

Heath Lane Nursery School



CHARGING AND REMISSION POLICY

Review Date	Date Approved by Governors	Next Review Date
March 2011		September 2014
September 2014	October 2014	September 2015
September 2015	March 2015	March 2016
March 2016	14 July 2016	Spring Term 2017
Summer 2017	13 July 2017	Summer Term 2018

CHARGING AND REMISSION POLICY

Purpose

In general, no charge can be made for admitting pupils to maintained schools. Heath Lane Nursery School runs a facility for parents and carers to enable them to work or attend their own education/college courses. This facility provides the following sessions and some of these sessions incur a charge:

8.00-8.30am	Breakfast
8.30-11.30am	Early Years Session
11.30-12.30pm	Lunch
12.30-3.30pm	Early Years Session
3.30-6.00pm	After School

See Heath Lane Nursery charging policy in Appendix A

From time to time children are offered opportunities for trips out as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that additional activities can make towards the children's personal and social education. The Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for all the children of the school and club and as additional activities.

We believe that all our children should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school and club activities and visits (curricular and extra curricular) independent of their parents financial means. This charging and remissions policy minimises the financial barriers which may prevent some children taking full advantage of all opportunities.

Refunds

Where an activity makes an unexpected surplus the school will consider making a refund. In accordance with the guidance set out within the HCC Financial Handbook for Schools', the school and club will make a refund where the surplus is either:

- 5% or more of the total cost per person, or
- £5 or more per person

Surpluses will be reimbursed in 'round amounts' only, e.g. £3 not £3.29.

Where a refund is offered, the accompanying letter will indicate that 'a surplus of £x has been made and that if the parent/guardian would like to take advantage of it they should contact the office by a date two weeks in advance. If the school and club are not contacted by that date it will assume that the refund has been donated to school funds.' All refunds will be made in cheque format in order to maintain a clear audit trail. Refunds donated to the school will be transferred to an appropriate budget heading, following approval from the Headteacher.

Where an activity makes a surplus, refunds will be issued by the Business Manager, in accordance with the school's charging and refunds policy. Any remaining balance is transferred to school funds and is used to support students on future activities.

Where an activity results in a deficit, this will be made up from the school's private account according to governor policy.

Roles and responsibilities of headteacher, other staff, governors

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

No charges will be made for:

- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the (EYFS) Curriculum
- Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours

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 no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances. This remissions policy sets out the circumstances in which charges will be waived for both nursery activities and access to children's club services.

Voluntary Contributions

The Headteacher or Governing Body may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

- any activity which takes place during school hours;
- school equipment;
- school funds generally.

The contribution must be genuinely voluntary, though, and the pupils of parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute will not be discriminated against. Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, then it will be cancelled.

The following standard paragraph is to be appended to all letters to parents regarding school outings where voluntary contributions are applicable.

"It is necessary for voluntary contributions for this visit to take place. There is no obligation to contribute but it will be necessary to have substantial voluntary contributions in order that the trip may take place. However, if we do not have sufficient voluntary contributions in fairness to all, the visit will not go ahead for any of the children."

Legislation does not prevent the school from asking parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of a given activity or visit. This contribution, however, must be optional, and with prior parent agreement.

Parents are asked therefore to contribute voluntarily towards the cost for:

- Educational visits outside the nursery environment which support the children's learning
- Visits by for example, artists, musicians and other experts, who come into school to extend the children's knowledge and experience.
- Snack/cooking ingredients.

Extended Services Fees

All children are entitled to 15 hours free EYFS education and care. Fees are then charged (as published in Appendix A). In exceptional circumstances a parent/carer may apply in writing for modification of fees in order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged children e.g

- Those children accessing a full time placement who need additional care
- Vulnerable children starting with us immediately after their third birthday before the free place funding commences (external services information to be provided).

This will be at the discretion of the Headteacher, Early Years Manager and the Governing Body.

Policy Review

This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body, June 2017.

It is due for review Summer Term 2018.

3 & 4 Year Old Funding Scheme

All three and four year olds are currently entitled to receive free place funding, up to a maximum of five sessions per week for each academic term (a session is regarded as 3 hours morning or afternoon). It is also possible to combine a child's entitlement to free sessions between 2 or more providers from the state, private and/or voluntary sector, although you will still only receive funding for a maximum of 5 sessions per week. Funding is available from the term after your child's third birthday until they are required to attend Reception class at a primary school.

If you choose Heath Lane Nursery School we will apply on your behalf each term for funding. Parents will be invoiced for any additional sessions in the usual manner.

We accept certain **childcare vouchers** from employers who offer this benefit to their eligible employees as a paper or e-voucher. Vouchers are non-taxable and exempt from NI contributions for employees, whilst offering NI savings for employers. Both parents are eligible to claim as long as they are both in employment. Further information can be found at www.childcarevouchers.co.uk.

Tax Credits are available from the HM Revenue and Customs, based on household circumstances. You may be able to access help with the cost of 'Ofsted approved' childcare if you are working for a minimum of 16 hours per week. Check online at www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits for further information and eligibility.

Commencing September 2017, working parents will be able to access 30-hour funding, if they meet the criteria laid out by the Government. The school will claim this funding in a similar way to the 15 hour funding scheme above.

REGISTRATION

For families registering for additional fee-paying sessions, a one-off, non-refundable registration fee of £10 will be required when initially registering your child.

Children are expected to do a minimum of two 3-hour sessions per week, in addition to their nursery attendance.

HOURS OF OPENING & FEES

Breakfast:	8.00am-8.30am	£3.75 (including breakfast)
Morning:	8.30am-11.30am	£18.00
Lunch*:	11.30am-12.30pm	£5.00
Afternoon:	12.30pm-3.30pm	£18.00
After School:	3.30pm-6.00pm	£17.50 (including light tea)

Fees are payable in advance on receipt of a monthly invoice.

