

# CHARGING POLICY

## **A route to a positive future :**

Committed to providing a quality education to pupils with complex needs, including autism and sensory impairment in West Berkshire and Greater Reading



**Brookfields**  
Specialist SEN School

Reviewed : Summer 2017

Due for Review : Summer 2018

Policy Holder : A Brown

## **BROOKFIELDS SCHOOL CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY**

### **Brookfields School Equalities Statement**

**All pupils at the school are offered a broad, balanced, stimulating and relevant curriculum regardless of their background, culture or ability. Each pupil is valued for who they are and what they bring to the school. We appreciate and celebrate the richness of diversity within the school community as well as the wider community. Through the work we do across the school on developing Values, we actively promote the importance of tolerance, co-operation, courage, determination, friendship and respect. Through this approach, pupils develop independence, confidence and integrity which prepares them for their future lives.**

## Purpose and background

The school wishes to make a broad programme of activities accessible to as many pupils as possible. This policy is intended to maintain a fair and coherent system of charges and remissions within the constraints of the school budget. It also defines other circumstances when the school may wish to ask for voluntary contributions. The policy is written to comply with the relevant terms of the Education Act 1996, the Education (School Sessions and Charges and Remissions Policies) (Information) (England) Regulations 1999 and the Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) Regulations 1989. It also states the school's policy for charging for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

### Policy objectives

**Charging** No pupil should have his/her access to the curriculum limited by charges. However, the school reserves the right to levy a charge in any circumstances permissible under statute as detailed below. When charges are to be made the school reserves the absolute right to determine whether the activity has to be cancelled if an insufficient number of families are prepared to pay for the activity to take place.

**Voluntary Contributions** Where a charge cannot be made (as is the often the case for activities which are an essential part of the curriculum, or religious education) parents may nevertheless be asked to make a voluntary contribution. The matter of a voluntary contribution will not be a factor in deciding whether a pupil is allowed to participate in an activity to be financed by voluntary contributions. Again, when voluntary contributions are sought, the school reserves the absolute right to determine whether the activity has to be cancelled if an insufficient number of families are prepared to make the voluntary contribution.

**Remissions** The school will apply the statutory minimum remissions to any charges that they make. However no pupil shall be placed at an educational disadvantage because of a parent's unwillingness or inability to contribute.

In the case of particular need, remission outside these parameters will be at the absolute discretion of the Headteacher.

**Information** In line with the school's Publication Scheme on Information available under the FOIA, *the costs of providing information may be charged to the recipient, these to be advised prior to the request for information being fulfilled. The decision to charge will be at the discretion of the headteacher, except that where the costs exceed the "Threshold" as defined in the FOIA, the charge will be determined in line with the formula prescribed by the Act.*

**Liability for personal property** The school does not accept liability for any items of personal property lost or damaged in school, although in exceptional circumstances a contribution to the replacement of a lost or damaged item may be made at the absolute discretion of the Headteacher.

**Liability for school property** The governors reserve the right to make a charge for replacing or repairing school buildings or property damaged or lost where this is as a result of deliberate or inappropriate action. In the event of accidental damage the school reserves the right to request parents to make a contribution towards the cost of replacement or repair.

## Management of policy

**Staff:** This policy is implemented and managed by the Headteacher

## Associated policies

*School Fund*

Publication Scheme on information available under the FOIA

## **Practice and procedures**

Organisers of activities should be clear as to whether an activity falls within the parameters for charging or voluntary contributions:

### **A - Activities which are AN ESSENTIAL PART of the national curriculum, religious education or for an approved examination:**

#### Charging

It is not *normally* possible to charge for these activities.

Where a charge is allowed (see below), it may not exceed the cost that can be apportioned to the pupil's participation. If the cost of the chargeable element of an activity is expected to exceed the sum of the charges received then the organiser should ensure funds to balance are available by reference to the Headteacher. The school may make a charge where the law permits it:

- 1 the cost of board and lodging for all residential activities, *subject to full remission being given to those pupils whose parents are receiving one of the following:*
  - Universal Credit in prescribed circumstances (the government plans to prescribe the circumstances when Universal Credit is fully rolled out)
  - Income Support (IS);
  - Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
  - support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
  - Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190 (financial year 2013/14)
  - the guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
  - an income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.
- 2 musical instrument tuition for pupils in groups of not more than 10, if the teaching is not an essential part of the either the national curriculum or a public examination syllabus,
- 3 activities that take place during lunch breaks,
- 4 the services of a non-school organisation employed during school hours,
- 5 any charges levied by the LA for services that it provides whilst applying the remission arrangements that the Authority considers appropriate,
- 6 materials used in the production of an article where the pupil's parent has indicated in advance that he/she wishes the article to be owned by the pupil, (NB where a parent declines to offer to pay for materials used in the production of an article where otherwise it would be expected that the pupil's parent would have indicated in advance that he/she wishes the article to be owned by the pupil then the pupil shall undertake the exercise but not be allowed possession of the article on completion),
- 7 public examinations, only where without good reason a student fails to complete the requirements of the examination, or an examination on the school's set list has not been studied for by the student at school, or the examination is not on the school's set list.

### Voluntary contributions

These may be asked for, but this must be done in line with the stated objectives of this policy. Organisers of activities may ask for voluntary contributions to cover the costs of:

- travel
- materials, books and equipment
- teaching costs including supply cover
- associated administrative and support staff costs
- tickets and entrance fees

The organiser is expected to have constructed a balanced budget in advance. When arranging an activity the voluntary contribution requested may be set to cover the direct cost per pupil, fixed overhead costs and where appropriate, with an allowance for a contingency.

When writing to parents the benefit and educational aims of the activity must be described along with any risks associated. A request for voluntary contributions must make it clear that:

- there is no obligation to make a contribution,
- no pupil will be treated differently or not allowed to participate according to whether a contribution has been made,
- it may be necessary to cancel an activity if voluntary contributions received are insufficient to meet the costs of the activity.

### **B - activities available to our pupils that take place outside, or mainly outside, school hours that are NOT AN ESSENTIAL PART of the national curriculum, religious education or for an approved examination ('extra-curricular activities'):**

#### Charging

A charge may be levied in order to support the wide range of additional extra-curricular activities arranged by the school. The organisers of activities will normally determine a charge to cover the costs of:

- travel, board and lodging
- materials, books and equipment
- costs of staff paid to attend the activity (not supply cover)
- associated administrative and support staff costs
- tickets and entrance fees

For an extra-curricular activity the charge should be set to cover the direct cost per pupil, fixed overhead costs and where appropriate, an allowance for a contingency to cater for any reasonable unforeseen shortfall in income or increase in expenditure.

When writing to parents the benefit and aims of the activity must be described along with any risks associated.

C – Uniformity of charges levied or voluntary contributions sought

For activities in categories A or B above, charges levied or voluntary contributions sought will usually be at the same level for all pupils undertaking the same or similar activity, and will not be set at a higher level because of any special needs of that pupil. Any remissions applicable will be applied to this level of charge or voluntary contribution.

The exception to this is where the charge (or voluntary contribution) that is set will not be sufficient to allow the activity to take place, but in any case the charge (or voluntary contribution) will still be set so that it does not exceed the cost that can be apportioned to each pupil's participation).

Signed: .....  
Policy Holder

Date: .....

Signed: .....  
Headteacher/Governor

Date: .....