

Lydbrook Primary School
(including Robins Nursery)
CHARGING and DEBT POLICY

Where anything is Possible

Policy Reviewed:	Recommended annually
By:	Resources Committee
Agreed:	
Next Review:	Summer 2022

Lydbrook Primary School wishes to provide for all pupils the best possible educational opportunities available within the funds allocated by the Education Authority. The law states very clearly that education during normal school hours is to be free from any compulsory charges to parents and the school warmly endorses that principle and is committed to uphold the legal requirements.

It is recognised, however, that many educationally valuable activities have been and will continue to be dependent on financial contributions in whole or in part from parents. Without that financial support the school would find it impossible to maintain the quality and breadth of the educational programme provided for pupils. The school's concern is to keep financial contributions to a reasonable sum and to ensure as far as possible that all children are able to take part, irrespective of their circumstances.

The law recognises that charges may be made to parents in certain defined circumstances - provided that each school has identified the activities for which charges will be made and have explained the basis on which charges may be reduced or waived for certain pupils. The Governing Body of Lydbrook Primary School has decided that until further notice its policy will be as follows:

1. DAY VISITS

For visits occurring during school time the school will invite a voluntary contribution from parents to meet costs. If sufficient contributions are not received to cover the cost of the proposed visit, it may be cancelled.

2. RESIDENTIAL VISITS

The School will invite voluntary contributions from all parents to meet the full cost of the visit, including all allowable costs and board and lodging. In cases of extreme hardship charges may be waived or reduced for children whose parents make application to the School.

Allowable costs include:

- (a) The pupil's travel and subsistence costs
- (b) Materials, books, instruments and other equipment

- (c) Non teaching staff
- (d) Costs of teaching staff where separately engaged under a contract for services for the visit or activity.
- (e) Entrance fees to museums, castles and theatres.
- (f) Any additional insurance.

3. **INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS**

- 3.1 Any Local Authority tuition provided during school hours is charged for on a termly basis. Fees are partially subsidised by the school and bursaries are available for families in receipt of qualifying benefits. Parents also pay for the hire of musical instruments used in individual (or small group) tuition. This charge is waived in respect of children whose parents are in receipt of qualifying benefits.
- 3.2 Peripatetic music tuition that takes place on school premises is arranged directly between the peripatetic teachers and the parents and fees are payable direct to these teachers.

4. **CLASSROOM MATERIALS**

No charge will be made for materials or equipment. However for certain practical activities (technology, cookery etc.), parents may be invited to provide materials or ingredients on a voluntary basis. Where parents would like to possess the finished product, the school reserves the right to charge the cost or require the supply of the necessary materials.

5. **LETTINGS**

For charges relating to hire of the school facilities please refer to the Lettings Policy.

6. **EXTENDED SCHOOLS – AFTER SCHOOL AND BREAKFAST CLUB**

The School offers before and after school care. Sessions are charged at £4.00 per hour with an additional £1.00 fee payable for Early Bird sessions for Breakfast Club. An administration fee of £5.00 is also charged per term, per family (3 times a year)

Before and After School Club attendance is recorded directly on to the ParentPay system every Friday. Balance reminders will be sent out at the end of each month by text. If the debt is not paid then the payment will roll over each month until the debt is paid. If the debt exceeds £35.00 and no payment is made, then all sessions will be withdrawn until payment is made in full. Any unpaid invoices will be vigorously pursued, and the school may take legal action to recover any money owing to it.

See **Appendix A** for Before and After School Club debt implementation procedure.

7. **NURSERY FEES - ROBINS NURSERY**

- 7.1 The School offers nursery provision for children aged 2 years to pre-school.
- 7.2 Government funding is available for a maximum of 15 hours per week, 38 weeks per year for **all pupils aged 3 years** and over from the term following their third birthday.

