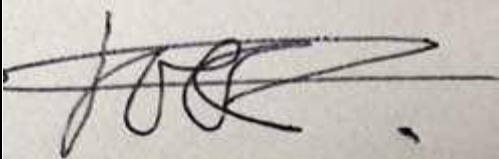




Darell Primary & Nursery School Charging and Remissions Policy

Governors' Committee Responsible	Resources Committee
Status	Statutory
Review Cycle	Every 2 years
Date written/last review	March 2025
Date of next review	March 2027
Approved By: Joe Porter Headteacher	
Approved By: Laura Morgan - Chair of Governors	

At Darell, our values drive everything that we do. As a school, we value:



- Equality - we celebrate our differences and treat everyone equally and fairly.
- Responsibility - we take responsibility for our behaviour. We are kind and caring to ourselves and others.
- Enjoyment - we are passionate about learning and look for enjoyment in everything we do.
- Aspiration - we place no ceiling on what we can achieve. We challenge each other to be the best that we can be

1. Aims

Our school aims to:

- › Have robust, clear processes in place for charging and remissions
- › Clearly set out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will and will not be made
- › Offer a range of activities and visits whilst minimising the financial barriers that may prevent some pupils from taking full advantage of these opportunities

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on [charging for school activities](#) and [the Education Act 1996](#), sections 449 to 462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England.

3. Definitions

- › **Charge:** a fee payable for specifically defined activities
- › **Remission:** the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

4. The Governing body

The Full governing board has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor or the headteacher.

The governing body also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

Responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy has been delegated to the Resources Committee.

4.2 Headteachers

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the charging and remissions policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

4.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- › Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently
- › Notifying the headteacher of any specific circumstances that they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies

The school will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

4.4 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to notify staff or the headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding the charging and remissions policy.

5. Where charges cannot be made

Below we set out what we **cannot** charge for:

5.1 Education

- Admission applications
- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of:
 - The National Curriculum
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
 - Religious education
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent/carer
- Entry for a prescribed public examination if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school

5.2 Transport

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local authority (LA) has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing board or LA has arranged for pupils to be educated
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for that examination at the school
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit

5.3 Residential visits

- Education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours
- Education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of:
 - The National Curriculum
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
 - Religious education
- Supply teachers, covering for teachers who are absent from school, accompanying pupils on a residential visit

6. Where charges can be made

Below we set out what we **can** charge for:

6.1 Education

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent/carer wishes the child to own them
- Optional extras (see section 6.2)
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see section 6.3)
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities

- › Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school **and** the pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus

6.2 Optional extras

We are able to charge for activities known as 'optional extras'. In these cases, schools can charge for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. The following are optional extras:

- › Education provided outside of school time that is not part of:
 - The National Curriculum
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
 - Religious education
- › Examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school
- › Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the LA or governing body has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education)
- › Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
- › Extended day services offered to pupils (such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions)

When calculating the cost of optional extras, an amount may be included in relation to:

- › Any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra
- › The cost of buildings and accommodation
- › Non-teaching staff
- › Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra (including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra)
- › The cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not be greater than the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating.

Any charge will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils who wish to take part in the activity but whose parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. Parental agreement is necessary for the provision of an optional extra that is to be charged for.

6.3 Music tuition

Schools can charge for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of pupils, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent/carer.

Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff giving the tuition.

Charges cannot be made:

- If the teaching is an essential part of the National Curriculum
- If the teaching is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 instrumental and vocal tuition programme
- For a pupil who is looked after by a local authority

6.4 Residential visits

We can charge for board and lodging on residential visits, but the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

7. Voluntary contributions

As an exception to the requirements set out in section 5 of this policy, the school is able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents/carers to fund activities that would not otherwise be possible.

Some activities for which the school may ask parents/carers for voluntary contributions include:

- Day trips, visits and workshops wholly, or mainly, during school hours

Darell Primary School organises trips, visits and workshops to enrich the curriculum and the educational experience of the children. The school will request voluntary contributions in respect of the cost of the activity, including the cost of transport.

- Residential Visits

Parents will be asked to make voluntary contributions towards the cost of transport and activities taking place during Residential Visits. Board and lodging during Residential Visits is a chargeable item (unless parents are in receipt of certain benefits) and is therefore included in section 11 below.

