



Thames Ditton Infant School

Charging and Remissions Policy 2024-25

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Approved By: Finance and Resources Committee

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This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

1. Introduction

Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 set out the law regarding what charges can and cannot be made for activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England and Wales. The Act prescribes what activities governing bodies may and may not charge for when taking place during or outside of school hours, including residential activities. The Act also requires that every governing body and local authority in England and Wales should have a charging and remissions policy in place and review them.

The Governors of Thames Ditton Infant School are committed to the principle of free education but also recognise that voluntary contributions by parents make a significant contribution to the provision of optional activities. This policy therefore sets out the circumstances in which charges and remission will be made and the kinds of activities for which voluntary contributions may be requested.

The circumstances where charging is permitted can be divided into the following categories:

- Education outside school hours
- Voluntary contributions
- Requests for evaluation of pupils by independent and non-maintained schools
- Breakage, damage, loss of school property, equipment and books
- Other activities arranged by third party organisations

2. Education Outside School Hours

2.1 Charging

No charges may be made for education provided wholly or mainly outside school hours where the education is provided:

- to fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus for a prescribed public examination; or
- specifically to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum; or
- specifically to fulfil statutory duties relating to religious education.

Other education provided wholly or mainly outside school hours is defined as an “optional extra”, and it is the intention of the Governing Body to charge for such optional extra activities organised by the school. The basis for calculating the charge will be the proportionate cost, where appropriate, to each participating pupil for travel costs, board and lodging, materials, books and equipment, entrance fees and insurance.

Staffing costs may also be included if they fall into the following categories:

- teaching staff employed by the Governing Body for the purpose of providing the activity; or
- teaching staff employed by the Governing Body to provide instrumental music tuition, or
- teaching staff already employed by the LA or Governing Body who have been engaged on a separate contract for services to provide the optional extra.

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, the school will apply the formula outlined in the 1996 Act to determine whether it is deemed to take place in or out of school hours. This calculation will be used as the basis for determining whether a charge may be applied.

2.2 Remission

The Governing Body delegates to the Headteacher the discretion to remit some or all of the charges for optional extra activities, where voluntary contributions, sponsorship or other forms of subsidy permit. Parents on low incomes and in receipt of relevant benefits may be entitled to full or partial remission. In such cases, the criteria applied for remission will be made clear to parents and other interested parties, but children will not be treated differently according to whether their parents have made a voluntary contribution.

3. Voluntary Contributions

The restrictions on charging for school activities do not in any way prohibit the school from seeking voluntary contributions in support of any school activity, whether during or outside school hours, residential or non-residential. Such activities shall include educational visits (e.g. to museums), visits to the school by storytellers, artists etc. These activities may be for the whole school or to specific year groups. The terms of any request for a voluntary contribution will make it clear:

- a) how the voluntary contribution has been calculated;
- b) that there is no obligation to contribute;
- c) pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution;
- d) the school reserves the right to cancel a proposed activity if the level of voluntary contributions received is insufficient to fund the activity;
- e) the process for any parents who may be entitled to partial or full remission (see 2.2 Remission)

Calculating Charges

When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay, to support those who can't. Support for cases of hardship will come through voluntary contributions and fundraising. Parents who would qualify for support are those who meet the free school meal eligibility criteria. The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the school and/or charges to parents.

4. Requests for Evaluation of Pupils by Independent and Non-Maintained Schools

4.1 Charging

The Governing Body will levy a charge on each completed request from a private school for written evidence of a pupil's performance, aptitude and attainment and other relevant information in respect of each application. The school incurs costs in producing such materials (principally the cost of supply cover) as these reports are:

- a) produced outside of the normal schedule for report-writing; and
- b) written to a format other than the usual transfer documentation.

The charge will be as determined by the Governing Body, which is £40.

4.2 Remission

There will be no remission, the Governing Body having decided that application to a private school is a voluntary act by parents.

5. Breakage, Damage, Loss of School Property, Equipment and Books

5.1 Charging

There is no statutory reference to breakage or damage to school property in the 1988 Act. The Governing Body has decided in the absence of such, to delegate to the Headteacher the discretion to seek financial compensation from parents for damage to, or breakage/loss of school property or equipment, where this was caused by deliberate or wilful behaviour on the part of their child.

6. Other Activities

There may be other activities arranged by third party organisations, which hire requisite parts of the school premises. Such activities in the past have included music tuition, chess and dancing. The charging arrangements for all of these are the direct and sole responsibility of the organisations concerned.

7. Complaints

The Governing Body has established a formal complaints procedure, **Complaints Procedure and Policy for Thames Ditton Infant School**, which is based on the Local Authority's model policy, and is available on the school website. If parents are unhappy with the application of the Charging and Remissions Policy, they should in the first instance discuss the matter with the Headteacher. A summary of the complaints procedure and policy will be made available for parents to provide guidance on how to proceed.