- 7.3 Some children are entitled to Government funding for Nursery Education from the period after their 2nd birthday until they start state school.
- 7.4 The School will claim Nursery Education Funding on behalf of the parents who will be asked to complete a funding form 3 times per year.
- 7.5 Children eligible for Nursery Education Funding but attend Nursery for more than 15 hours per week will be charged for the additional hours at a rate of
- £4.00 per hour for 3 year olds
 - £5.00 per hour for 2 year olds. This is to reflect the additional needs of 2 year olds.
- 7.6 Children for Nursery Education Funding who you have chosen to allocate your entitlement in whole or in part to another setting, will be charged for attending Robins Nursery for those sessions not covered by the funding at the rates above – please also see Appendix B for additional charging information.
- 7.8 Children may stay for the lunchtime period. There is a charge of £1.50 towards the cost of lunchtime supervision. This charge will be invoiced and is payable termly, in arrears.
- 7.9 Some children may be eligible for 30 hours childcare from Government funding. Parents will need to check their eligibility using the online childcare calculator www.gov.uk/childcare calculator, and, if eligible, submit an online application. Once signed up parents will receive an eligibility code which they must provide to the Nursery. This code will then be checked with the local authority and if eligible parents can book their 30 hours place. This entitlement can also be used to cover the cost of Breakfast and Afterschool Club provision
- 7.10 Parents of children who are not eligible for Nursery Education Funding will be charged at the hourly rate set out in Appendix A. Invoices will be issued at the end of each term. Fees are payable within 14 days of receipt of invoice. If sessions are increased during the term, an additional invoice will be issued. A late payment charge of £5.00 will become payable if fees remain unpaid after 14 days from invoice.

See **Appendix B** for Nursery fees debt implementation procedure.

8. **CHANGES IN FEES**

Parents/Carers will be given a minimum of one months' notice of any changes to the published charges with reference to Before and After School Clubs, Nursery fees and School lunches

9. **PAYMENT METHODS**

We aim to be a “cashless school”. All payments can be made through the on-line payments system “Parent Pay”. Parent Pay accepts debit/credit cards for online payments or you can use a barcode letter at to pay with cash or card at a local shop.

Childcare vouchers can be used to pay for Nursery fees and Breakfast and Afterschool fees. Please check with the school office to register your voucher provider. Please note that childcare vouchers cannot be used for school lunches.

9.1 School lunches

All bookings for school lunches must be made and paid for using the ParentPay on line booking system. Lydbrook Primary School has adopted a strict **NO DEBT** policy relating to the school meal service. If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents. Every parent will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents give this policy their full support.

If parents believe that their children may qualify for entitlement to Free School Meals please contact the office for more details. This allowance is a statutory right and it is important that you use it if you qualify. We will help you all we can with your application.

Children will not be provided with a school lunch unless it is paid for, except those that are entitled to free school meals or Universal Infant Free School Meals (pupils in YR to the end of Y2). If a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance, the school may grant a debt allowance of 1 meal. However this must be paid next day and future meals must be paid in advance before any further meals can be booked or provided.

If the debt is not cleared, parents must provide a packed lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received nor a packed lunch provided, the Headteacher will phone the parent to ask them to come to school with the money or ask them to pay online immediately. Otherwise they must provide sandwiches before lunch time.

If payment of the debt is not received by the end of the week, the Headteacher reserves the right to begin legal proceedings against parents to recover the debt. Social Services may also be informed that these parents are not carrying out the responsibility of care by not providing food for their children at lunchtime.

See **Appendix C** for school lunch debt implementation procedure.

If you are struggling or in financial difficulty and are unable to pay, then please come and see Mrs Ruck to discuss the situation so that a repayment schedule can be put in place for the debt to be cleared down.

Signed:M Knight..... Chair of Resources Committee

Dated:05.07.2021.....

Reviewed Spring 2019
Reviewed Spring 2021

Approved by Resources Committee - 05.07.21

APPENDIX A - DEBT IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS

Level 1

Indicator: A child's account has a debt of £35.00.

Check 1: Are dates attended correct

Check 2: Is there a possibility that payments (including Childcare vouchers) have not been credited.

Action 1: Reminder text – a reminder is sent to the parent/carer requesting payment with 28 days

Level 2

Indicator: A child's account remains in debt of £35.00 or over for a period exceeding 28 days.

Check 1: Are dates attended correct

Check 2: Is there a possibility that payments (including Childcare vouchers) have not been credited.

