



**Good Shepherd Catholic
Primary & Nursery School**

**CHARGING, REMISSIONS AND DEBT
MANAGEMENT POLICY**

**Reviewed November 2023
Next review: November 2024**

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that there is clarity over those items, which the school will provide free of charge and for those items where there may be a charge. It also provides clarity over the management of debt. (Throughout this policy, the term “parents” means all those having parental responsibility for a child.)

The policy has been informed by DfE guidance.

Responsibilities

The Headteacher will ensure that staff are familiar with and correctly apply the policy. The Governors will review the policy every year.

Policy statement

The Governing Body recognizes the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including clubs, day trips, residential trips and experiences of other environments, can make towards a student’s all-round educational experience and their personal and social development.

During the school day, all activities that are a necessary part of the National Curriculum will be provided free of charge. This includes any materials, equipment and transport to take pupils between the school and the activity.

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, therefore, 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. Swimming is also provided to children in other year groups which does not form part of the National Curriculum. This is funded by the Government Sports Grant and no charge is made to parents.

Music Tuition

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. We do not charge for this.

Where individual or small-group music tuition takes place, this is not part of the National Curriculum and charge will be made. These individual or small-group lessons will be taught by external peripatetic music teachers.

Voluntary Contributions

Unless the teaching is an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil(s), we will make a charge in the form of voluntary contributions.

Voluntary contributions may be sought for activities during the school day which entail additional costs, for example, visits out and visitors in. In these circumstances, no pupil will be prevented from participating because his/her parents cannot or will not make a contribution. If insufficient funds are available it may be necessary to curtail or cancel activities.

Educational Trips

When organising school day trips or visits which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the trip.

If we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, we may cancel. 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.

The following is a list of additional activities organised by the school, which require voluntary contributions from parents. This list is not exhaustive:

- visits to museums, galleries and exhibitions
- outdoor adventure activities
- visits to the theatre
- musical events
- cinema visits
- historic walks

The cost for Free School Meal eligible children will be covered by separate Pupil Premium funding received from the Government for this purpose.

Residential Trips

Residential trips, Year 6 leavers' activities and external theatre trips attract an additional contribution that is activity specific. The cost of each of these will be published and enabled on ParentPay, allowing parents to make small regular contributions over a longer period of time. The full cost will also be visible so that parents who are able to pay any amount up to the full cost will be able to do so.

For residential trips, the payment requested will cover the full cost of the trip, insurance and travel.

Parents who feel they are unable to make full payment should make an appointment to discuss this with the Headteacher. Where no application has been made directly to the Headteacher, parents will be expected to pay the full amount. The cost for Free School Meal eligible children will be covered by separate Pupil Premium funding received from the Government for this purpose.

The school has to book places well in advance in order to secure the best deals and these bookings are made on pupil numbers. If a parent does not wish to send their child, they must inform the Headteacher in writing as soon as the trip has been communicated to parents. Failure to do so may mean that they will be liable for the full amount whether or not the child goes on the trip.

Optional activities outside of the school day

We will charge in full for optional, extra activities provided outside of the school day. After school activities cover a range of practical, artistic and sporting clubs. These clubs can be applied for on a termly basis. There is a termly charge for this and spaces are limited dependant on the activity.

Other Charges

Dinner Money**

Dinner money, is chargeable on a daily basis for those children in Nursery and from Year 3 to Year 6 (unless they are eligible for Free School Meals).

Children in Reception and Years 1 and 2 have their dinners paid for by the Government under Universal Infant Free School Meal funding.

Nursery Fees

Nursery provision is free for the first 15 hours, with an additional Wednesday afternoon session available to purchase. Please contact the school office for more information.

Late Collection Fee

The school day ends at 3.15pm and all children are expected to be collected promptly. It is understood and accepted that there will be occasions where parents face unavoidable delays and children are consequently collected late. A grace period is allowed for this purpose and late children are taken to the office area and supervised by a teacher on duty. However, where a child is collected 15 minutes or more late on TWO occasions within the same week – or are collected after 4.15pm on any single occasion (not including children on the register for an afterschool club)

- without an acceptable explanation and without prior notification, the headteacher reserves the right to make a charge of £5 per 15 minutes (or part thereof). Parents will be required to pay this within 48 hours and to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to avoid the repeated late collection of their child/ren. Any money collected in this way will be added to the School Fund account balance.

Calculating charges

When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who can't or won't.

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the school and/or charges to parents.

Remissions

The School receives separate funding from the Government called 'Pupil Premium' which can be used to fund the cost of participation in school chargeable activities. This will remission of full or part of the costs of:

- Any school organised residential activity
- Educational trips
- Extra-curricular activities, such as after school clubs

If you believe you are eligible for Free School Meals, please contact the school office.

The Governing Body may remit charges in full or in part to parents after considering other specific cases of hardship. Parents are requested to contact the Headteacher to discuss this in confidence.

Malicious Damage

Where it can be proved that a child or group of children have caused damage to school property or resources, either in school or to resources taken home, a charge will be made to parents in order to replace/mend the damage that has been caused. This can include damage to reading books and other equipment children may take home.

Debt Management

The school has a strict policy of **no** bad debts and cannot afford to divert school education funding in support of non-payment of school meals or other chargeable events.

Payments

Payment for school meals, nursery fees and other events must be paid in advance by ParentPay.

In the event of non-payment, the school will advise the parent that the child cannot continue to have a school meal or attend the additional nursery session until the debt has been cleared. Outstanding payments in excess of £10.00 per family will be considered under the debt non-payment process.

Unavoidable circumstances

The guiding principle is that a child should not expect a school lunch unless paid for in advance or eligible for Free School Meals.

The Headteacher can permit a school meal as a 'controlled' bad debt in exceptional circumstances. Payment of this overdue amount must be reimbursed the next school day. If payment is not forthcoming a reminder telephone call will be made. If the debt continues to be unpaid the parent/carer will be asked to attend the school to discuss the matter.

Nursery fees are payable in advance. The Headteacher can agree to the child attending one afternoon session in exceptional circumstances. Payment should be reimbursed the following school day.

Continual non-payments

Should a failure to reimburse costs continue, a more formal debt recovery remedy will be applied:

- The parent/carer will be advised in writing by the Headteacher that the child will not be given a school meal unless paid for in advance as per the policy or one afternoon session for Nursery fees.
- An agreed recovery plan of outstanding bad debts is agreed with the parent/carer. It will be a commitment from the parent/carer to honour the agreed plan.
- For school dinners, the parent/carer will be advised that until the debt is recovered, the child must bring in a packed lunch.
- In the event of continual bad debts, the Headteacher can refer the debt to the governing body to take further action.
- Non-payment of meal bad debts can only be written off with agreement by the governing body.
- The governing body retains the right to take debt recovery action as deemed necessary.

*** The Mayor of London has sanctioned Free School Meals for all Rec – Year 6 children from 01/09/23 – 31/08/24*