



Charging and Remissions Policy

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Charging and Remissions Policy for Parents and Carers

Introduction

All education during school hours is free. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum. However for certain activities we may charge or ask for voluntary contributions.

In accord with Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996, the Governors have drawn up the following charging and remissions policy. This policy is to be reviewed and approved on an annual basis by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

This policy shall be made available on the school website and paper copies to parents or carers on request.

Voluntary Contributions

The school may ask parents or carers for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or towards activities, for example, contributions towards school fund, fund raising, sporting activities, which require travel expenses, outdoor adventure activities, musical activities and costs associated with school trips and visits.

School Trips and Visits

When organising school visits which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children the school will write to parents asking them to contribute towards the cost of the visit. If a visit cannot take place without some help from parents or carers, this will be explained at the planning stage. No pupil will be left out because a voluntary contribution has not been received. However, if there are insufficient contributions, the school may be left with no choice but to cancel the visit. The school will subsidise the charge of the visit by around 30%, asking parents to contribute around 70% of the total cost. Parents of children in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) will have their contribution further subsidised for residential visits.

If insufficient funds are received to cover the 70% contribution cost from parents, then the visit may be cancelled. This decision will be taken by the Headteacher who will ascertain whether it is lack of interest or if the cost is a contributing factor. In which case, the Headteacher may decide to ask for a smaller contribution from parents of pupils entitled to FSM. If the visit has to be cancelled all parents or carers who have contributed would then receive a full refund.

If a parent/carer is unable to contribute the full amount stated on the letter sent out to parents informing of the visit, the Headteacher will meet with the parent/carer and assess each case individually as to the level of contribution to be made. The Headteacher will take all necessary facts into consideration. The Headteacher will do this on an individual case basis and the parent will be responsible for approaching the Headteacher. The parent/carer will also be offered the opportunity to make payment in instalments before the visit takes place, if agreed with the Headteacher.

Residential Visits and Overnight stays

Where a school activity involves pupils staying nights away from home, there will be a charge for board and lodging. Parents or carers who are in receipt of pupil premium funding are able to claim remission from the payment of the board and lodging charge.

Optional Extras

There are currently no charges associated with out of hour's activities, for example Cricket, Netball, Athletics, Football, Hockey and Dance Club.

Instrumental Music Lessons

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum and class tuition from specialist music teachers from Wolverhampton Music School. We do not charge for these.

Swimming

The school organises swimming lessons for pupils. These take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum. We make no charge for this activity. We inform parents when these lessons are to take place.

Charging for School Equipment

No charge will be made for materials, books or equipment needed for lessons. The only exception to this is where wilful damage to the equipment by the child has taken place or a library book has been lost or damaged. A contribution towards the cost of replacement shall be requested.

Water Bottles

Water bottles are available to all children at the school for a reduced fee of £1.00 per bottle.

Fruit

Fruit is provided free of charge to all Early Years and KS1 pupils. The school purchases fruit for KS2 pupils as part of the Healthy Eating initiative at no cost to the parent/ carer.

School Uniform

It is our school policy that all children wear uniform when attending school and when participating in a school-organised event either inside, or outside of normal school hours. Charges are made for the purchase of school uniform and PE Kits.

School Meals

Under the Education Act 2011, schools are permitted to charge up to the maximum cost of a school meal. With effect from 01/01/2024 Bantock Primary School is being charged £2.55 for each School Meal that they provide. Meals are provided to parents/carers at the cost price of £2.40 per junior paid meal. Children in Early Years Education or of Infant School age at present receive a free meal under the Universal Infant Free School Meal initiative that has been in place since September 2014.

We do ask that families who are eligible for free school meals still apply for them as the premium attached to this benefit comes in to school and helps provide children with additional benefits such as free milk, extra help in lessons, reduced costs for some school trips, sports coaching, pastoral/welfare support etc. The previously mentioned criteria will be used to assess entitlement.

To be eligible for a free school meal where no charge is made for the provision of a school meal (separate to the UIFSM) parents/carers need to meet the following criteria:

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided the parent is not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and the family annual income does not exceed the specified minimum (£16,190 in financial year 2024/25)
- The guaranteed element of state pension credit; and
- An income related employment and support allowance.
- Universal Credit – if applied for on or after 1 April 2018, household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including and benefits)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after the parent stopped qualifying for Working Tax Credit.

Those children whose parents do not qualify for most benefits (also known as having 'no recourse to public funds'), may still be eligible for free school meals. Parents who believe they fall in this category are asked to contact the school office to find out if they are eligible.

Milk

There is provision to provide ½ pint (189ml) free milk per day to children under the age of 5 years attending approved day care facilities for 2 or more hours per day, until the term after their 5th birthday.

Children aged 5 and over that are registered to receive benefits related free school meals are also entitled to receive free school milk.

Bantock Primary School

For pupils aged 5 and over, not in receipt of benefits related free school meals, there is a current charge of £13.00 per term, payable at the beginning of each term.

