

Our Lady of Dolours Charges & Remissions Policy

All our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra curricular) independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimize the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

The 1996 Education Act requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities, which will be kept under regular review. The review date for this policy is recorded at the end of the document.

The policy identifies activities for which:

- charges will *not* be made.
- charges that *will* be made
- charges that may be waived
- Voluntary contributions

Separately from the matter of charging, schools may always seek voluntary contributions in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to pupils. All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their *voluntary* nature and the fact that pupils of parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have.

The Law says:

If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the parents will be notified of this from the outset.

No child will be excluded from an activity because parents are unable to pay.

If insufficient contributions are raised, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled.

If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay their child will be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

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 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 the school's basic curriculum for religious education;

Our Lady of Dolours
Catholic Primary School
Charges & Remissions
Policy
April 2021 until March
2022

Business Name

Our Lady of Dolours RC Primary
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- Tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as 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;
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school*;
- Examination re-sit(s)* if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school;
- Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours;
- Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours
 - a. if it is part of the National Curriculum, or
 - b. part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or
 - c. part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip;
- Transport provided in connection with an educational trip.
- If a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus a charge will be made.

Activities for which charges may be made:

a) Activities outside school hours

Non-residential activities (other than those listed in 3 above) which take place outside school hours but only if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside school hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours).

b) Residential activities

Board and lodging costs (but only those costs) of residential trips deemed to take place during school time. However pupils whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (see Remissions Policy below) may not be charged for board and lodging costs. Residential trips deemed to take place outside school time (other than for those activities listed in 3 above).

c) Music tuition

Music tuition for individuals or groups of up to 4 pupils

Is a residential trip in or out of school time?

If the number of school sessions on a residential trip is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the trip it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A "half day" means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

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It is the policy of Our Lady of Dolours RC Primary School that charges will (or may) be made as indicated below. Parental agreement will be obtained before a charge is made. When any trip is arranged parents will be notified of the policy for allocating places

Activities which can be charged for (with the exception of board and lodging for residential trips) are regarded as 'optional extras'. Charges will not exceed the *actual cost per pupil*

| Activity or thing which will or may be charged for | Notes | Remitted or help available |
|--|--|--|
| Charges may be made for any materials, books, instruments or equipment <i>where a parent wishes their child to own them.</i> | | LAC premium— corporate parent SEND provision - if available through allocated budget |
| Charges will be made for music tuition | The cost, or a proportion of the costs for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument or singing. Where the tuition is an optional extra for an individual pupil or groups of up to four pupils. | Pupil Premium musical tuition projects may subsidise access if possible—see Pupil Premium Strategy Statement |
| Charges will be made for the board and lodging component of residential trips | The charge will not exceed the actual cost | Remission for category A (see below) As per Pupil Premium Strategy Statement |

Remissions

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.

Families qualifying for remission or help with charges — where funding is available

If remission or help *is available* in relation to a particular charge it is indicated in the right hand column of the table above. Criteria for qualification for remission are given below.

Category A

Parents in receipt of:

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit (providing that they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an an-

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Additional categories of parents may claim help with some costs in the following circumstances:

Additional considerations

The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible we shall publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the school year so that parents can plan ahead
- We have established a system for parents to pay in installments
- When an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip—if the child remains a pupil at the school (**not beyond Year 6**)

We acknowledge that offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

Policy Agreed by the Governing Body on

Signed Chair of Governing Body

Review Date

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Our Lady of Dolours School Meals Debt Recovery Policy

The school will work closely with parents in working out a form of payment plan to help resolve any School Meal debt situation, if requested by the parent. However, where no attempt is made to clear the debt it will follow the procedure of the school's Debt Management Policy.

Information regarding school meals and free school meal eligibility is available from the School Office

Our Lady of Dolours Catholic Primary School has a clear '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 the 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.

No parent would take their child to a restaurant and expect them to be given food without paying; - the same applies at school. 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.

If a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance, the school may grant a debt allowance of one meal. However this debt must be paid next day and future meals must be paid in advance before any meal is 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 office will phone the parent to ask them to credit the SchoolComms Gateway Account immediately.

Otherwise they must provide sandwiches before lunch. If payment of the debt is not received by the next day, the governors reserve the right to begin legal proceedings to recover the debt as failure to provide a lunch for your child will be deemed as neglect.

We hope that by implementing this debt policy we are able to help parents manage school dinner money better and at the same time ensure that all money that is for children's learning is available.

The school reserves the right to refer the family to the relevant external agency when there is genuine concern in regard to a parent not providing provision for school lunches—this includes non-payment of school lunches or providing adequate packed lunches.

