

Charges, Remissions & Debt Recovery Policy

Yew Tree Primary School



Date of Policy:	April 2026
Responsibility:	Governing Body Policy
Review Date:	April 2027
Consultation:	This policy was reviewed in consultation with staff and governors.

ETHOS STATEMENT

It is the aim of the Governing Body of Yew Tree Primary School to develop policies and procedures which support the school's vision of:

“Learning Without Limits”

INTRODUCTION

Education, during school hours is free and Yew Tree Primary School does not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the basic curriculum entitlement (Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum or National Curriculum).

As a school, we try:

- To make activities accessible to all pupils regardless of family income;
- To encourage and promote external activities which give added value to the curriculum;
- To respond to the wide variations in family income while not placing additional unexpected burdens on the school's budget.

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on [charging for school activities](#) and [the Education Act 1996](#), sections 449 to 462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England.

It's also based on guidance from the DfE on [statutory policies for schools and academy trusts](#)

DEFINITIONS

- **Charge:** a fee payable for specifically defined activities
- **Remission:** the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

DETAILS OF CHARGES

Admissions

No charge shall be made in respect of admission to the school unless it is for the purpose of supplementary costs associated, where applicable, with full time nursery provision:

- ***Lunchtime Provision:***
In line with DfE expectations, parents/carers are not required to pay for lunchtime cover if their child is attending Nursery full time (30hrs). The only charge, during this period, will be food costs unless a child is eligible for/registered to receive Free School Meals.
- ***Unfunded hours:***
In the event that a parent fails to validate their code for the forthcoming term, the pupil will be allowed to continue attending on a full-time basis and a charge will be made for the unfunded hours. This will be based on the current rate of funding from the Local Authority so shall be communicated at the relevant time.
- ***Optional Extras:***
Charges will only be issued to parents/carers for optional extras that are not a part of the provision entitlement for all, e.g. snacks, nappies or additional activities. Parents/carers will be able to opt out without losing their place.

Provision of Education

No charge shall be made in relation to the education of registered pupils where education is provided during school hours. Where education is provided outside of school hours, no charge shall be made provided if it is required as part of the syllabus/curriculum.

If activities are organised to enrich the curriculum, within school hours, then a voluntary contribution can be requested. If this takes place outside of school hours then it may be offered on an optional basis as long as no pupil's education entitlement is adversely affected.

Musical Instrument Tuition

All pupils study music as part of their basic curriculum entitlement, sometimes including whole class instrumental tuition, which is not charged for. However, the school may organise peripatetic music tuition, which can be provided individually or in small groups, as an optional extra which would incur a charge for parents in order to cover the costs only (i.e. no profit will be made).

Practical Subjects

No charge shall be made in relation to the resources required for practical subjects, e.g. food technology. Voluntary contributions may be requested to cover the cost of materials and ingredients provided by a school for practical subjects but no child shall be restricted from participating regardless on whether or not they have contributed.

Visits during the School Day

A voluntary contribution can be made to cover the cost of educational visits and/or activities, e.g. visitors to school, which take place during the school day. However, charges cannot be made or contributions enforced where this forms part of the curriculum. Where the level of non-payment renders a trip or activity financially unviable, consideration will be given to cancellation.

There are occasions where the school will subsidise the cost of a trip or activity in order to reduce charges for parents. There must be no occasions where a profit is made from an educational activity and all charges should be organised on a 'cost neutral' basis.

A breakdown of costs and subsidies can and should be made available for parents as requested.

Residential Visits

Where at least half of the time away from home is not normal school time, e.g. where the trip involves an overnight stay or where the work undertaken is not an integral part of the basic curriculum entitlement, the trip is classed as optional and parents can be expected to meet the full cost (board, lodging, transport, insurance and activities)

If the visit is deemed to have taken place during the school day, or is part of the required curriculum, then only the cost of board and lodging can be passed onto parents and this cannot exceed the actual cost. Parents of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding are eligible for assistance to cover these costs.

Swimming

Yew Tree Primary School organises swimming lessons for selected year groups. These take place in school time and are a part of a pupil's basic curriculum entitlement. Therefore, we make no charge for this activity (inc. transport costs).

Before/After School Clubs & Activities

Yew Tree Primary School organises a range of activities after school which are delivered by qualified instructors, visiting professionals or our own staff. Wherever possible, we try to subsidise the cost if the provision is not provided freely (i.e. through a funded programme). Where there are costs, these shall be priced on a 'cost neutral' basis and subsidies may be available.

Late Collection/Unplanned Childcare

In the event that children are repeatedly collected late at the end of the school day, the school may need to charge for staff supervision of the pupil(s) left in school. If so, parents will be informed via a late collection slip/letter and the charge will be £10 per 30mins of supervision (or parts thereof).

Loss or Damage

Parents will be expected to meet the cost of repairing or replacing any property of the school which has been purposefully damaged or destroyed by a pupil and could include any fines to be paid by Yew Tree Primary School as a result of the actions of a pupil. A charge may also apply for loss or damage of school property (including books or equipment) placed under the care of the pupil. Where laptops have been damaged, the school will place a limit on the costs recouped of £250 for accidental damage and £300 for negligent damage.