Cheques should be made payable to 'Heath Lane Nursery School'.

Fees are reviewed termly.

Priority is given to parents wanting full day entitlement.

* The lunch time session can only be booked with an additional paid morning or afternoon session. However, if spaces are available ad-hoc sessions can be booked.

CHANGE OF ATTENDANCE PATTERN

All requests for a change in attendance pattern must be given in writing, with a minimum of 4 weeks' notice. All changes to attendance will be at the discretion of the headteacher and availability permitting.

NOTICE

4 weeks' notice must be given in writing before removal of your child from the club, or in default, 4 weeks fees are payable.

LATE COLLECTIONS

It is important that your child is collected promptly. However, if for any reason you are unable to pick your child up on time please contact us on 01442-255418, during term-time, or 01442-234687, for the Holiday Playscheme, or after 4pm.

A fee of £10 per 15 minutes is charged for late collection.

APPENDIX B

DEBT RECOVERY POLICY

General requirements

The school will take all reasonable measures to vigorously collect debts as part of its management of public funds. A debt will be written off only after all reasonable measures (commensurate with the size and nature of the debt) have been taken to recover it.

The school's debt recovery policy will observe the relevant financial regulations and guidance set out in the Financial Handbook for Schools and any other legal requirements. In particular:

- the Governing Body will not write-off any debt belonging to the school which exceeds £5. Any sums above this will be referred to the Director of Children Schools and Families for approval and the formal agreement of the County Council's Finance Director obtained before writing-off. (If any debtor has a number of debts which together exceed the write-off limit then these will be treated as a total amount).
- a formal record of any debts written off will be maintained and this will be retained for 7 years (the form of this record is specified below and set out in Appendix C).
- the school will not initiate any legal action to recover debts, but will refer any debts which it has not been able to collect (unless a decision to write-off the debt is demonstrably a reasonable course of action) to the County Secretary to consider taking legal or other action to recover the debt.
- the school will NOT write-off any debt belonging to the County Council or another party, e.g. debts for school meals. If in doubt as to the appropriate action to collect any such debts the school will seek advice promptly from officers of the County Council.

School staff are expected to follow the following procedures to secure the collection of all debts.

Recording of goods or services supplied where payment is not received in advance or 'at the point of sale'.

A record will be kept of all such supplies that details what was supplied, the value, the date(s) and the identity of the 'debtor', e.g. child, parent, hirer, etc.

Where invoices are raised these should state the date by which payment is due.

In all other cases correspondence with parents, etc. should indicate the maximum period that the school and club regards as reasonable before payment is overdue, e.g. contributions for a school trip should be received by, payment for items purchased should be sent to the school office by, etc.

The Headteacher should determine what the reasonable 'credit period' is if this is not otherwise specified.

Initial reminders

Initial reminders may be informal and made either in person (when a parent comes to collect/drop off the child) or by telephone. Normally, the Office Administrator will undertake this having built up a good relationship with the parents.

First reminder letter

A formal reminder letter should be issued one week from any informal reminder/the date of supply, *e.g. two weeks. If action is to proceed further, it is necessary to prove that all reasonable attempts have been made to recover the debt, and that these attempts have been made in a timely manner, i.e. at the time that the debt first became overdue.*

Second reminder letter

A second reminder letter will be issued one week after the First reminder letter.

Using reminder letters

Should a debt need to be taken beyond two reminder letters, formal written evidence may have to be produced. It is therefore important that at least one, but preferably two, written reminders are sent. Details of all reminders, whether verbal or in writing, should be maintained. Where a letter is issued, a copy must be retained on file.

Failure to respond to reminders / settle a debt

If no response is received from the reminders issued, a letter will be sent to the debtor advising them that the matter will be referred to the County Secretary's Department, Legal and Administration.

At the discretion of the Resources Committee the debtor may be advised that they will be required to pay in advance for all future supplies or the supply will no longer be available to them. This decision and its basis will be recorded.

Negotiation of repayment terms

Debtors are expected to settle the amount owed by a single payment as soon as possible after receiving the first 'overdue reminder'.

If a debtor asks for 'repayment terms' these may be negotiated at the discretion of the Head teacher. A record of all such agreements will be kept. A letter will be issued to the debtor confirming the agreed terms (unless this not judged necessary). The settlement period should be the shortest that is judged reasonable.

The Head teacher will decide whether any debtor who has been granted extended settlement terms will not be offered any further 'credit' and will be required to pay in advance in future.

Costs of debt recovery

Where the school incurs material additional costs in recovering a debt then the Resources Committee will decide whether to seek to recover such costs from the debtor. This decision and its basis will be recorded.

The debtor will be formally advised that they will be required to pay the additional costs incurred by the school in recovering the debt.

Reporting of outstanding debt levels

The Head teacher will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is known / can be determined at any time.

The Resources Committee will review the level of outstanding debts every term to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debts is effective.

(Monitoring of outstanding debts may be differentiated by type, e.g. if school meal debts prove more of a problem than those for lettings of premises then the frequency and degree of monitoring should reflect this).

Bad debts

Write-off of any debt requires the written approval of the Resources Committee Governing Body up to a maximum of £500.

A record of the write-off, the reason for it, and the approval for it, will be retained for 7 years.

Any debt belonging to the County Council will be referred to the appropriate officer for consideration/action without delay once the school and club has taken reasonable measures to collect the debt (i.e. has followed the reminder notification procedures set out above).

In the case of school meal debts the procedure set out in the School Meals & Milk Administration Handbook will be followed.