

Charging and remissions Policy



Ratified by the Full Governing Body on:
To be reviewed

December 2017
September 2020

Chair of Governors Signature:

Jane Wilson

THE PINES SCHOOL

POLICY FOR CHARGING & REMISSIONS

INTRODUCTION

At The Pines School we believe that in order to enhance the children's education and make the curriculum more accessible and meaningful educational visits are an essential element. Educational visits are therefore an important aspect of our children's education and are planned as an integral part of their curriculum.

We are committed to providing quality education based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. In practice, this means the pupils have an entitlement to benefit from all educational activities and to:

- Participate fully in school curriculum
- Contribute to all aspects of school life; and
- Be valued partners in the process of education.

These objectives must be seen to inform educational activities, whether in or outside the school and are therefore integral to the process of charging for school activities and to the remission which is available to parents / guardians who are on low income. We aim:

- To make school activities accessible to all pupils regardless of family income;
- To encourage and promote external activities which give added value to the curriculum;
- To provide a process which allows activities to take place at a minimum cost to parents, pupils and to the school; and
- To respond to the wide variations in family income while not adding additional unexpected burdens to the school budget

As a Right Respecting School The Pines School do their best to ensure that all pupils are aware of their rights to maximise their potential. This is outlined in several articles of the Rights of the Child

Article 26: You have the right to help from the government if you are poor or in need.

Article 28: You have the right to a good quality education.

Educational visits at The Pines School fall into three categories:-

- 1) Half or full school day activities which are non-hazardous and occur within a 20 mile radius of the centre of Birmingham. There may be visits, for example, to a local library, museum, park, observing different architecture and buildings, or experiencing different modes of travel.

These visits are regarded as the norm for our school and no charges or voluntary financial contributions are made. The school minibus is generally used, and the governors accept financial costs for these valuable experiences.

- 2) Half, but more usually full school day activities which may be hazardous or are outside the 20 mile radius (as mentioned above). These educational visits may be to view a castle, or period buildings

in other cities, towns or villages which are non-hazardous. However, any water activities such as a canal experience in a narrow boat or a pleasure cruise on a river are regarded as hazardous. The Governing Body also accepts its financial responsibilities by supporting such activities and by meeting a proportion of the costs involved. Parents/carers are then asked to support the activity by making a voluntary contribution.

3) **Residential Ventures and Activities**

Residential activities not only give our pupils an educational experience, but also social and emotional benefits and are, therefore, important to the development of the total child. Such activities may include camping, staying in a cottage or house in the countryside or participating in a Local Educational Authority Centre or a private Activity Centre. Residential activities may take the form of an overnight stay or a seven night stay depending on the age, aptitude, needs and ability of the children. The Governing Body supports such activities and accepts some financial responsibility wherever practical.

PRINCIPLES

The Pines School is committed to equality in its educational provision for all its pupils irrespective of race, religion and gender. Therefore the Governing Body and staff have a duty to:-

- * make school activities accessible to all children regardless of family income.
- * provide a process which allows activities to take place at a minimum cost to parents, pupils and the school.
- * cost all activities and set against this their educational value so that the school is offering value for money.
- * be aware of hidden costs for example lunch money and pocket money.

Although education including materials, books, equipment and transport during school hours is free there are occasions when the school may make charges.

- 1) For board and lodging on a residential venture.
- 2) For activities which take place wholly or mainly outside school hours.
- 3) When the activities are not a necessary part of the National Curriculum or that form part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education. We will not make any charge for activities that are an essential part of the school life.

In all cases, where charges are proposed for activities parents will be notified well in advance. Staff will honour the principles set out in this policy with particular reference to the provision of a process for parents/carers to pay by instalments.

In the case of educational visits which take place during school time where certain costs have to be met staff may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the visit. In arranging an educational visit full costings are worked out and agreed by the Headteacher and the proposed expenditure shared equally. In circumstances where a high percentage of parents is not prepared to make a contribution then the visit will not take place. This is made clear in all introductory letters about proposed educational visits to parents/carers. No child will be excluded from an activity because his/her parents/carers cannot or will not make a contribution. The only time a child will not take part in an educational visit will be solely where it is not appropriate to his/her age, aptitude, ability, needs or behaviour, and where the cohesiveness of the group may be affected. The Governing Body wishes however to foster an attitude of partnership with parents/carers in which joint responsibility is accepted for financial contributions towards educational visits, rather than an expectation that all of these special activities will be provided free of charge.

If there is a financial short-fall because some children's families cannot/will not make a contribution then the Governing Body will try to meet these costs from funds at its disposal under the discretion of the Headteacher.

REMISSIONS

The school will give consideration to the remission of charges to parents or carers who receive the following support payments:

- Income Support
- Income based Job-seekers Allowance
- Student Tax Credit (where the person is not receiving Working Tax Credit as well)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Income related employment and support allowance

Pupils of families who receive these payments are also entitled to free school meals. Parents who are eligible for the remission of charges will be dealt with confidentially. The Head Teacher and Chair of Governors will authorise the remission of charges.

The school may choose to subsidise part or all of the payment of some charges for certain activities and pupils, and this will be determined by the Governing Body and Head Teacher

ADMISSIONS

There is no charge for admissions.

SCHOOL MEALS

There is no charge for pupils who are entitled to free school meals. Currently (2017) universal free school meals are provided for pupils in Reception – Year 2. Pupils who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged a set amount per day. Pupils have the option to bring sandwiches.

CONTRIBUTIONS

The Governing Body may ask for voluntary contributions to the school for general funds and/or to fund activities that will enrich our pupils' education. At The Pines we ask for a weekly contribution towards tuck. In any case where an activity cannot be afforded without voluntary funding, this will be made clear to the parents by the school. If the activity is cancelled all monies paid will be returned to parents. There is no obligation for a parent or carer to make any contribution and the school will in no way pressure parents to make a contribution.

DAMAGE TO PROPERTY AND BREAKAGES

Where school property has been wilfully damaged by a pupil the school may charge those responsible for some or all of the cost of repair or replacement. Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a pupil, and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible. Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the Head Teacher and dependent on the situation. This is also stated in the Behaviour & Discipline Policy.

Date: December 2017
Chair of Governors

VERSION 14