



# Charging and Remissions Policy

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## **Review Procedures**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and will be adjusted in line with any subsequent guidelines from the DfES, local authority or the Enquire Learning Trust. The policy will be reviewed sooner should the need arise.

## **2022/2023 Specific Updates**

For the 2021/2022 academic year some charges and voluntary contributions were waived for all pupils. This decision was made following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our pupils and their families, this includes; Breakfast Club, After School Provision, lunch time and after school activity clubs, school trips and in- house activities led by external parties.

Following the significant uptake of various activities and the positive outcomes for families and impact on pupil wellbeing and behaviour, it has been agreed that the above named activities will remain free of charge for all pupils during the 2022/2023 academic year.

The above waived fees will be reviewed and a decision regarding future years will be made based on the schools finances, uptake of various activities, outcomes and impact on pupil wellbeing and behaviour. Charges will apply to school meals, FS1 extra sessions and FS1 lunch sessions.

Voluntary donations to the school will be accepted for fundraising events and charitable donations will be collected for our chosen charities.

## **Aims**

This policy sets out Buckingham Primary Academy's approach to charging and remissions, and intends to clarify when charges will be made.

## **What we can and cannot charge for**

At Buckingham Primary Academy we acknowledge that legally we **cannot and do not charge** for:

- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- Tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;

- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school; and
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school.

We are also aware that we **can** charge for:

- optional extras (see below); and
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (

## Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as “optional extras”. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge **can** be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment. **Optional extras are:**

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
  - a. Part of the National Curriculum;
  - b. Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school; or
  - c. Part of religious education.
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;

- Transport that is not required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority, governing body or the Enquire Learning Trust have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education; and
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.

In calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- Non-teaching staff;
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
- The cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It must not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

Furthermore in cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. Therefore no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional extra activity 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 extra where charges will be made.

**Please Note:** Parents who persistently fail to pay for 'optional extras' may see the withdrawal of the service to their child if they do not cooperate with the school.

The charges associated with 'optional extras' such as after school clubs/ provision (outside of the curriculum) often do not cover the actual costs in full and as such, a shortfall in contributions may result in the cancellation of the 'optional extra' for all service users.

At Buckingham Primary Academy we pride ourselves on providing the best possible experience for all of our pupils. If your child would like to access 'optional extras' such as an after school activity and you are experiencing financial difficulty please speak to the school office who will be more than happy to discuss alternative arrangements. Depending on your circumstances the school may receive extra funding for your child or have access to donations from other parents and carers or local businesses who have donated to the school fund.

## After School Activities

**Please note: charges for after school activities do not apply for the 2021/2022 academic year**

After school activity fees are charged per term or half term dependant on the duration of the club.

After school activities are charged at £2.00 per session and payment is due in full before the club begins.

## After School Provision

**Please note: charges for after school provision do not apply for the 2021/2022 academic year.**

After school provision fees are charged at £2.50 per hour from 3:15- 5:15.

After School Provision fees are required to be paid in full within 4 weeks of the MCAS invoice issue date.

Parents who repeatedly collect their child late at the end of the school day (3:15) will be charged a fee of £2.50 for their child to attend After School Provision. An additional charge of £2.50 will occur if the child is not picked up before 4:15.

## Voluntary Contributions

**Please note: voluntary contributions do not apply for the**

**2021/2022 academic year with regards to school trips and in-house activities led by external organisations. Voluntary contributions may be collected for events such as the Summer Fayre- if it is safe to do so following relevant COVID-19 guidance. Voluntary Contributions will also be collected for our chosen charities.**

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body, local authority or academy trust 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 principal should make this clear to parents at the outset. The governing body or principal **must** also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, then it must be cancelled. Schools must make sure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. Schools should make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

When making requests for voluntary contributions to the school funds, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and **not compulsory**. Schools should avoid sending colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments into the school or maintenance funds. Schools should also ensure that direct debit or

standing order mandates are not sent to parents when requesting for contributions.

Currently parents are asked for voluntary donations associated with the cost of school trips. The school recognises that parents may be unable or unwilling to contribute voluntary donations. The costs associated with school trips are not covered entirely by voluntary contributions and are subsidised by the school. As such, a shortfall in voluntary contributions may result in the school trip being cancelled.

## **Residential Visits**

**Please note: the school does not currently offer residential visits but would consider this a chargeable activity should we offer residential visits in the future, as per the guidance below:**

Schools **cannot** charge for:

- Education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours
- Education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education; and
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a

residential visit.

Schools **can** charge for:

- Board and lodging and the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

## **Music Tuition**

Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music lessons are an exception to this rule.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a regulation-making power which allowed the Department for Children, Schools and Families to specify circumstances where charging can be made for music tuition. The new Regulations, which came into force in September 2007, provide pupils with greater access to vocal and instrumental tuition.

Charges may now be made for teaching either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing. Charges may only be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil(s), or the first access to the Key Stage 2

Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme (Wider Opportunities).

Charges will be made (when appropriate) for musical/vocal tuition in line with Music Service charges (at no profit to school).

