

Stockbridge Primary & Pre-School



Policy for

Charging

Inc. remissions

Approved by	Full Governing Body
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Review date	April 2025
Headteacher	<i>Geor Jeffers</i>

Signed...Steven Dunn Role... CoG...

Ownership: FGB

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Introduction

In accordance with the Education Act 1996 (sections 449-462), education during school hours is free. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum, with the exception of some individual or small-group music tuition when this is a chosen extra provision by families.

School hours are defined as those when school is actually in session (see school Prospectus) and do not include the break in the middle of the day.

We place enormous value on the enrichment opportunities offered to children through experiences which make learning come to life, these are both in and out of school premises. They have a large impact on children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and help us bring to life our school motto of 'Learning for life'.

Voluntary Contributions

Educational Visits

When organising school visits to enrich the curriculum and the educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to contribute to the cost. All contributions are voluntary. If the visit cannot take place without the voluntary contributions, we will make this clear at the outset. We also have a duty to make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution. If a visit goes ahead, it may include children whose parents/carers have not paid any contribution. We do not treat these children any differently from any others.

If a parent/carer wishes their child to take part in a school visit or event, but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, we allow the child to participate fully in the visit or activity.

We aim to ensure visits fall within an £18 limit and to use minibus transport where possible as this is the biggest cost saver.

Residential Visits

If the school organises a residential visit in school time, or mainly in school time, which is to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum, we make a charge for the child's board and lodging, the educational activities and travel expenses. We do not make any charge for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

It is expected that all parents will meet the full cost of the residential trip. To spread the cost phased payments will be facilitated. For a few families in receipt of the following benefits, we may be able to negotiate a reduction up to 50% of the cost or may be exempt from the cost of paying board and lodging.

- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £15,575 (Financial Year 2008/09);
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit; and an income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.

Charging if child does not attend

If a child does not attend an education visit or residential when they had previously paid for their visit and were subsequently absent on the day, there will be no refund other than in cases of residential or educational visits where the value of the visit is over £45. If the child is unable to attend for

medical or exceptional reasons, but has paid more than £45 contribution towards the visit, the school will reclaim the money through the school's visits insurance providers, where possible:

Hampshire County Council
Personal Accident and Travel
Insurance Group Policy
Policy Number: 0010627579

General Claims: 0345 6029429

Fax: 020 8253 7569

Email: claimsuk@aig.com

In the case of a residential, where contributions are not voluntary, the amount is divided between the number of children in the peer group attending the residential. Should a deposit not be paid but the child remain on roll and be withdrawn from the residential within 4 weeks of the start date, they will be liable for meeting the cost of the residential unless the child is absent due to illness in which case, any monies already paid towards the cost will be claimed from the insurers.

Any refund of monies will rest upon our claim being successful from the insurers. If, for any reason, the insurance company do not pay out a refund, the school will not be able to refund monies paid. This is because each visit is divided by the number of children eligible to go in order to keep costs as low as possible for every child. This is also true during a pandemic. Where feasible, the school will seek to undertake visits with companies that provide refunds during a pandemic or allow the visit to be postponed until such time that it can be safely undertaken. It is possible that insurance policies may change in these situations and the school will always seek to be upfront and honest with its stakeholders about the insurance situation where possible.

Extra-curricular activities

Out of school hours, staff provide many optional activities for which parents have given their consent in advance voluntarily. Where costs are incurred, parents will be asked to contribute to the total so that each activity is self-funding. If funds received are insufficient, the activity may be cancelled. These activities are not during school hours therefore the contribution is not voluntary but obligatory and will need to be paid up front before the first session of the club begins to secure a place. As in all cases where a charge is levied, should this prove financially difficult for parents, they may seek support from the school in meeting the cost through an email, letter or face to face meeting with the Headteacher.

If a qualified coach, who is not a member of the school staff, runs and organises these sessions, we may ask parents/carers to cover the cost incurred. We also ask for contributions to cover the cost of transport to and from sporting fixtures where applicable, where they fall outside of school hours.

Visiting Speakers & Performers

Where visiting experts or performers have been invited to support the curriculum parents/carers will be asked to contribute so that each occasion is self-funding. These are additional to the statutory curriculum and therefore chargeable. Where possible, these costs will be initially met through;

- a) finding free speakers/visitors
- b) approaching FOSS to see if they can contribute
- c) grant finding

Instrumental Music Lessons

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. We do not charge for this. There is a charge for individual or small group music tuition, since this is an additional curriculum activity, and not part of the National Curriculum. These individual or small group lessons are taught by visiting music teachers.

For individual tuition, we facilitate outside experts to work with children but they deal with all fees and charging themselves.

Where school or county owned instruments require regular maintenance parents will be asked to pay a proportional charge, notified in advance.

