

Bickerton Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School



Charging Policy

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| Person responsible for policy: | Paul Sweetnam |
| Approved on: | 20 th October 2022 |
| Signed: | Chair of Governors Vice Chair of Governors |
| To be reviewed: | October 2025 |



Our School Prayer

This is our school,
Let peace be here,
Let it be full of happiness.

Let love be here.
Love of one another,
Love of everyone,
Love of life itself,
And love of God.

Amen

Mission statement

Respect for oneself and others is central to our mission
of giving every child in our school
the highest standard of education and care
within a Christian community.

Our School Rules

Respect and take care of each other.
Treat others how you would like to be treated.
Share and use the school's equipment and environment carefully.
Listen to each other and to adults at school.
Help others to learn.

SECTION A: POLICIES

General

This section contains the policies that the governing body has decided shall apply to the school. Procedures specified by the head teacher to implement these policies are detailed in Section B.

The following terminology is used in this section:

“may” indicates a suggestion by the governing body to the head teacher;

“should” indicates a recommendation by the governing body to the head teacher and indicates what the governing body considers to be best practice;

“must” indicates a mandatory requirement determined by the governing body.

Where the head teacher is unable to implement any mandatory requirement specified in this section he must report the fact to the next meeting of the governing body and, in urgent matters, to the chair of governors.

Ethos, aims and expectations

The governing body is committed to a free school education for all children. This means that the general, day-to-day provision of education must be free and that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal school teaching time should be available to all pupils regardless of their parents’ ability or willingness to help to meet the cost. However, some opportunities and activities the school provides may incur costs which are over and above the normal; for such activities there may be a charge. Examples of some of these activities are given in the Section B: Procedures.

The school has the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours. Importantly, the school may ask for contributions for the benefit of the school or in support of activities organised by the school, whether during or outside school hours. Such activities include, though not exclusively, residential visits and other educational visits.

Monitoring

The head teacher must monitor the effectiveness of this policy and report to the governing body the effectiveness of the policy with, if necessary, recommendations for improvements.

The head teacher must arrange for appropriate records to be maintained and reviewed. The policy should be reviewed at least every three years.

SECTION B: PROCEDURES

In order to maintain the rich curriculum we offer, we may request contributions from parents towards activities organised by the school during or outside school hours such as swimming, gymnastics at the Wingate Centre, educational visits and visitors to school. If insufficient contributions are made for an activity, then the activity may be cancelled. Optional visits may be charged at full cost in order that they can go ahead. Again, if insufficient funds are forthcoming, the visits may not take place.

Sometimes, the school may organise activities for children and their families such as a visit to the theatre or Young Voices. Charges are made which cover the cost of tickets and transport, as well as any other costs incurred. A date is set for payments to be made. There will be a cut-off date for payments to be received, after which attendance at the event cannot be guaranteed.

For some activities such as cooking and design activities, the school may ask for contributions towards the cost of ingredients, materials and equipment where parents have expressed the wish to have the finished product.

The school may make charges for breakages or other forms of damage if that damage has not been accidental.

School uniform is stocked by Whitchurch Sports. Parents purchase uniform directly from Whitchurch Sports. The school does not stock or provide items of uniform.

Individual music tuition is organised by Music for Life and other providers and payment for lessons is met by the parents, paid directly to the provider.

We may also have some after school extra-curricular activities which are provided by outside providers. Methods of payment for these will be either through the school or direct to the provider. This will be made clear depending upon the activity and provider.

School meals are charged according to the price set by the governing body. We ask parents to pay in advance for these if possible, but this is not always possible.

Payment of charges is made using the school's online payment system – 'School Money'. Parents log into this to make payments at any time. The system also has the facility for the admin officer to prompt parents to pay and to notify them that there are outstanding payments.

If 5 or more working days have elapsed from the due date, a letter will be sent home requesting payment within 5 working days. If the letter relates to an educational visit or activities such as swimming, the letter will include the phrase, *“If the cost is causing difficulty, please come and talk with the head teacher confidentially as soon as possible so we can sort something out.”* If the letter relates to school meals and payment is not made within that timescale, another letter will be sent requesting immediate payment and requesting that parents provide a packed lunch until the debt is cleared to avoid debts mounting. If this fails, the parent will be asked to come to meet the head teacher to discuss the issue.

The school reserves the right to make charges for DBS checks for ‘volunteers’ where this volunteering is a part of their career development.

There may be occasions when we ask for small amounts of cash to be brought into school for example for charitable donations, non-uniform day or events such as the barn dance. Such occasions are infrequent. As far as possible, we try to be cashless in school.

Remissions

The governing body may wish to remit in full or in part the cost of some activities such as educational visits for some parents, for example, in the case of family hardship. When arranging a chargeable activity such parents will, in confidence, be offered remission of charges in full or in part. Authorisation for such remission will normally be made by the head teacher, or in some circumstances, by the head teacher in consultation with the chair of governors as appropriate.

Letters sent to parents informing them of a visit will include the following form of words:

“If the cost is going to cause any financial problems to anyone, please come and talk with me confidentially as soon as possible so we can sort something out. No child should miss out on this great visit for financial reasons.”

The governing body also authorises the head teacher to write off an unpaid debt up to the amount of £150. If the debt is above this amount, the head teacher should discuss the issue with the chair of governors who may authorise it or refer it to the governing body for a decision about how to proceed.

Charges to staff

The staff at Bickerton give a huge amount to the school over and above their contracted duties. In fact, the school relies on this 'good will' for it to function in the way it does. The head teacher is therefore authorised by the governing body to use discretion as to whether to allow a member of staff to do the following activities and whether a charge is to be made or not.

Personal phone calls: Staff rarely make personal phone calls. If they need to, permission is sought from the head teacher who uses discretion as to whether a charge is needed dependent upon the duration and distance of the call.

Personal photocopying: Personal photocopying may be charged at the rate set out in the SFVS, currently 5p per copy. The head teacher uses discretion as to whether a charge is made.

Use of premises: On occasions, a member of staff may ask if they can make use of part of the premises eg for a family picnic during a school holiday. Again, the head teacher uses discretion as to, first, the appropriateness of the activity taking place on school premises, and secondly, whether a charge is made.