



Wickford Primary School

Charging, Remissions, Refunds, and Debt Recovery policy

Policy name:	Charging, remissions, refund and debt recovery policy
Reviewed by:	S.Bayley
Approved by:	Governing Body
Date of Governor meeting	19 th November 25
Date of next review:	September 25

Confirmation that the Charging, remissions, refunds and debt recovery Policy in respect of Wickford Primary School has been discussed and formerly adopted by the Governing Body:

Agreed at the Governors Meeting on: 19.11.25

Wickford Primary School believes all pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and trips independent of their parent/carers' financial means.

1 Introduction

1.1 All education during school hours is free. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum with the exception of swimming where we ask for a voluntary contribution or music tuition (see below).

1.2 Definitions

Charge: the fee payable for a specifically defined activity

Refund: the return of monies previously paid for a specifically defined activity

Remission: the cancellation of / exemption from a charge that would normally be payable

2 Voluntary contributions

2.1 When organising school trips or visits that enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school invites parents/carers to contribute to the cost of the trip. All contributions are voluntary and are gratefully received.

2.2 Where 10% or more of parents/carers decline to make the requested voluntary contribution (their identity will remain confidential), or the contributions shortfall is £50 or more, the visit or activity may not take place.

2.3 If a trip/activity goes ahead, it may include children whose parents/carers have not paid any contribution. We do not treat these children differently from any others.

2.4 The following is a list of additional activities organised by the school, which require voluntary contributions from parents/carers. These activities are known as 'optional extras'. This list is not exhaustive:

- visits to museums;
- sporting activities which require transport expenses;
- outdoor adventure activities;
- visits to the theatre; musical events.
- visits to historical/geographical sites
- after school clubs

3 Residential visits

Tax-Free childcare vouchers can be used to pay for a proportion of the residential trip as this provides childcare outside of the normal school day.

3.1 When the school organises a residential visit in school time or mainly school time, which is to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum, we ask for a voluntary contribution for the education and travel expenses. An additional charge is made to cover the costs of board and lodging.

The school subsidises trips for parents/carers in receipt of benefits. However, where the school cannot afford to subsidise, it is possible that the trip will be withdrawn.

4 Music tuition

- 4.1 All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. We do not charge for this.
- 4.2 Essex Music Services charge for individual or group music tuition, this is not part of the National Curriculum. However, in order to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils, charges for music tuition within school hours for pupils eligible for free school meals or children in care will be considered for remission, and parents/carers in receipt of benefits may be exempt from payment.
- 4.3 Essex Music Services manage the booking and payments for all additional music tuition, parents/carers will be provided with information regarding this at the start of each academic year.

5 Swimming

- 5.1 We organise swimming lessons for all children. These take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum. We ask for a voluntary contribution to cover the cost to hire the pool and staff the lessons. We have use of the pool every Tuesday morning during term time and details of the contribution will be available on SchoolMoney. To keep costs at a minimum, we request contributions are paid in half term blocks. Where parents/carers cannot or are unwilling to contribute, their child will still be able to attend the lessons.

6 Clubs

Tax-Free childcare vouchers can be used to pay for school run clubs, if the club is run by an external provider the parent/carer will need to contact the provider for further guidance.

- 6.1 There is a £1 weekly charge for a teacher led club. Where we bring in outside staff, parents/carers are asked to make all payments directly to the provider. For parents/carers in receipt of benefits, the school will endeavour to subsidise their Childs' sessions on request.

7 Breakfast / Twilight Club

Tax-Free childcare vouchers can be used to pay for Breakfast and Twilight club. (the school understands these payments may be made in arrears).

- 7.1 Fees are to be paid in advance; unless payment is made by childcare vouchers Payment is due for all sessions even if a child is unable to attend on the day.

Parents/carers can change or cancel their sessions up to 1 week prior to their child attending without incurring a charge. Any change or cancellation after this point is non-refundable.

- 7.2 The parent/carer signing the club registration form is known as the 'contracting parent/carer' and is responsible for payment of all fees.
For parents/carers who are in receipt of benefits, the school will endeavour to subsidise their sessions on request.
- 7.3 Charges will apply when children are collected late from Twilight club.
- 7.4 When a parent / carer is late collecting a child after the normal school day, they will be taken to Twilight club and a late collection charge may be applied.

8 School Meals

- 8.1 The charge for a school meal will be set annually by the governing body following consideration of the catering business plan as part of the annual budget setting process. All meals taken by pupils who are not eligible for free school meals will be chargeable, and must be paid for in advance, parents/carers are expected to make prompt payment.
- 8.2 There is no charge for pupils entitled to free school meals or universal infant free school meals.

9 Loss and damage to school property

- 9.1 The School will make every effort to ensure our equipment is not lost or damaged deliberately. However, we reserve the right to ask parents/carers for a contribution to cover the cost to replace any item that we believe has been lost or damaged by their child.

10 DBS checks

- 10.1 The school will cover the cost of DBS checks for all employed staff, and volunteers that work within school.

Debt Recovery

It is accepted that on occasion arrears may arise. However, arrears cannot be allowed to accumulate. If at any time parents/carers encounter financial difficulties, please contact the school to discuss.