School Lunches

Payment is encouraged in advance for a week, month or half term period. Any outstanding payment will be followed up after a 1-week period of non-payment. Should payment not be forthcoming then the school lunch option will be removed from the family and the family will be required to provide a packed lunch for the child until the debt is settled. In the event that dinner debt reaches £25, parents will be contacted and informed that we will provide a meal for their child on that day but subsequently, they should provide a packed lunch until the dinner debt is fully cleared. Only in exceptional circumstances will school dinners be provided if the debt is not fully cleared.

Materials

Where craft, DT, cookery and other practical lessons result in finished products, pupils may keep the items if the cost of materials is less than £1. Where the cost is £1 or more, parents/carers may be asked to contribute the full cost of materials. In such cases, notification will be in advance of the lesson, with confirmation that pupils will not be excluded from the lesson itself in the event of non-payment.

Loss & Breakage

We maintain the right to recover the full cost of any damage to and/or loss of school property or equipment from the parents/carers of the children involved. The initial decision to seek recovery of costs shall be at the discretion of the Head Teacher, having due regard to the circumstances of the loss or damage.

General Considerations

In all cases where costs are involved, the school will endeavour to meet these in respect of pupils where parents' personal difficulties, subject to prior agreement by the Head Teacher.

Where a subsidy is agreed, the Head Teacher will write to the parent, within 7 days of the meeting about it, to confirm what is to be subsidised and what the parents will need to pay.

Debt Recovery

- The first step to recover a debt is to send a reminder after it is outstanding for **7** days.
- If the debt remains outstanding after a further **10** days a final demand will be issued.
- When no payment is forthcoming after the above reminders providing the debt is less than £25 the Governing Body may consider whether to write it off.
- If the debt is over £25 the Governors may refer it to the County Treasurer's Debtors Group where appropriate action will be taken.
- When a debt is written off an explanatory record giving the reasons must be written, signed and dated by the Head Teacher. This Record must be kept for inspection.

In all cases, references to "Parents/carers" include those with Parental Responsibility.

Pre-school billing & charges

As a community resource which is committed to childcare, we aim to keep our fees affordable and competitive and at such a level that we can provide childcare of the highest quality. From 1st January 2025, a flat fee of £8.45 per hour regardless of the child's age is chargeable where hours are not covered by Government funding. The fee structure is reviewed annually in April in line with the financial year to ensure that we continue to meet our objectives and remain competitive. Stockbridge Primary & Pre-School reserve the right in increase fees if required to meet our aims and objectives with four weeks written notice to parents.

Stockbridge Primary & Pre-School is open between the hours 08:50 and 15:00 Monday- Friday. Hours used by your child, not covered by the aforementioned funding schemes will be charged at the rates above.

Fees will not be collected for bank holidays or staff training days, please speak to the school office for further information.

Fees are to be paid half termly, within 10 days of the start of term. If fees are not settled within the 10 days, a late payment charge of 10% of the overall total of the half term bill will be added. If the fees are not then settled within a further 10 days, your child may lose their place. Invoices must be settled in full by the end of each half term, the final settling date will be detailed clearly on the invoice. If fees are not settled by the end of each half term, your child may lose their place. School will provide parents with an invoice during the first week of term. Our ability to pay staff rests on all invoices being settled on time.

If after the 20 days, fees are not settled in full, Stockbridge Primary & Pre-School reserves the right to stop your child's fee paying hours. Your child's place may be given to another child on the waiting list. You will remain liable for the fees incurred from the hours your child has already attended that term. In this case, in line with the school's charging policy, we will seek payment of the outstanding amount through the County Treasury Department and their debt collecting agency. When this process is in place, your child will no longer be able to take up a pre-school place until the bill is settled in full.

Deposit

A ~~non~~-refundable deposit of £40 is payable to the pre-school via cash or cheque (made payable to HCC) to secure a place. This deposit fee is refundable against your child's first set of uniform to ensure we encourage the sense of community and belonging. You will be provided with a red pre-school polo-shirt, legionnaires cap, deluxe PE bag and your child's first pre-school jumper. This deposit should be settled on or before the first stay and play session for your child. Children who qualify for the Early Years Premium are exempt from this deposit and we will use part of the premium to fund this initial start-up kit.

In the event of cancellation, monies will be refunded on receipt of goods being returned to school in new condition.

Consumables charge

Early Years funding through the Universal 15hrs for 2, 3 & 4 year olds and extended 30hrs for 3 & 4 year olds does not, in any way, cover the costs of maintain a high quality learning environment for our children. We therefore incorporate a consumables charge per session, payable by all users, including those with Government funded hours. The only exception to this is those who qualify for the Early Years Premium who are exempt from any consumables charge.

The consumables charge covers items such as snacks, nappies, nappy sacks, outdoor provisions in forest school, waterproof clothing, special visitors such as a magician or farm, parties, leaver's provisions, trips and snacks whilst on trips and much more that goes towards making a child's experience in pre-school the best it can possibly be.