Wrap Around Club

The school offers Breakfast and After School Club to help meet the needs of working parents. Charges are to cover the cost of staff facilitating the club and to provide extended activities as well as the healthy food provided. The total charge will not exceed the cost of providing the activity and no parent will be asked to subsidise others. Breakfast club will be charged at £2.00 per session and After School Club will be charged at £2.00 per session (3.25pm - 4.30pm) and £4.00 per session (3.25pm - 5.30pm). There is a one-off charge of £5.00 to register a child for the club. Registration will remain active for the duration of the pupil's time at Bantock Primary School.

Tackling deprivation and disadvantage to reduce attainment gaps is a core focus of extended services. There may be circumstances or occasions when the school allocates a place at the club to a pupil. In this instance, the cost would be subsidised from wider school budgets. Any parent wishing to access this should speak to the school office initially.

All absences will be charged at full price, including illness. Any child that is collected late from the 3.25-4.30 pm session will be charged at the 3.25-5.30 pm session rate. Late collection of pupils (after 5.30 pm) will incur a £30.00 charge. Any changes to the contract must be agreed between parent/carer and Headteacher and put in writing, signed and dated by both parties. Any parent/carer failing to comply with the school's agreement for payment may have their child excluded from the club until the situation is resolved. Any parent/carer who regularly breaks the agreement will have their child excluded from attending wrap around care.

From September 2024 children from Merridale Primary School will also be offered the opportunity to use our Wrap Around Club. Staff from Merridale Primary School will operate a walking bus from and to Bantock Primary School at the beginning and end of the school day respectively. Merridale Primary School will be responsible for administering the Wrap Around Club charges for their pupils and re-imbursing Bantock Primary School. Charges for sessions and late collection charge rates will be the same as for Bantock pupils. Merridale Primary School will charge an additional cost to cover the Walking Bus facility.

Paying for Information

Where parents request copies of information under the Freedom of Information Act the Governors can make a charge for providing copies of information. This is detailed in the Publication Scheme.

Letters

Parent/Carers often ask for a letter from school to provide evidence to various organisations, such as immigration, child benefit, etc. that their child attends Bantock Primary School. With effect from 1st April 2015, anyone requesting a letter will be asked to make a contribution of £5.00 to school fund.

Late Collection at the end of the school day/ After School Club

Parents and Carers who are late collecting their child/ren at the end of the school day or after school club without an exceptional reason will incur a charge. The Headteacher will make the decision as to whether the parents/carers reason for being late is exceptional. Parents who are late within the first 15 minutes of school closing will not be charged but will be reminded of the importance of collecting their child/ren punctually. After this time children will be placed in the wrap around club and parents will need to pay the appropriate Registration Fee and session cost.

Charging other Schools and Organisations

On occasions, other schools and organisations request support, assistance or training from Bantock Primary School staff. These sessions may take place both within or outside of school hours. When these instances occur, it may be necessary for school to arrange cover for the member of staff concerned which has a financial impact. In order to recoup these additional costs, Bantock Primary School will charge the client organisation staff time and any other additional expenses it may have incurred.

Staff Charging Rates

Rates recharged to other schools and organisations will be dependent upon the staff members involved in the support (see appendix)

Administration charge

In order to cover the administration time in calculating and generating invoices, the school will make an administration charge of £5.00 per invoice.

Multi Use Games Area (Top Playground)

The school's top playground can be hired out by a local authority school, department or partner organisation at a cost of £10.00 per hour during the school holidays, weekends or after school. Should the hire take place outside or normal school hours it may be necessary also charge an additional £20.86 per hour for caretaking. Those organisations who are provided with a key will be charged a £10.00 returnable deposit. If the key is lost, the deposit will be used to replace locks and keys.

Charging for School Equipment and Resources

Charges for materials, books or equipment needed for training sessions may be necessary. These will be calculated based on the number of consumables used and equipment supplied. This rate will be agreed with the partner organisation prior to delivery.

School Procedures for Non-Payment of School Meals

The school has a procedure in place for school meals that have been provided, but not paid for. Reports are monitored from the SIMS system.

1. Where meals are not paid for initially parents are reminded by email that they owe money for their child's lunch.
2. If after two weeks, meals have not been paid for a telephone call and further email message will be sent out to parents informing them of how much is outstanding and the need to pay. Parents are informed that if they are unable to pay they should contact the school office.
3. If the income due is not received a letter will be generated and sent out to parents. They will be informed of what is outstanding and if required the school can provide information on the dates meals were provided, but not paid for. Letters are re-issued as reminders every two weeks if money is still not received.

Where parents have not paid for their children's lunches for a period of time, the school will investigate the reason for this and enquire whether the family is eligible to apply for free school meals (FSM). If this is the case, the application for FSM will not be backdated and the school will still need to pursue the outstanding debt.

4. Parents will be asked to provide a packed lunch for their child until the outstanding balance is cleared. Parents will be offered the option of a payment plan if they are unable to clear the debt in one full payment. A payment card will be issued and signed by the office staff as a payment is received.
5. If the parent continues not to pay the school must decide whether to write off the debt and stand the cost or write to the parent informing them that the debt needs to be paid and include a warning that if the issue is not resolved, the matter will be passed on to the Local Authority.
6. Where the debt is in excess of £75.00, the SBM or SFM will liaise with Banking & Finance Support at the LA and the debt will be passed to the LA for recovery.

