

Charging, Remissions and Debt Recovery

Review frequency: Annually.

Approval: Governing body free to delegate to a committee of the governing body, an individual governor or the headteacher.

Legislation: Applies directly to academies and free schools via their funding agreements.

Maintained schools - [Education Act 1996, section 457](#).

[Education \(School Sessions and Charges and Remissions Policies\) \(Information\) \(England\) Regulations 1999](#).

[Education \(Residential Trips\) \(Prescribed Tax Credits\) \(England\) Regulations 2003, SI 2003/381](#).

[The School Information \(England\) Regulations 2008 \(as amended\)](#).

Also see: [School charging advice](#)

Review Date:	Committee:	Ratified:
13/02/2018	PFP	19/03/2018
26/02/2019	PFP	25/03/2019
25/02/2020	PFP	23/03/2020
9/03/2021	PFP	29/03/2021
08/03/2022	PFP	28/03/2022
07/11/2023	PFP	04/12/2023
05/03/2024	PFP	25/03/2024
11/03/2025	PFP	07/04/2025

Version Control

Current version	Previous version	Summary of changes made
Feb 25	Feb 24	To be reviewed at the Spring PFP Meeting 11/03/25
Feb 24	Nov 23	To be reviewed at the Spring PFP Meeting 05/03/24
Nov 23	Nov 22	Policy reviewed and checked in consultation with Julie Cheung (Headteacher).
Nov 22	Nov 21	Policy reviewed and checked in consultation with Julie Cheung (Headteacher).
Nov 21	Oct 17	Policy reviewed and checked in consultation with Julie Cheung (Headteacher).
	17 Oct 17	To be reviewed at the Spring PFP Meeting 9/3/21
17 Oct 17		To be reviewed at the Spring PFP meeting 25/2/20
17 Oct 17	18 Oct 16	Policy amended to new format.
18 Oct 16	Oct 13	Policy reviewed and reworded, more detail added into each section after cross referencing with DFE Charging Guidelines. To be reviewed again in 3 years.

CHARGING, REMISSIONS AND DEBT RECOVERY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

All education during school hours is free. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum with the exception of individual or group music tuition.

The Governing Body will, when setting the annual budget, agree to commit an amount for each year group to use towards 'First Hand Learning Experiences' (internal and external). Children whose parents are in receipt of some specific support payments, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, may apply in confidence to the Head teacher for the remission of their charges in part. The head teacher, in consultation with the Chair of Governors, will make authorization of remission.

Any money owed to school has an impact on the budget and may affect the resources we can provide to all children. We hope that parents understand this and will make every effort to avoid owing the school money. The school will take all reasonable measures to collect debts as part of its management of public funds. This policy and information will also be published on the school website.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

When organising school trips or visits which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to contribute to the cost of the trip. All contributions are voluntary. If we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, we may cancel a trip. If a trip goes ahead, it may include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. We do not treat these children differently from any others.

If a parent wishes their child to take part in a school trip or event, but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, we do allow the child to participate fully in the trip or activity. Sometimes the school pays additional costs in order to support the visit. Parents have a right to know how each trip is funded. The school provides this information on request.

The following is a list of additional activities organised by the school, which require voluntary contributions from parents. These activities are known as 'optional extras'. This list is not exhaustive:

- visits to museums;
- sporting activities which require transport expenses;
- outdoor adventure activities;
- visits to the theatre;
- school trips;
- musical events.

RESIDENTIAL VISITS

If the school organises a residential visit in school time or mainly school time, which is to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum, we do not make any charge for the education. However, we do make a charge to cover the costs of board, lodging and travel expenses. If parents are experiencing financial difficulty they are invited to write in confidence to the headteacher.

MUSIC TUITION

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. We do not charge for this. There is a charge for individual or group music tuition if this is not part of the National Curriculum. Bolton Music Service (BMS) peripatetic music teachers teach individual or small group lessons, Parents/ Carers pay for these lessons. If parents are experiencing financial difficulty, they are invited to write in confidence to the headteacher. We give parents information about additional music tuition at the start of each academic year.

