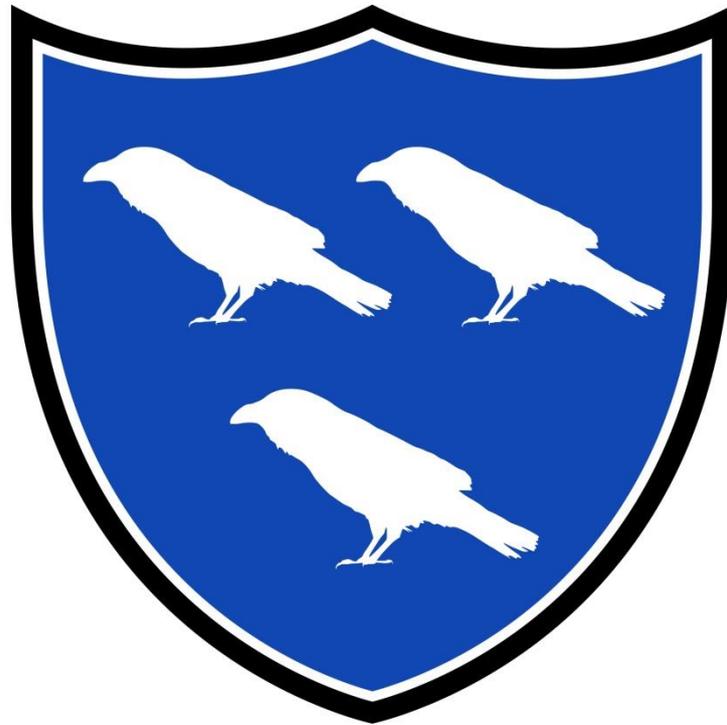


# Valley Primary School



## Charging & Remissions Policy

Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 sets out the law on charging for school activities in schools. Academies are required through their funding agreements to comply with the law on charging for school activities. This document sets out the school's policy for charging and remission for school activities and school visits.

Updated: March 2017

Review Date:

We believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

The policy has been informed by A Guide to the Law for School Governors and the DCSF guidance "Planning and Funding Extended Schools" and "Charging for School Activities" (January 2009).

The policy complements the school's equality scheme, teaching and learning policy and the Financial Management Standards for Schools.

The headteacher, staff and governors will ensure that the following applies:

**1. No charges will be made for:**

- Admission to the school.
- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books or other equipment).
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education.
- Year 6 SATs testing.
- Equipment - The provision of books, equipment, materials or transport in relation to any activity that cannot itself be charged for, subject to the provisions under permissible charges (see below).
- Tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum.
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip.
- Non-residential school trips - the School may request a voluntary contribution towards the costs, but it will be made clear to parents that they are under no obligation to contribute. No pupil will be excluded from such a trip because his or her parents have not contributed. The School will inform parents that, if a particular trip is dependent on voluntary funding and if sufficient funds are not raised, the trip may have to be cancelled or the school may have to find the shortfall from its own resources.

**2. Activities for which charges may be made:**

- Activities outside school hours - Non-residential activities which take place outside school hours, if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside school hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours).
- Residential activities - Board and lodging costs of residential trips deemed to take place during school time.
- Residential trips deemed to take place outside school time (other than for those activities listed in 1 above).
- Music tuition - Music tuition for individuals or groups of up to four pupils.
- Breakfast or Afterschool Clubs
- Extra-Curricular Clubs - The School facilitates a number of clubs which run outside normal school hours to the benefit of pupils. These clubs may be run by external service providers or by Valley Primary School staff. Where the club is run by an external organiser, for example a sporting activity, the club organiser will charge parents direct for the activity.
- Clothing - Although no charge will be made for equipment for use in connection with education provided during school hours as set out in Section A(5) above, the Education Act 1996 (as amended) specifically excludes clothing from this definition.

Parents may wish to buy school jumpers/cardigans, PE bags and Book Bags with logos. These can be purchased from the school's chosen uniform supplier – Graduates Schoolwear in Orpington. All other items can be purchased from department stores.