If you have any concerns please don't hesitate in contacting the Headteacher.

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Establishing a debt policy

Our Lady of Dolours will ensure that parents are aware of this policy in the following ways:

- A letter to parents
- The school's newsletter
- The school brochure
- The school website—see School Policies section on School Information (Home page)

This will ensure that all parents get the same message in a consistent way. This will be updated at least once each year. All parents will be provided with a copy of the policy when their child joins the school.

Debt Policy implementation

Key Information

1. All parents will be provided with a copy of the debt policy when their child joins the school.
2. All school lunches must be paid for in advance
3. No child should be sent to school with no money in their account and expect to be given a meal.
4. Parents who don't want their child to have a school lunch, should provide a healthy packed lunch—see school website for advice on Healthy Schools Packed Lunch

Level 1

Indicator: A child's record shows a debt

Check 1: is this child entitled to Free School Meals, are dates correct?

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

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

Action: send a 'Gentle debt reminder' **Appendix A** followed by Personal contact
Someone will phone the parent to ask them to bring in the money owed or bring sandwiches to school before lunchtime.

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, has there been Free School meal authorisation since level 1?

Check 2: has this parent made contact?

Action: send second letter **Appendix B**

Level 3

Indicator: The parent does not comply with any of the above options,

Action: send Strong 3rd letter **Appendix C**

Level 4

Indicator: The parent consistently does not comply with any of the options, after having received letters **A, B, and C**

Action: An appointment will be made to see The Headteacher and SBMC.

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Appendix A

xxxx/xxxxxx/xxxxx

Dear Parent /Carer of xxxxx xxxxxx,

Re: School Meal Payments for xxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxx, Yx

Our records show that despite previous reminders you have not paid dinner money for your child Class: as atyour account is showing a debt of £

In accordance with our school meal's policy, your child will not be provided with school dinners as of until the debt is settled.

Please ensure you have made sufficient provision for your child's lunch as is your legal responsibility. Once the debt has been cleared your child is welcome to resume school meals with payment in advance.

Please contact school to discuss your outstanding debt, failure to do so will result in the activation of the school's debt management recovery procedure.

Yours sincerely,

The School Administration Team
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Appendix B

xxxx/xxxxxx/xxxxx

Dear Parent /Carer of xxxxx xxxxxx

Re: School Meal Payments for xxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxx, Yx

Our records show that you have not paid dinner money for your child xxxxxxx xxxxxxx Class: xx despite a previous written reminder and a telephone call. As at xx/xx/xxxx our records show a debt of £-xx.xx the outstanding amount should be cleared ASAP. Please seek to have it paid immediately by crediting the SchoolComms Gateway Account.

If your child is in Key Stage I then they are now entitled to Free School Meals. This does not however mean that any previous debt is cancelled. All outstanding balances must be paid off.

Since non-payment for school meals affects the quality of service we offer to the children, we need to ensure that all payments are up-to-date and I am afraid that if the debt is not cleared by the end of this week it will not be possible to provide your child with a school meal. You will need to make your own arrangements for your child's lunch.

The school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings to recover the debt and to inform social services of our concerns that you are not providing a meal for your child at lunch time.

If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely,

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Appendix C

xxxx/xxxxxx/xxxxx

Dear Parent /Carer of xxxxx xxxxxx

Re: School Meal Payments for xxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxx, Yx

There is an outstanding balance remaining on your child's school meal account. You must clear the outstanding dinner money balance for xxxxxxx which at the moment stands at the amount of -£xx.xx as of the xx/xx/xxxx

The outstanding amount should be cleared ASAP. Please seek to have it paid immediately by crediting the SchoolComms Gateway Account. Once the debt is cleared please ensure the account is always in credit.

If your child is in Key Stage 1 then they are now entitled to Free School Meals. This does not however mean that any previous debt is cancelled. All outstanding balances must be paid off.

If by Thursday no payment has been received or no phone call has been received regarding a payment plan, you will be receiving a phone call from the school office to make an appointment to see the Head Teacher (Mrs Alley) and the School Business Manager Consultant)

NOTE: All meals MUST be paid for in advance in accordance with our debt policy (copy enclosed). If you don't wish for your child(ren) to have a school meal please provide them with a healthy packed lunch or arrange to take them home for lunch.

The cost of a school meal is £2.20 per day - £11 per week. For a Free School Meals Information leaflet for Parents and Guardians, detailing the eligibility criteria and how to apply for free school meals, or alternatively call 020 7641 6000 to check eligibility (this process takes less than 5 minutes). If you have any queries regarding these arrears, please contact the school office immediately.

Yours sincerely,

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