SWIMMING

The school organises swimming lessons for all children in Key Stage 2. 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, and we ask parents for their written permission for their child to take part in swimming lessons.

MALICIOUS DAMAGE

In cases of wilful or malicious damage to equipment or breakages, or loss of school books or equipment on loan to pupils the Head teacher in consultation with the Chair of the Governing Body may decide to make a charge. Each incident will be dealt with on its own merit and at their discretion.

At Brownlow Fold, Governors are keen to ensure that any child who shows a flair in a particular skill should not be excluded from participating due to financial constraints. Each case will be assessed on its own merits by the Governing Body and financial assistance may be provided. The funding of activities will be a clear and open process understood by all. We intend that our charging and remissions policy will be in line with that of the LA and that it will meet the requirements of the law.

SCHOOL LUNCH/BREAKFAST CLUB/SNACKS

We recommend that payment for school lunches and snacks are made every Monday morning for the week ahead. The parent/carer can decide at the beginning or end of each half term/term if they want to change to/from school lunch and cannot change in between. The cost per week for school lunch is £12.75. The cost for snacks per week is £2.50.

The running of the breakfast club, including the cost to parents, will be reviewed each year due to budget constraints, which will allow school to apply for any funding that may be available at that time. Cost is £2.00 per child, per session. Parents and Carers will be required to Pay termly or half-termly.

Should the parent/carer fall into arrears the following steps will be made by the school office staff:-

After missing first payment a text message will be sent

After missing second payment a reminder letter is sent home (Appendix 1)

After missing third payment a further letter will be sent advising parent/carer that their child will no longer be entitled to a school lunch if the debt is not cleared by a defined date and that they should send their child to school with a packed lunch until the debt is paid in full. Failure for the parent/carer to provide their child with a packed lunch may result in involving the school's child protection officer. (Appendix 2)

MUGA HIRE

All hire fees must be paid in advance of the activity taking place. An additional fee is payable by the hirer for each hour or part of an hour that the facilities are retained by the hirer from the expiry of the contractual period until the hirer has returned control thereof to the School, ready for use by a subsequent hirer. The additional fee will be calculated pro-rata to the total fees paid or payable for the contractual period to the nearest complete hour and shall be paid to the School on demand.

Payment

a) Block Bookings: On return of the Booking Confirmation Form, the hirer shall either pay the full amount due on each visit or with agreement, be invoiced and pay in advance.

b) The Contract: The appropriate payment and any insurance policy (if required) must be sent to the School as soon as possible. Provided that these prove satisfactory, written acknowledgement will be forwarded to the hirer by the School whereupon the booking is confirmed subject to the remaining conditions contained herein.

The rights of the hirer are conditional upon adherence to the payment terms set above.

The charge is £22.50 per hour WITH lights or £15 per hour with NO lights (this is only suitable during the summer months).

Cancellation

a) Block Bookings: In the case of a cancellation of a block booking, the hirer shall pay to the School the full amount of the basic hire charge together with any other losses whatsoever incurred by the School.

b) Special Bookings/Events: In the case of a cancellation of a special booking/event, the hirer shall pay to the School the full amount of the basic hire charge together with any other losses whatsoever incurred by the School.

By the School: The School reserve the right to cancel any booking in the event of any unforeseen circumstances prior to the booking or if in the opinion of the School any regulation or requirement of any Public or Local Authority or owner of the premises may be contravened by holding the event/honouring the booking. In which case, the School shall return any deposit paid to the Hirer.

The School may vary these conditions from time to time by agreement with the hirer.

DEBT RECOVERY PROCEDURES

Where payment from the parent/carer has not been received a repayment plan should be discussed and agreed with them. Once agreed a repayment schedule should be sent in writing stating this is a Final reminder and payments must be received on each of the agreed days otherwise this will result in the school taking possible legal action. (Appendix 3).

NEGOTIATION OF REPAYMENT TERMS

Debtors are expected to settle the amount owed by a single payment as soon as possible after receiving the first payment reminder. Failure to meet any repayment terms will result in the school taking possible legal action. However, if people are unable to pay; The School may reduce or cancel a debt in certain circumstances. 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 it all off.
- 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.

