recover any money owed.

Guidelines

1. Purchased items, i.e. school photos, should be paid for in advance of receipt.
2. If debt does accrue (for example through a bounced cheque) a letter advising that debt has accrued will be handed to the parent or responsible adult.
3. If the debt is still outstanding 14 days after the letter has been sent, a further reminder should be sent, followed by another 14 days later if required.
4. If debt is still outstanding at this point the parent will be invited to attend a meeting at the school to discuss how the debt will be repaid.
5. If the school is unsuccessful at recovering the debt and the debt is in excess of £100, it should be referred to the County Treasurer's Debtors Group where appropriate action can be taken.
6. The Head teacher, with the approval of the Resources Committee, may write off any amount of income due up to a maximum of £200 if it is considered irretrievable, and must sign an explanatory record giving reasons for the write off. Records must be kept for inspection.
7. The governing body can approve write off debts up to £1000.
8. The County Treasurer is responsible for writing off debts in excess of £1000.

Created by Nikki Riches

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Charging and Debt Policies amalgamated November 2014, reviewed November 2019, March 2022, February 2025

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