## **Transport**

Schools **cannot** charge for:

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local authority or academy trust has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body, local authority or academy trust has arranged for pupils to be educated;
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school; and

Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

## **School Uniform**

At Buckingham Primary Academy we do insist that our pupils wear school uniform. However, we do not insist that uniform is purchased through a particular supplier as long as the colours are in line with our uniform and do not feature trademark logos. Uniform featuring the school logo is

available to purchase from [www.clothingattesco.com](http://www.clothingattesco.com) (School uniform; Uniform embroidery; Find your school/ group).

## **Spoilt or Damaged Resources**

Buckingham Primary Academy reserves the right to ask parents and carers to pay for the cost of replacing a lost resource (e.g. reading books). The school also reserves the right to ask parents and carers to pay for the cost of replacing and/ or repairing damaged or destroyed school property.

We ask parents and carers to be aware that damage to school property, whether intentional or accidental not only has an impact on your child's learning but the learning of others and you may be asked to cover the costs if school property is damaged as a consequence of yours or your child's actions.

The preferred method of issuing charges for replacing and/ or repairing lost or damaged property is MCAS. Parents and carers will be given the opportunity to discuss the charges with your child's teacher or senior member of staff and alternative methods of payment and repair and/ or replacement may be discussed.

## **Private use of Academy Equipment**

On request staff, governors, parents and guardians can use in school items such as photocopiers and telephones.

In the case of staff there will be no charge but the school reserves the right to charge if appropriate.

For other users the services will be charged for at the cost rate to the school. The school does reserve the right to refuse access.

## **Cost of Lettings**

Charges will be in line with the local authority's and/ or the Enquire Learning Trust's community use costs. These relate to premises and staffing costs at the current time.

Where lettings involve educational activities for Buckingham Primary Academy pupils the costs of hire can be negotiated at the discretion of the school.

## **Foundation Stage One**

Charges will be made when extra sessions are requested by parents / guardians of pupils in Foundation Stage One. These sessions will be in addition to the 5 free sessions that are a 3 year old child's entitlement. The additional sessions are at the discretion of the School. The charge for an additional 3 hour session (8.45am – 11.45am or 12.15pm – 3.15pm) will be charged at £12.50 and a lunchtime session (11.45am – 12.15pm) will be charged at £2.50. The charge associated with a lunchtime session is for the cost of the session only and does not include lunch provided by the school unless a

child is in receipt of Free School Meals and attends a morning and afternoon session on the same day. Once the school receives confirmation of a child's Free School Meal eligibility parents will be contacted to confirm whether they would prefer the school to provide their child with a lunch or not (if they stay for a morning and afternoon session on the same day).

FS1 fees are charged per term and payment is required in full within 4 weeks of the MCAS invoice issue date. The preferred method of payment is via pupil MCAS accounts.

FS1 fees are charged as optional extras as advised by the DFE and a shortfall in payment of fees may result in the cancellation of extra sessions and lunchtime sessions for all service users. Parents and carers are encouraged to contact the school if experiencing financial difficulties.

## **School Meals**

Pupils in Foundation Stage Two to Year Two are entitled to a free school meal as part of the Governments Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) funding.

The Local authority provides a school meal subsidy and as a result the current price of a school meal for pupils in Years three to Six is charged in line with the local authority's recommended school meal price.

We ask that school Meal accounts are kept in credit and balances of -£5.00 (10 meals) may result in pupils being unable to access the school meals service.

The preferred method of payment is via pupil MCAS accounts. Information relating to MCAS is available from the school office.

Parents/ guardians who are experiencing financial difficulty are encouraged to contact the school as a matter of urgency should they feel that they are not in a position to keep their child's MCAS account in credit. Payment plans and alternative methods of payment may be negotiable depending on individual circumstances.

For information regarding free school meals (FSM) please contact the school office or visit the following link to apply online <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims>

## **Remissions**

Where parents and carers would like their child to participate in an additional or optional activity, for which a charge or voluntary contribution is requested, and feel their financial circumstances are insufficient to meet the cost of the activity, the school encourages parents and carers to contact the school, with a view to remitting all or part of the cost.

Parents and carers of pupils who become eligible for free school meals, and have an outstanding balance on their

account, are encouraged to contact the school to arrange a payment plan or to discuss remitting all or part of the outstanding balance dependant on financial circumstances.

Parents and carers of pupils who have historical outstanding balances on their account, are encouraged to contact the school to arrange a payment plan or to discuss remitting all or part of the outstanding balance dependant on financial circumstances.

Parents and carers of pupils in Foundation Stage One, who are not eligible for the 30 hour funding but would benefit from their child attending FS1 for more than 15 hours per week, are encouraged to contact the school to arrange a payment plan or to discuss remitting all or part of the outstanding balance dependant on financial circumstances. Please note: this applies to the additional 3 hours per day session fee (£12.50 per session) and not the lunch session fee (£2.50 per session).

Please ask at the school office if you have any queries or would like to request a paper copy of Buckingham Primary Academy's charging policy.