If a debtor requests for 'repayment terms' these may be negotiated at the discretion of the Headteacher/School Business Manager. A record of all such agreements entered into will be retained. In all cases, a letter will be issued to the debtor confirming the agreed terms for repayment. The settlement period should be the shortest that is judged reasonable. The Headteacher/School Business Manager will decide whether any debtor who has been granted extended settlement terms will not be offered any further 'credit' and in future will be required to pay in advance.

COST OF DEBT RECOVERY

Where the school incurs material additional costs in recovering a debt then the Finance Committee and/or Governing Body will decide whether to seek to recover such costs from the debtor. The debtor will be formally advised in writing that they will be required to pay the additional costs incurred by the school in recovering the debt. This decision and its basis will be recorded and reported to the Finance Committee and/or Governing Body.

REPORTING OF OUTSTANDING DEBT LEVELS

The Headteacher/School Business Manager will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is regularly monitored. Suitable 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 and reported to the Finance Committee and/or Governing Body. The Finance Committee and/or Governing Body will review the level of outstanding debts every term to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debts is effective. Details of all reminders will be maintained in school. Where a letter is issued, a copy must be retained in file.

STAFF DEBT RECOVERY

Staff debts can accumulate from school lunches they have taken. If payment isn't received for a school lunch a text message will be sent reminding them of their outstanding balance. If this is not received by the end of the week the debt will be reported to the School Business Manager.

BAD DEBTS

Write-off of any debt between the values of £250 - £2,500 requires the written approval of the Finance Committee, debts over the value of £2,500 will be referred to the Full Governing Body. A record of the write-off, the reason for it, and the approval for it, will be retained for 7 years.

NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC

Families with no recourse to public funds, for example are ineligible for free school meals, despite their financial limitations can apply for discretionary funding to support their school meals only. This support is capped and not for extended day provision use.

Appendix 1

Dear Parent/Carer

2nd 'overdue payment' reminder for _____ in Class _____

I am writing to remind you that according to our records, you have an outstanding debt on your child's school meals account. In order for your child to continue to having school meals it is important to keep your account in credit.

Our records show that your child's outstanding debt is £_____ Please arrange for this to be paid immediately.

Non-payment affects the quality of service we are able to offer to the children therefore we need to ensure that all payments are up-to-date. Once the debt is cleared please ensure the account is always in credit by paying your child's dinner money every Monday morning for the week ahead.

If you have any queries regarding this debt, or if you have difficulty making payment, please contact the School Office to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

School Office Manager

Appendix 2

Dear Parent/Carer

Final Reminder of 'overdue payment' reminder for _____ in Class _____

It has been brought to my attention that despite numerous reminders there is still an outstanding debt on your child's school meals account.

To date your child's outstanding debt is £_____ Please arrange for this debt to be paid by _____ at the latest. If you are unable to pay this debt please contact the school office immediately so we can discuss a repayment plan with you.

As this debt remains outstanding you will now have to send your child to school each day with a packed lunch from home until the debt is cleared.

Once the debt has been paid your child may go back onto school dinners. Please remember dinner money is due each Monday morning for the week ahead, if you make a payment each Monday your child's dinner account will always be in credit.

If you have any queries regarding this debt, please contact the School Office to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

School Office Manager

Appendix 3

Dear Parent/Carer

Outstanding dinner money Repayment Plan.

I spoke to you on _____ regarding _____
outstanding dinner money debt of _____ and we agreed that you would pay
£ _____ per week until the debt is cleared.

Please make sure _____ brings the money on each of the dates listed below.
If you do not stick to this payment plan we will have to pass it onto the debt collectors at Bolton
Council.

_____ **WILL STILL NEED TO BRING A PACKED LUNCH FROM HOME
EVERYDAY UNTIL THIS DEBT IS CLEARED.**

Dates & Payment Amount Required

Please make sure you make each weekly payment.

Yours sincerely

School Office Manager