



Policy reviewed by Governors: September 2023

Date for next review: September 2024

The Governing Body of Merridale Primary School recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including trips, clubs and residential experiences can make towards pupils' education.

The Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional, optional activities.

All education during school hours is free. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum. However, for certain activities we may charge or ask for voluntary contributions. Any charges made will not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity.

In accord with Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996, the Governors have drawn up the following charging and remissions policy. This policy will be reviewed annually. This policy shall be made available to parents or carers on request and via our school website.

Voluntary Contributions

The school may ask parents or carers for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or towards activities, for example, contributions towards fund-raising, sporting activities which require travel expenses, outdoor adventure activities, musical activities and costs associated with school trips and visits.

There is no obligation for parents to make any contribution. A child will not be excluded from an activity due to his or her parents/guardians/carer being unable to pay.

The headteacher will ensure that the following applies:

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 the activity.

Visits which occur during school hours must be provided free of charge. However, parents can be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the trip/visit/activity. In reality, the value of the requested contributions equates to the total cost of the visit and therefore if insufficient voluntary contributions are forthcoming the visit may have to be cancelled - parents must be notified of this contingency.

Pupils whose parents/carers do not contribute will not be discriminated against.

Optional activities outside of the school day

We may charge for optional, extra activities provided outside of the school day e.g. contribution to costs of extra-curricular clubs or activities. Such activities are not part of the National Curriculum or religious education, nor are they part of an examination 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 the charges were calculated.

Residential trips

Charges will be made for board and lodging, except for pupils who accrue Pupil Premium in which case a discount can be applied. Parents and carers are always encouraged to discuss their personal circumstances at the earliest opportunity with the Headteacher regarding payment for residential trips. Other charges will be made to cover costs when the number of school sessions missed by the pupils totals half or more of the number of half-days taken up by the activity. In such cases parents will be told how the charges were calculated.

All Visits

The group leader should always ensure that parents are notified as early as possible as to:

- the total cost of the visit;
- how much the school is asking each parent to voluntarily contribute towards the cost of the visit;
- how much spending/pocket money pupils will reasonably need (especially important for trips which involve a residential element);

Early notification of the above is important as this allows parents to make financial preparations.

Parental permission should be obtained by either:

- i) Signed permission slip or completed online form received back from parents/carers
- ii) Signed annual confirmation (local visit permission form) received from parents that their child is given annual permission to attend all school trips provided the

parents receive an electronic/paper copy of the trip information and are instructed to inform the school office if they do not give permission.

Music Lessons

All children study music as part of the normal School Curriculum and Years 2 and 4 receive whole class tuition from specialist music teachers from Wolverhampton Music School. Some children also receive small group Dhol drumming tuition from a specialist teacher. We do not charge for these.

Swimming

The school organises swimming lessons for children in Key Stage 2. These take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum. We make no charge for this activity. We inform parents when these lessons are to take place.

School Meals

Under the Education Act 2011 schools are permitted to charge up to the maximum cost of a school meal. The Governors have agreed to charge parents/carers £2.30 per Key Stage 2 paid meal.

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are eligible to receive a free meal under the Universal Infant Free School Meal Scheme currently in place.

To be eligible for a free school meal where no charge is made for the provision of a school meal (separate to the UIFSM) parents/carers need to be in receipt of support payments (below) and to apply via:

<https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/education-and-schools/free-school-meals>

Who is eligible?

These are the Government's eligibility criteria for benefits-related Free School Meals (FSM):

- 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. This is equal to £616.67 a month (after tax and not including any benefits you get) to qualify for benefits-related Free School Meals (FSM)

Where children do not wish to have a school meal but families are eligible, we do ask that families still apply for them as the premium attached to this benefit comes into school and

helps provide children with additional benefits such as free milk, extra help in lessons, reduced costs for some school trips, sports coaching and pastoral/welfare support etc.

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 cases of hardship will come through voluntary contributions and fundraising. The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the school and/or charges to parents.

Charging for Childcare

A charge is made for children in Nursery accessing the 30 hours provision to cover staffing costs over the lunchtime session (the lunchtime session is in addition to the 30 hours free provision).

Damage/Loss to Property

A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of school property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials), the charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide.

A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials) belonging to a third party, where the cost has been recharged to the school. The charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide.

Remissions Policy

The Headteacher, Resources (Finance) Committee or Governing Body may remit in full or part charges in respect of a pupil, if it feels it is reasonable in the circumstances. The Headteacher, Resources (Finance) Committee or Governing Body may decide not to levy charges in respect of a particular activity, if it feels it is reasonable in the circumstances.

Receipts

All income is recorded; receipts are available on request.

Monitoring & Review

The procedures in this policy will be monitored in the light of any new information and guidance which becomes available.

Paying for Information

Where parents or members of the public request copies of information under either the Data Protection Act or the Freedom of Information Act, the Governors can make a charge for providing copies of information.