



Oakwood Primary School

Governors' Charging, Remissions and Allowances Policy

Updated on: 27 March 2014
To be reviewed by: 27 March 2019

Oakwood Primary School endorses the principles of the 1988 Education Act in maintaining the right to free education for all children. The act allows us to request voluntary contributions to broaden children's educational experience.

Trips, Visits and Activities

The school reserves the right to ask parents for voluntary contributions for any activity organised by the school which takes place wholly or mainly (50% or more) during normal teaching time.

Non-contribution would not prejudice a pupil's place, however, unless most parents were prepared to make a contribution, the school may have to cancel the activity. Such enriching activities are an important aspect in supporting the curriculum.

Where an activity is residential, the consequent cost of residency will be charged to the parents or legal guardian. Any parents or legal guardians who are experiencing financial difficulty will be encouraged to approach the school where we will seek to find assistance with the charges. We are often able to do this via local trust funds and bursaries. The Governing Body will determine the special circumstances as appropriate, however, in all cases parents will be expected to make a nominal contribution.

Voluntary contributions will, in all circumstances, be invited through individual letters to parents. Any school organised activity which takes place mainly (more than 50%) outside of school time will be charged for in such a way as to meet the entire costs of the activity.

Damage to School Property

The school will cover accidental breakages of school property. Deliberate or wilful acts which result in breakage or damage to school property will be charged for at a rate appropriate to replacement costs.

Music

Where children receive tuition from peripatetic staff, either individually or in a group activity, the school enters into a contract with the parent. The school then enters into a contract with our music services provider. The school administers the sending of invoices and the collection of payments for such tuition to and from parents.

The charges for tuition are set by the governors and are increased by inflation annually. The money collected for tuition is less than the budget the school allocates to pay our music services provider, which effectively means the school has provided an equal subsidy to all children.

The school's contract with our music services provider covers an academic year and so parents commit to a year's tuition and associated payment. The school may agree to cut the contract short or not ask for a full year's payment only in exceptional circumstances.

Instrumental lessons for Year 3 are currently funded by the school as part of the First Access programme, but parents are expected to pay instrument insurance if they want their child to take the instrument home. This is currently £20 for the year.

Twins/Siblings in the same Year Group

The governing body makes special arrangements for twins and siblings in the same year group. Where there are charges invited from or charged directly to parents, only one charge will be invited or made.

Transaction Charges for Debit/Credit Card Payments

Southampton City Council does not currently pass processing charges for card payments onto schools. If this policy were to change, the governors have agreed that the full transaction charge will be passed on to parents. The Internet Payments system allows for this to be calculated and charged automatically.

Swimming

Swimming lessons for Year 5 are currently funded by the school from its delegated budget. This means the school subsidises the cost of swimming equally for all pupils, such that no charge is passed on to parents.

Dinner Money

Dinners are charged for at the rate set by Southampton City Council and the full cost passed on to parents. For children eligible for Free School Meals, no charge is made. From September 2014, we will provide a free school meal for all children in Years R, 1 and 2.

Uniform

The school receives a small amount as part of its delegated budget each year to subsidise the cost of uniform. The governors have agreed that this grant should provide two uniform items annually to each child who is eligible for Free School Meals. This costs more than the government grant, meaning that each eligible child is equally subsidised.

Other Charges to Parents

The Headteacher, Resources Committee or Governing Body may levy charges for miscellaneous services up to the cost of providing such services, e.g. for providing a copy of an OFSTED report.

The school charging policy will be subject to change if there are new Local Authority or Department for Education policy changes, or changes in the law.

Hiring and Letting

The governors have agreed to hire out rooms and spaces in the school to outside agencies, subject to appropriate safeguarding checks and insurance arrangements.

We follow the recommended charging structure from the Local Authority for our Breakfast and After School Childcare provider

Where the hirer is providing a service directly to the children of the school, eg. an extra-curricular club, we make no charge to the hirer.

Where the hirer is private, we set hourly charges recommended by the Local Authority and charge additionally to cover the full costs of site management time and a partial contribution to energy costs. Charges for refreshments, lunch and other resources, eg. Photocopying, are passed on in full. This charge also includes a small additional amount to cover the costs of administration and to make a small surplus from each let which can be spent for the good of the pupils. This charge is increased annually in April by inflation.

Governor Allowances

The Education (Governors' Allowances) Regulations 2003 provide the legal framework for governing bodies to pay 'out of pocket' expenses to their governors. The Department for Education guidance which accompanied those regulations states:

"It is good practice to pay such allowances as governors should not be out of pocket for the valuable work they do".

The payment of allowances is not a reward; it is recognition that being a governor is not a cost-free exercise. Some governors may be able to afford the out of pocket expenses their role entails, but this is not true of all potential governors and restricting the right to claim may prevent someone from becoming a governor or force them to resign their position. A governing body with a policy of paying allowances claims will be going some way to meeting their duty to promote community cohesion by encouraging participation by all members of the community, not just those with deep pockets.

If governors are continually expected to meet the costs of fulfilling an essential role out of their own pocket then there is a real danger that a culture of doing the bare minimum will ensue; meaning governors will not undertake training and will be poorly informed.

Travel expenses must be paid at a rate not exceeding the authorised mileage rate provided on HMRC website for private use of cars. http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/cars/advisory_fuel_current.htm

Oakwood Primary School Governing Body believes that paying governors' allowances, in specific categories as set out below, is important in ensuring equality of opportunity to serve as governors for all members of the community and so is an appropriate use of school funds. The specific items allowable reflect this objective. However, governors will not be paid to attend meetings nor will they be reimbursed for loss of earnings.

All governors of Oakwood Primary School will be entitled to claim the actual costs, which they incur as follows:

1. Governors and Associate Governors will be able to claim allowances providing the allowances are incurred in carrying out their duties, as a Governor or representative of Oakwood Primary School, and are agreed by the Resources Committee that they are justified before any reimbursable costs are incurred.
2. Governors and Associate Governors will be able to claim for the following, on a case-by-case basis and with the prior approval of the Governing Body:
 - childcare or baby sitting allowances (excluding payments to a current/former spouse or partner)
 - cost of care arrangements for an elderly or dependent relative (excluding payments to a current/former spouse or partner)
 - extra costs they incur in performing their duties either because they have special needs or because English is not their first language
 - cost of travel relating only to travel to meetings/training courses at the rate specified by HMRC
 - travel and subsistence costs, payable at the current rates specified by the Secretary of State for Transport associated with attending national meetings or training events, unless these costs can be claimed from the LA or any other source
 - telephone charges, photocopying, stationery, postage
 - any other justifiable allowances

Governors wishing to make claims under these arrangements, once prior approval has been sought, should complete a claims form (obtainable from the School Office), attaching receipts where possible. Claims forms will be submitted for final approval one week prior to the meeting of the Resources Committee in the second half of each term. Claims will be subject to independent audit and may be investigated by the Chair of Governors (or Chair of Resources in respect of the Chair of Governors) if they appear excessive or inconsistent.