Action 2: Send gentle debt letter – this letter will be sent from the School Business Manager with a Payment Plan if amount exceeds £100.00

A £5.00 late payment fee will be added to the amount owing.

Attendance at all sessions will be withdrawn until payment is made in full or until the payment plan is adhered to.

Level 3

Indicator: A child's account remains in debt of £35.00 but no more than £100.00 for a period up to 56 days.

Check 1: Are dates attended correct

Check 2: Is there a possibility that payments (including Childcare vouchers) have not been credited.

Action 3: Strong debt letter – this letter will be sent from the Headteacher. Attendance at all sessions will remain withdrawn until payment is made in full.

Level 4

Indicator: A child's account remains in debt of £100.00 or over for a period exceeding 56 days.

Check 1: Are dates attended correct

Check 2: Is there a possibility that payments (including Childcare vouchers) have not been credited.

Action 4: Bring in outside agencies – LA to advise, small claims court, Social Services.

APPENDIX B
DEBT IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE – NURSERY FEES

Level 1

Indicator: Invoice remains unpaid 14 days after date of issue

Check 1: Is the child's nursery fees funded by 3 /4 or 2 Year old funding

Check2: Is the child's nursery fees funded by Extended Hours funding

Check 3: Is there a possibility that payments (including Childcare vouchers) have not been credited.

Action 1 A further copy of the invoice will be resent with the words "reminder" stamped on it, together with a further invoice for the £5.00 late payment charge

Level 2

Indicator: Payment has not been made one week before the end of term,

Check 1: Is the child's nursery fees funded by 3 /4 or 2 Year old funding

Check2: Is the child's nursery fees funded by Extended Hours funding

Check 3: Is there a possibility that payments (including Childcare vouchers) have not been credited.

Action 2 A letter will be sent detailing the amount owing and advising that the child will not be allowed to return the following term unless and until payment of the overdue invoices is made.

Level 3

Indicator: Payment has not been made.

Check 1: Is the child's nursery fees funded by 3 /4 or 2 Year old funding

Check2: Is the child's nursery fees funded by Extended Hours funding

Check 3: Is there a possibility that payments (including Childcare vouchers) have not been credited.

Check 4: Has the parent made contact.

Action 3: Child no longer allowed to attend. As a last resort the Headteacher will write to the parents asking them to come in for a meeting to explain the non-payment of fees.

Level 4:

Indicator: Payment continues not to have been made

Check 1: Is the child's nursery fees funded by 3 /4 or 2 Year old funding

Check2: Is the child's nursery fees funded by Extended Hours funding

Check 3: Is there a possibility that payments (including Childcare vouchers) have not been credited.

Check 4: Has the parent made contact.?

Action 4: Bring in outside agencies – LA to advise, small claims court, Social Services.

Approved by Resources Committee - 05.07.21

APPENDIX C
DEBT IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE
SCHOOL MEALS

Level 1

Indicator: A child's account goes into debt

Check 1: Is this a FSM child, are dates recorded correct?

Check 2: is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?

Check 3: does this parent normally pay on time, is this just a one off?

Action 1: Send a Gentle debt reminder – This letter is already set up for use in Parentpay and will come from the School Office.

Level 2

Indicator: A child comes to school again without the debt being paid or a packed lunch.

Check 1: Is this a FSM child, are dates recorded correct?

Check 2: is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?

Check 3: has this parent made contact?

Action 2: Personal contact

Someone will phone the parent to ask them to either bring money or pay online or bring sandwiches to school before lunchtime or arrange to take their child home at lunchtime.

Level 3

Indicator: The parent does not comply with any of these options.

Check 1: Is this a FSM child, are dates recorded correct?

Check 2: is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?

Check 3: has this parent made contact?

Action 3: Send strong debt letter - This letter is already set up for use in ParentPay and will come from the Headteacher

Level 4

Indicator: The parent consistently does not comply with any of these options

Check 1: Is this a FSM child, are dates recorded correct?

Check 2: is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?

Check 3: has this parent made contact?

Action 4 Bring in outside agencies – LA to advise, small claims court, Social Services.