Charges will be made as indicated below. Parental agreement will be obtained before a charge is made.

Activities which can be charged for (with the exception of board and lodging for residential trips) are regarded as "optional extras". An optional extra, as defined in Section 455 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended) is an activity, which takes place outside school hours; participation in such activities is dependent on parental choice.

Charges will not exceed the actual predicted cost (per pupil) of provision as the school does not aim to profit from any activity. In the event of a profit being accidentally made, a refund will be offered if the profit is greater than 5% of the overall cost. (See refunds section).

### **Examples of Charges and Remissions**

<b>Activities or situations which will or may occur a charge</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Charges may be made for any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where a parent wishes their child to own them	For example, a clay model – a charge to cover the cost of the clay.
Charges may be made for music tuition	The cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument or singing, where the tuition is an optional extra for an individual pupil or groups of up to four pupils
Charges will be made for the board and lodging component of residential trips	The charge will not exceed the actual cost

### **3. Families qualifying for remission or help with charges**

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the governing body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances.

Parents who feel that they are unable to meet the full charge for a specific activity should apply to the Headteacher who in his sole discretion can authorise a discount of up to 100% of the cost depending on individual circumstances. We will remind parents of this provision through letters, at meetings and through one to one conversations as necessary.

In some circumstances, remission of music tuition fees may be available through application to the Bromley Music Trust (BYMT).

### **4. Additional considerations**

The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- we have established a system for parents to pay in instalments
- when an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip
- we acknowledge that offering opportunities on a "first pay, first served" basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

## **Voluntary donations**

The school sometimes requests voluntary donations towards the cost of certain activities (e.g. school trips). Although payment is voluntary, letters always state that where there are insufficient funds activities will not be able to take place in future. The school acknowledges that in some cases, where payments are made on a voluntary basis, there will be some that do not pay.

## **Refunds**

Where a planned trip does not take place, parents will be refunded in full.

A refund will not normally be given if a child is absent for a trip through illness. However, if a child missed a residential trip due to accident or illness, costs may be recovered through the insurance policy. Where a parent has reserved a place for their child on a trip and the school has secured this place with the company concerned, payment will not be refunded to the parent unless the school is able to cover its related costs.

If, for any unforeseen reason, parents have been overcharged, refunds may be required where overall profits exceed 5%. Likewise, if undercharged, it may be necessary to ask parents for either additional payments or voluntary contributions.

## **5. Arrangements for the collection of monies owing to the school**

### **Dinner Money**

If families opt for a school lunch we encourage payments to be made half termly in advance.

Free school meals may be available to families with limited income and can be applied for through application to Bromley Council.

Regular statements and reminders are sent to those families whose account is in arrears. When three reminders have been given and payment is not received then a letter stating that dinners will be discontinued until the debt is cleared is sent.

### **Music Tuition**

We provide music tuition free of charge for Year 3 (Djembe Drumming) in whole class or half class sessions. Individual lessons, usually provided by BYMT, are not compulsory but an optional extra for those families wishing their children to have instrumental tuition. Remission of fees to those families in receipt of certain benefits may be available by applying to BYMT directly. The music tuition payments are dealt with directly between parents and music tutors.

### **Breakages and fines**

If a pupil is responsible for damage to property or equipment, or for the defacement or loss of a book, the parent may be asked to pay a contribution of or the full cost of any repairs or replacement. To facilitate the recovery of such monies after a pupil has left the school, a deposit may be requested which, if all textbooks and library books which have been lent out have been returned, will be refunded in full. Parents in hardship may be given a waiver on this deposit.

## **6. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation**

The Finance and Personnel Committee of the Governing Body will monitor the impact of this policy, the charges being levied, the subsidies awarded (without giving names) and the source of those subsidies. It will seek to evaluate the impact of the school's extended services on those children most in need of additional support through the impact statements for Pupil Premium and Sport Premium expenditure. This policy will be publicised on the school website. It will also be available at the school office.

## **7. Lettings**

Valley Primary School Academy Trust operates a separate Lettings Policy which clearly states the associated charges for hiring school facilities.