The charges for consumables, from January 1st 2025 are as follows:

£2.50 per session (morning or afternoon)

£3.80 per day if a child attends both morning and afternoon sessions as part of 30hrs funding

We have worked to keep these charges at a minimum since 2018 and January 2025 will be the first increase since then.

In keeping with the principles of Early Years funding, these charges are voluntary however, it is important to note that without levying these charges, the pre-school is unable to fund the activities and level of care currently on offer and may be at risk of closure.

As a registered childcare provider, we are in receipt of early years education funding (EYE) for eligible two, three and four year olds. Where funding is not received, or extra hours are required in excess of

funded hours, then fees are payable to Stockbridge Pre-school via Scopay, our online payment system or by using Childcare vouchers.

Late collection fee

Staff are contracted for a certain number of hours each week and contact and non-contact time is carefully planned to ensure they are able to prepare the setting, assess and work on non-contact tasks. It is crucially important for the child's well-being that they are collected on time too. If you are late collecting your child, there will be a £6.00 fee charged for every 15mins or part thereof after the scheduled collection time.

We recognise that there may be, on rare occasions, exceptional circumstances that result in a late pick up. If such circumstances arise the school office must be notified as soon as possible and staff will do their best to accommodate this. In these circumstances parents may apply to the pre-school manager for a waiver of the late collection fee. The pre-school manager will have discretion to waive the fee in whole or in part and, if necessary, may request evidence in support. Late collection of children as a result of delays caused by traffic, travel or parking will not amount to exceptional circumstances.

Early Years Education (EYE) funding

At Stockbridge Primary & Pre-School we are registered to receive Early Years Education funding (hereafter called EYE) which children are eligible to receive from age 9 months.

In line with new Government guidance, all children at Stockbridge Primary & Pre-School are entitled to use either their Universal 15 hours of funded sessions per week for 38 weeks a year or, if parents qualify and the child is over 3 years old, we offer up to 15 spaces for extended 30hr funding. Parents can use this funding at any registered setting or with registered childminders, and can use their 15 hour or 30 hour entitlement in a combination of settings or childcare arrangements.

Parents need to check their eligibility on the Childcare Choices website run by the Government:

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

From 1st April 2025, we are only able to accept funded place children who commit to use all 15 funded hours with us in our one setting whether they are 2 or 3 or 4 years old.

If parents qualify for the 30hr extended funding, it is their responsibility to ensure they keep their codes for eligibility up to date as without their code and hand it to the school office whenever it has come up for review. These children may share their funded hours with another setting providing the first 15 are funded and used at Stockbridge Primary & Pre-School.

In the event that a parent forgets to renew their code or recheck their eligibility, funding from Government may be lost. As the child's place has been held for them, we will expect payment for the hours reserved up to the end of any normal notice period (6 weeks). The parent(s) can then decide whether they can afford to continue paying the fee rate for the additional hours on top of the Universal 15hrs they continue to receive or whether they wish to terminate the place at the end of the 6 weeks.

Stockbridge Primary & Pre-School currently opens for no more than 38 weeks in a school year, therefore parents are able to use the funding in a 'standard' not 'stretched' manner.

Our term dates are the same as the primary school dates and are published to parents and available on request.

Repeated regular non-attendance on days funded by EYE without written reason may mean that the council asks you to repay the funding received on your child's behalf. Please let your keyworker know if your child is going to be absent or write an email/note to say why they missed a session.

Procedure for applying for EYE:

The school office will issue a funding claim form to the parent/carer at the point of registration and then again each term in anticipation of the headcount deadline date when funding claims must be

registered. This must be filled in and brought back with proof of your child's date of birth by the deadline explained by the administrator.

You will need to declare any EYE sessions being claimed elsewhere (eg. at a day nursery, or other pre-school). If you do not sign the form by the deadline, you will not be able to claim NEF for the term. Once your form has been submitted, you will be unable to change your claim for hours for that term. Any change to hours within that term will be billed separately and at the chargeable rate published above.

Payment methods

- Cash to school office, a written receipt must be obtained
- Online payment via www.scopay.co.uk. Please see office for details
- Childcare vouchers, please see office for details

We are committed to resolving payment issues with you should circumstances arise. We are open to discussion regarding payment planning and actively encourage parents to enter into an agreement about this where necessary. The office would like to discuss all our available options with you if you are unable to pay an invoice but this should be done at the date of invoice issue, not around the date when the payment is due.

Giving notice

If you wish for your child to leave the pre-school or change settings or, you require a change of hours, we require a 6 week notice period. Should you choose to leave within this 6 weeks, sessions you have previously requested are chargeable and need to be paid in full before leaving. We are legally obliged to ensure that EYE funding is transferred to the new setting as soon as a child leaves us, this may therefore mean a substantial invoice for hours using our own hourly rate as detailed above. Consumable fees still need to be settled within this invoice as they are billed in advance and built into our budgeting model.