

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. 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.

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.

Residentials

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.

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. 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.

2. 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 Senior Administration Assistant 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 Senior Administration Assistant.

School Trips and School Journeys:

The Senior Administration Assistant records 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 Senior Administration Assistant.

Banking

Little money is now received into the school as payments are encouraged through Arbor. Where money is received, the School Business Manager or Senior Administration Assistant 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 Senior Administration Assistant also monitors balances and chases parents for debts outstanding.

School Trips and School Journeys:

Using Arbor the Senior Administration 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

Senior Administration 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
- Records payment for trips and school journeys given into school
- Debt collection for trips and school journeys

School Business Manager:

- 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, school journeys and Nursery extended hours provision fees. If a change of supplier is deemed necessary, this to be discussed by the Resources Committee

Payments can be made with a debit card or credit cards but AMEX is 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 for Arbor 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'.

Parents 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, 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

The Senior Administration Assistant 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).