



Darell Primary and Nursery School

Charging and Remissions Policy

The Status of the policy: Statutory

Purpose:

During the school day, all children have full and free access to a broad and balanced curriculum. This policy explains the activities for which parents may be asked to pay, as well as explaining how parents can make those payments. You will also find details of when the school will make an exception on a payment, and how the school will recover debts.

Contents:

1. Charging for school activities
2. Parent payment methods
3. Debt recovery

Links with other policies:

Finance Policy and Procedures

Monitoring and evaluation:

This policy is reviewed every 2 years and monitored by the Resources Committee

Date of approval by Resources Committee: June 2017

Date of next review: June 2019

If you require a copy of this document in large print, Braille, audio format, or on paper, please contact the School Office.

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| <p>Signed:</p>  <p>Chair of Resources Committee</p> | <p>Signed:</p>  <p>Headteacher</p> |
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1. Charging for school activities

During the school day

All activities that are a necessary part of the National Curriculum plus religious education will be provided free of charge. This includes any materials, equipment and transport to take pupils between the school and activity. It excludes charges made for teaching an individual pupil or groups of up to four pupils to play a musical instrument. Unless the teaching is an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupils, we will make a charge.

Voluntary contributions may be sought for activities during the school day which entail additional costs e.g. school trips and cooking. In these circumstances no pupil will be prevented from participating because his / her parents cannot or will not make a contribution.

From time to time we may invite a non-school based organisation to arrange an activity during the school day e.g. visiting theatre groups. Such activities may result in a charge for pupils. Parents may request permission from the headteacher for their child to be absent from the activity.

Optional activities outside the school day

We may charge for optional, extra activities provided outside the school day e.g. some clubs. Such activities are not part of the National Curriculum or religious education, nor are they part of an exam syllabus.

Education partly during the school day

If a non-residential activity happens partly inside the school day and partly outside of it, there will be no charge if most of the time to be spent on the activity falls within the school day. Conversely, if the bigger proportion of time spent falls outside of the normal school day, charges may be made. When such activities are arranged parents will be told how charges were calculated.

Residential

Charges will be made for board and lodging, except for pupils whose parents are entitled to free school meals or those whose parents require additional financial support. In these circumstances, a voluntary contribution will be requested and the amount agreed upon at the discretion of the Headteacher.

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. Support for the cases of hardship will come through voluntary contributions and fundraising.

If we do not obtain sufficient funds to meet the majority of the cost then an activity may be cancelled, at the Headteacher's discretion.

Parents who would qualify for support are those who are eligible for free school meals or those agreed at the Headteacher's discretion.

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

Assistance for charged activities

The school actively seeks assistance for charged activities. This can be through application to the PSA or a charity e.g. Richmond Parish Lands / Kew Fete.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The Resource Committee of the governing body will monitor the impact of this policy by receiving a financial report as required about those activities that resulted in charges being levied, the subsidies awarded (without giving names) and the source of those subsidies.

Damage to school property

Parents/carers will be charged for replacement of school property that is damaged, defaced or lost as a result of a pupil's unacceptable behaviour. The charge will be the cost of replacement or repair.

2. Parent Payment methods

Purpose of the System

The school uses Tucasi payment system to record income from parents for school dinners, trips and school journeys. This policy is to define the roles and responsibilities of staff using the system and how to handle losses. Income is entered into manually by the admin staff plus automatically from online payment system via Streamline and WorldPay.

Examples of Uses

The system may be used for the following purposes:

- Recording income of school educational visits
- Recording income and take up of school meals
- Recording Income for school journeys
- Monitoring income against expenditure of above

Administration

School Dinners:

The welfare assistant is responsible for the school dinner system. The welfare assistant enters income manually on Tucasi for payments made by parents in school and records the daily school meal take up (absences). Online payments are monitored by, and school meal debt management is managed by, the welfare assistant.

School Trips and School Journeys:

The admin assistant records income manually on Tucasi for school trips and school journeys made by parents in school.). Online payments are monitored by, and debt management is managed by, the school business manager and admin assistant.

Banking

School Dinners:

The welfare assistant counts money and balances it with income entered on Tucasi. She then records it on a bank paying in slip ready for cash collection service. The total banked is checked against the expected banking on Tucasi by the school business manager. This income is then entered onto the finance management system by the school business manager.

School Trips and School Journeys:

The school business manager counts the money and checks it against money entered manually onto Tucasi for each trip or school journey. This is then recorded on a spreadsheet, along with paying in voucher numbers. Money is then recorded on bank slips ready for cash collection. This income is then entered onto the finance management system by the school business manager.

Debt Monitoring

School Dinners:

Using Tucasi which records both manual and online payments, the welfare assistant also monitors balances and chases parents for debts outstanding.

School Trips and School Journeys:

Using Tucasi which records both manual and online payments, the admin assistant also monitors balances and liaises with the class teacher regarding non-payments. Where appropriate (pupils not on pupil premium) parents are asked if they could make a contribution. Parents with pupils on pupil premium are either fully or part funded by pupil premium.