If debts are incurred, these have to be paid from the school budget. This means that money that should be spent on all pupils' education in school is used to pay for debts. The governing body see this as unacceptable and request that all parents/carers give the school their full support with this policy.

11. Dinner Money

- 11.1 It is allowable for a child to have 2 day's dinner credit (i.e. the child to have received two days' meals without pre-payment) Once the debt exceeds this, the office will email and text the parent/carer advising of the arrears, if the parent/carer does not respond the office will phone requesting full payment by either cash, school money, or card **or** a packed lunch is provided until the debt is cleared. If there is no response to this, it will be escalated to the Headteacher, who will contact the parent/carer and the child will be asked to wait until the end of lunch service, and may not have a choice of the full menu.

12 Trips / Swimming

- 12.1 If money is outstanding for trips and swimming, the office will email and text the parent/carer requesting a contribution is made by cash, School Money, or card payment.

13 Breakfast / Twilight club

- 13.1 It is allowable for a child to have 1 session's credit for both Breakfast and Twilight club, as it is understood late bookings may-be necessary; if fees remain unpaid the office will follow the same process as detailed in 11.1. If the arrears are not paid in full, the child will be unable to attend any further sessions. If payment is made by Childcare vouchers, it is understood these payments may be made in arrears.

If you are late collecting your child from Twilight club late fees will be applied, outstanding payments will be requested as detailed above.

14 Lettings

- 14.1 Invoices will be raised in respect of all monies due, if payment is outstanding after 30 days a second invoice will be sent and contact made via telephone to confirm receipt and obtain a payment date.

Refunds

15 Residential visits

- 15.1 If a pupil does not attend a residential activity due to illness, the school will endeavour to recover costs through the trip insurance, if successful this refund

will be passed onto the parent/carer, *please note that the travel company may retain the initial deposits.*

15.2 Where a residential trip is cancelled by the travel company, the school will endeavour to recover full refunds, which, will be passed onto the parents/carers.

15.3 Where a residential trip is cancelled by the school, parent/-carer contributions already received will be refunded, less any initial deposits withheld by the venue.

15.4 The school will be unable to issue any refund if the pupil decides they no longer wish to attend, or the parent/carer opts to withdraw their child.

16 **Music**

16.1 All refund requests must be directed to Essex Music Services.

16.2 Where a pupil fails to attend a pre-booked lesson, refunds do not apply.

17 **Swimming**

17.1 Where lessons are cancelled by the tutor or school, and payment has been made, the parent/carer may request a refund if lessons are not being continued by the pupil during the following term.

18 **Clubs**

18.1 If a pupil does not attend an activity due to illness, no refund applies.

18.2 Where clubs are cancelled by the provider / school, the income received will be held to cover the cost of the next sessions. Where pupils are not taking part in future, parents/carers should contact the provider to discuss a refund.

19 **Breakfast / Twilight club**

19.1 Refunds are in accordance with the registration form/agreement.

20 **School meals**

20.1 Where payment for a school meal is received in advance and the pupil is absent due to illness, the funds will be retained to be used for future meals.

- 20.2 If the school has to cancel meal provision for a short time, the income received in advance will be recorded against each individual pupil to be used to cover future meals, where that amounts exceeds £30 for any one pupil, the parent/carer may request a refund.
- 20.3 When a pupil leaves the school and income has been received but meals not taken, the parent/carer is entitled to request a refund where the figure exceeds £10: lesser amounts will be retained in school funds or transferred to a sibling (if applicable).

21 Educational trips / School visits

- 21.1 When a pupil is absent due to illness and does not attend, the transport/entrance cost will not be refunded where already committed. However, where possible the school will endeavour to recover costs related to the activity and, if successful, will refund the parent/carer.
- 21.2 If a trip has to be cancelled by the school, parent/carer contributions will be refunded, less any initial deposits withheld by the venue.
- 21.3 Where contributions for any activity exceed the final total cost by more than £5 per pupil, a refund will be given, excess income less than £5 per pupil will be retained in school funds. Excess expenditure will also be paid from school funds.

22 Remissions Policy

Wickford Primary School is an inclusive school. We believe that no child should miss any part of the curriculum due to financial difficulties faced by parents/carers.

The school will consider the remission of charges to parents or carers who receive the relevant support payments (in accordance with the current DfE listing) which make their child/children eligible for free school meals and for children in care.

School clubs

The school will pay 50% for any **one** club each term – parents/carers will be asked to contribute 50% of the published cost.

School swimming

We ask for 25% of the requested voluntary contribution in order to continue with the provision.

Music

Parents/carers can access additional support from Essex Music toward these costs.
(More information from the school office.)

Breakfast Club

The school will fund 100% of the daily charge for all pupils ~~who are~~ in receipt of pupil premium.

Afterschool Club

We ask that parents/carers pay 50% of the normal charges.

Trips and visitors to school

We ask parents/carers to contribute 25% of the voluntary contribution.

Year 6 Residential Trip

Parents/carers whose children are in receipt of free school or pupil premium funding are asked to contribute 50% of the cost.

Please note that the above does not apply to school meals – support for these come directly from the local authority. Please contact the office for more information.

The school will consider support for parents/carers on reduced incomes. We request an appointment is made to see the Headteacher via the school office. All meetings will be treated as confidential.

This policy will be reviewed annually and may be amended or withdrawn for financial reasons at any time.