

Thornton Primary School

Charges and Remissions Policy

Approved by the Governing Body

September 2024

Date of next review: September 2025

Introduction:

Thornton Primary School is committed to providing quality education based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. In practice, this means the children have an entitlement to benefit from all educational activities and to:-

- Participate fully in the school curriculum
- Contribute to all aspects of school life; and
- Be a valued partner 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/carers 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 and the school; and
- To respond to the wide variations in family income while not adding additional unexpected burdens to the school budget.

The development of a range of activities forms part of the school's forward planning process and is linked to the annual budget cycle with a particular emphasis on the identification of specific resources to support such activities.

It includes a number of key factors:-

- The value of certain activities in relation to the age / needs of pupils;
- The cost of the activity set against their educational merit;
- How the activity will be funded;
- The appropriate process for raising funding;
- An assessment of whether the educational aims can be met in any other way;
- An understanding of the various types of activities involved – e.g. educational visits, music tuition, materials for practical activities such as cooking etc;
- An assessment of local facilities.

Legislation – Education During School Hours

The Department for Education in its guidance to school leaders and school governors states that “School governing bodies and local authorities, subject to the limited exceptions... cannot charge for education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment).” The essential point is that no pupil may be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind.

Remissions Policy

To ensure that access to activities is fair and that outcomes reflect intentions, Thornton Primary School will implement the following remission policy. The fundamental aim of this policy is to ensure that all pupils gain fully from everything that the school is able to offer them and is based on an understanding of the relationship between low income, entitlement and access. This policy takes

into account the very real and persistent difficulties which people on low income have in meeting the costs of educational activities for their children. Birmingham City Council defines people in receipt of Housing Benefit and their dependents as living on the margins of poverty.

As a minimum, children at Thornton Primary School, from families in receipt of Income Support and Family Tax Credit or pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding, may be exempt from charges.

Teachers will ensure that these children are not publicly identified and stigmatised. This will be accomplished by developing methods of collecting charges via the office rather than in the classroom.

Implementation

Planning, as part of the process of budget building, is essential to developing a charging policy at Thornton Primary School, which recognises equality of access. We will endeavour therefore to produce a programme of activities based on a clear set of priorities identified by the school and taking into consideration the projected number of children, cost per head and a breakdown of transportation costs, entry fees, discounts, teacher costs etc.

Such a process however, should not inhibit flexibility and the capacity of the school to take advantage of opportunities which arise during the course of the school year. These will be implemented in a way which is consistent with the school's overall policy.

This year we will not charge more than £5.00 per child for trips where it is transport only or £10.00 where there is a cost for both transport and entrance fee or charge from the provider of the activity. Where possible the school aims to make the cost of going on trips and visits as accessible as possible to parents therefore where public transport can be used then this should be the first consideration as it is often much cheaper than private coach companies.

Charging for School Activities

At Thornton Primary School we will not charge for:-

- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any books, materials, equipment or instruments);
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- Tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments during the school day;

At Thornton Primary School we may charge for:

- Any books, materials, equipment or instruments, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them;
- Optional extras * (see details below)
- Music tuition if provided outside of school hours.
- Library books that are lost or damaged beyond repair.
- Reading books that are lost or damaged beyond repair.
- ICT equipment (headphones, keyboards, mouse etc.) that have been damaged beyond repair, either deliberately or through carelessness, despite safe use instruction.

Optional Extras

These include: -

- Education provided outside of school hours that is not part of the National Curriculum
 - Transport that is not required to take the pupil to school, or to other premises where the LA/Governing Body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education;
 - Board and lodging on a residential trip;
 - Any materials, books or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
 - Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra;
 - The cost or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils may not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It may not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity, whose parents are unable or unwilling to pay the full charge.

The charge cannot exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra or the board and lodging.

Participation in an optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Voluntary Contributions

If a school activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions this will be made clear to parents/carers at the outset. It will also be made clear to parents that there is no obligation to make a contribution. It may at times be necessary therefore to cancel visits or activities if insufficient contributions are made.

The Educational Visits co-ordinator

The school has a named person who is the educational visits co-ordinator and they ensure that all communication with parents, costings, bookings and risk assessments are consistently adhered to. All communication with parents is checked by the Headteacher or a member of the senior team. The educational visits co-ordinator has had recent, relevant training from the Local Authority and often attends trips and visit themselves to see how a trip or visit works in practice. Modifications are then made to future trips and visits, including changing venues should the one attended not be considered suitable or safe for the children.

Remissions Policy Responsibility

The Governing Body has delegated responsibility to the Head Teacher to remit (wholly or partly) any charges associated with particular school activities for families where there are known financial difficulties. This matter will remain confidential to the Head Teacher and the School Business Manager.

Allowances may also be made for families with several children at the school.

This policy was adopted by the Governing Body on: 28th September 2023 and is reviewed annually.