Delegation of Duties

Welfare Assistant:

- Records daily absences for school meals
- Records payment for school meals given into school
- Prepares banking of school meal payments
- Monitors online payments for school meals and chases debts

Admin Assistant:

- Records payment for trips and school journeys given into school
- Some debt collection for trips and school journeys

School Business Manager:

- Checks total banking prepared by welfare officer agrees with Tucasi
- Checks trip and school journeys monies agree with Tucasi

- Prepares banking for trips and school journeys
- Some debt collection for trips and school journeys
- Enters all income, school meals, trips and school journeys onto finance management system

Online Payment System

The school online payment system has been set up so that parents can pay online for school dinners, school trips, curriculum weeks, school journeys and Nursery extended hours provision fees.

- Tucasi provides the online payment system.
- WorldPay provide the payment gateway to capture and authorise the transaction and advises the acquirer (Streamline) to move the money.
- Streamline move the money from the parent's bank account to the school's bank account. Funds are only held by Streamline overnight.
- In the event of Streamline going into liquidation the school would need to cover the money lost, which would be a maximum of one nights online payments
- If a change of supplier is deemed necessary, this to be discussed by the Resources Committee

The only option for payments is with a debit card, credit cards are not accepted.

Online payments made by parents are reconciled with the school bank statements every week by the school business manager.

A copy of the contract and terms and conditions with Streamline is held in the school office.

3. Debt Recovery

General Requirements

Darell Primary and Nursery School will take all reasonable measures to vigorously collect debts as part of its management of public funds. A debt will be written off only after all reasonable measures (commensurate with the size and nature of the debt) have been taken to recover it.

Darell Primary and Nursery School's debt recovery policy will observe the relevant financial regulations and guidance set out in the Financial Handbook for Schools and any other legal requirements. In particular:

The Governing Body will not write-off any debt belonging to the school which exceeds £500. Any sums above this will be referred to the Local Authority for approval and the formal agreement of the LA's Finance Director obtained before writing-off. (If any debtor has a number of debts which together exceed the write-off limit then these will be treated as a total amount).

A formal record of any debts written off will be maintained and this will be retained for 7 years.

Darell Primary and Nursery School will not initiate any legal action to recover debts, but will refer any debts which it has not been able to collect (unless a decision to write-off the debt is demonstrably a reasonable course of action) to the LA to consider taking legal or other action to recover the debt.

The school will NOT write-off any debt belonging to LA or another party, e.g. debts for school meals. If in doubt as to the appropriate action to collect any such debts the school will seek advice promptly from officers of the LA.

School staff are expected to follow the following procedures to secure the collection of all debts.

Recording of goods or services supplied where payment is not received in advance or 'at the point of sale'.

A record will be kept of all such supplies that details what was supplied, the value, the date(s) and the identity of the 'debtor', e.g. parent, carer, hirer, etc.

Where invoices are raised these should state the date by which payment is due.

In all other cases correspondence with parents, etc. should indicate the maximum period that the school regards as reasonable before payment is overdue, e.g. contributions for a school trip should be received by, payment for items purchased should be sent to the school office by, etc.

The Headteacher should determine what the reasonable 'credit period' is if this is not otherwise specified, e.g. the governors may stipulate the maximum settlement period for school lettings in a separate 'premises hiring policy'.

Initial reminders

Initial reminders may be informal and made either in person (when a parent comes to collect/drop off the child) or by telephone. Normally, the office staff will undertake this having built up a good relationship with the parents.

First reminder letter

A formal reminder letter should be issued after two weeks from any informal reminder / the date of supply. If action is to proceed further, it is necessary to prove that all reasonable attempts have been made to recover the debt, and that these attempts have been made in a timely manner, i.e. at the time that the debt first became overdue.

Second reminder letter

A second reminder letter will be issued two weeks after the First reminder letter.

Should a debt need to be taken beyond two reminder letters, formal written evidence may have to be produced. It is therefore important that at least one, but preferably two, written reminders are sent. Details of all reminders, whether verbal or in writing, should be maintained. Where a letter is issued, a copy must be retained on file.

Failure to respond to reminders / settle a debt

If no response is received from the reminders issued, a letter will be sent to the debtor advising them that the matter will be referred to the Local Authority's Legal Department.

At the discretion of the Headteacher, the debtor may be advised that they will be required to pay in advance for all future supplies or the supply will no longer be available to them. This decision and its basis will be recorded.

Negotiation of repayment terms

Debtors are expected to settle the amount owed by a single payment as soon as possible after receiving the first 'overdue reminder'.

If a debtor asks for 'repayment terms' these may be negotiated at the discretion of the Headteacher / Resources Committee. A record of all such agreements will be kept.

A letter will be issued to the debtor confirming the agreed terms (unless this is not judged necessary). The settlement period should be the shortest that is judged reasonable.

The Resources Committee will decide whether any debtor who has been granted extended settlement terms will not be offered any further 'credit' and will be required to pay in advance in future.

Costs of Debt Recovery

Where the school incurs material additional costs in recovering a debt then the Resources Committee will decide whether to seek to recover such costs from the debtor. This decision and its basis will be recorded.

Reporting of Outstanding Debt Levels

The Finance Manager will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is known / can be determined at any time.

The Headteacher will review the level of outstanding debts at least once per term to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debts is effective, and report these findings to the Resources Committee.

Bad Debts

The Headteacher is authorised to write-off debts up to £100. Debts between £100 and £500 may only be written-off with the written approval of Resources Committee.

A record of the write-off, the reason for it, and the approval for it, will be retained for 7 years.

Any debt belonging to the Local Authority will be referred to the appropriate officer for consideration/action without delay once the school has taken reasonable measures to collect the debt (i.e. has followed the reminder notification procedures set out above).