- Swimming

The cost of providing swimming lessons in the local public pool, including transport, hire of the pool and provision of instructors, will be reviewed on an annual basis. Although the school will provide some funds to support this activity to ensure all pupils' educational requirements for swimming are met, it will be necessary to request voluntary contributions to offset the balance of the costs.

- Theme Weeks

All pupils have the opportunity of taking part in extended activities such as Arts Week, DT Week, Science Week and Sports Focus Week. A voluntary contribution will be requested to cover the cost of materials and/or external resources required

There is no obligation for parents/carers to make any contribution, and no child will be excluded from an activity if their parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay.

If the school is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit then it will be cancelled.

8. Activities we charge for

The school will charge for the following activities:

- Breakfast club – Cost based on staff and food costs

➤ After school clubs – Based on cost incurred for running the club including staffing and resources if internal club, if run by an external provider then price is determined by the provider.

➤ School lunches

School lunches are optional, chargeable items for Nursery Children and Staff only as Reception to Year 6 receive free school meals either under the UIFSM or Mayors KS2 meals schemes. Payment for school lunches must be made in advance and accounts should be kept with a credit balance.

9. 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. The voluntary contribution requested may cover all aspects of the activity, for example, including administrative costs. If insufficient contributions are received, then it may be necessary to consider whether the trip goes ahead. Parents may also be invited to make any extra donation to support the trip, should they be willing.

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.

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.

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.

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 free school meals or those agreed at the Headteacher's discretion. Support from school funds will be 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.

10. Parent Payment methods

Purpose of the System

The school uses Arbor 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 payments.

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 Office manager is responsible for the school dinner system. S/he enters income manually on Arbor for payments made by parents in school and records the daily school meal take up (absences). Manual payments by parents are discouraged and the school assists with internet access by providing use of a school laptop and connection in the office where needed. Online payments are monitored by, and school meal debt management is also managed by, the Office manager.

School Trips and School Journeys:

The Office manager and Receptionist record income manually on Arbor for school trips and school journeys made by parents in school. Manual payments by parents are discouraged and the school assists with internet access by providing use of a school laptop and connection in the office where needed. Online payments are monitored by, and debt management is managed by, the School Business Manager and Office manager.

Banking

Little money is now received into the school as payments are encouraged through Arbor. Where money is received, the School Business Manager or Office manager will record it on a

bank paying in slip ready to be deposited in the bank. The income is then entered onto the finance management system by the School Business Manager.

Debt Monitoring

School Dinners:

Using Arbor, which records both manual and online payments, the Office manager also monitors balances and chases parents and staff for debts outstanding.

School Trips and School Journeys:

Using Arbor the Office manager 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 contribute. Parents with pupils on pupil premium are either fully or part funded by pupil premium.

Delegation of Duties

Office Staff and SBM:

- 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
- Records payment for trips and school journeys given into school
- Debt collection for trips and school journeys
- Checks total banking agrees with Arbor
- Checks trip and school journeys monies agree with Arbor
- Reconciles monies received in bank account with Arbor
- 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 (Arbor) has been set up so that parents can pay online for school dinners, school trips, curriculum weeks, Wrap around care, school journeys and Nursery extended hours provision fees. If a change of supplier is deemed necessary, this to be discussed by the Resources Committee.

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 for Arbor is held in the school office.

11. Remissions

In some circumstances, the school may not charge for items or activities set out in sections 6 and 8 of this policy. This will be at the discretion of the governing body and will depend on the activity in question.

11.1 Remissions for residential visits

Parents/carers who can prove they are in receipt of any of the following benefits can be exempt from paying the entire cost of board and lodging for residential visits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit – provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit – if you apply on or after 1 April 2018, your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)
- Children of Families highlighted as PPG are entitled to one free after school club per term, discount on Trips, Residential trips and swimming

12. 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'.

Parents and staff are requested to pay for school meals a week in advance and prior to school trips. Where payment is not received, 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, staff 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 class teacher or office staff will undertake this having built up a good relationship with the parents.

First reminder email

A formal reminder email 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.

Phonecall

Office Staff will ring parents approximately two weeks after the first reminder email.

Should a debt need to be taken beyond this point, 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 School Business 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).

12. Monitoring arrangements

The Office Manager monitors charges and remissions, and ensures these comply with this policy. This policy will be reviewed by School Business Manager every 3 years.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the Resources committee and Full Governing Body.