Catering/School Meals

Yew Tree Primary School is able to provide fresh food cooked on site by a third party contractor who recommended the set price for meals, which is then approved by the school, prior to being communicated to parents. The current price of meals is always available on the school's website and any changes will be communicated at least a term in advance.

All pupils, from Reception – Y2, are eligible for Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) and shall be provided with a meal free of charge. Pupils in other year groups will be provided with a Free School Meal (FSM) if they are eligible and registered with Sandwell Council. Parents can check eligibility and gain support in applying for this by speaking to the school office or accessing our website: www.yewtreeprimary.co.uk/school-meals.

There will be a charge for any child not eligible for free school meals who takes one. School meal payments are managed by our catering company, Dolce, via the School Grid website. All payments must be made in advance as any debt could result in a lunch not being provided and parents/carers being required to supply a packed lunch. Any member of our admin team can assist parents in accessing the site used by our catering company to make orders/payments.

Our catering company also operates a tuck shop for KS2 pupils. This is optional and provisions are only provided to pupils who have money credited to their account in advance. KS2 pupils have the option of bringing in a healthy snack for break if they choose not to utilise the tuck shop. EYFS & KS1 pupils are provided with daily free fruit as part of a Government funded scheme.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

As contributions to the cost of any activities within the school day are voluntary, it is important that the following information is made clear:

- There is no obligation to make a contribution
- That pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have contributed to the planned activity
- That if there are insufficient contributions received to cover the cost for all pupils, the activity may not go ahead
- Where an activity takes place outside of school hours and does not form part of the basic curriculum entitlement, this is classed as an optional extra and parents can be asked to meet the full cost of these activities

REMISSIONS

Yew Tree Primary School believes that all pupils should have equality of opportunity to gain fully from the experiences that it has to offer and recognises the real and persistent difficulties faced by families on low incomes in meeting the cost of educational activities for their children.

The school receives additional Pupil Premium funding for pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who have received this in the past six years. Therefore, there may be occasions where money from this funding can be targeted to support individuals in accessing services and experiences which incur charges. If parents wish to discuss this as an option, they should contact the school as this is at the discretion of the headteacher.

DEBT MANAGEMENT

The school operates a strict 'no debt' policy because, if debts are allowed to build up, then money intended for the education of children at our school is used to cover these debts. Our funding available to us must be used to educate our children.

Debt Procedures

- In the event of school meals, pupils may not be provided with a school meal unless it is paid for. If money has not been credited for meals booked, Dolce will contact the parents to request that payment be made. If it is an isolated incident, i.e. the parent has forgotten to make a payment or the site didn't work, Dolce will provide a meal for a maximum of three meals. However, the debt must be paid ASAP and parents/carers will be reminded of the debt after each unpaid meal (maximum three).
- If the 'three meal' limit has been reached, no further meals will be provided until payment is received. School will also be notified and will make contact with parents/carers so that an alternative lunch can be arranged.
- Parents who disregard the debt warnings and fail to provide an alternative lunch may cause a referral to be made to Children's Services for failure to meet a child's basic needs.
- If a child is absent from school and meals have been paid for, it is the parent's responsibility to cancel their child's food order so that costs are not incurred (as food is cooked to order).
- Where there are debts other than school meals (i.e. those handled by the school), parents will receive a debtor letter requesting the arrears.
- If arrears cannot be cleared, parents should contact the school office as soon as possible in order that a payment plan can be agreed.
- If a payment plan has not been discussed and no payment is received then further action may be taken.
- If arrears remain outstanding for more than two weeks, or a payment plan begins to break down, the school reserves the right to begin legal proceedings.
- If debts relating to year 6 pupils remain outstanding, these will not be written off and will be added to younger siblings' balances where necessary.
- In the certain events where debts are owed, e.g. music tuition or optional activity (outside of school time), the school reserves the right to cancel this immediately unless a repayment plan is agreed.

Appendix A – Email/Text notification of outstanding debt

Our records show that £xx is owed for your child's (_____). All activities must be paid for in line with our Charges & Remissions policy. Please arrange immediate payment via Arbor or contact the office if there are any issues with this payment.

Appendix B – Letter notification of outstanding debt (to be sent on headed paper)

School Debt Policy for Parents

Yew Tree Primary School operates a strict **NO DEBT** policy. If debts are allowed to build up money, which should be spent on the education of our children, is used to pay for debts incurred by parents. I am sure you will agree that this is unacceptable.

If parents are facing financial difficulty, or are struggling to repay the debt owed, it is vital that you contact us in order to discuss a payment plan or hardship support. However, we must stress it is important not to ignore this communication as unpaid debts can lead to further action being taken.

Where debts are unpaid, it could result in children losing access to services (e.g. music sessions, clubs etc) until the debt is paid or, in some circumstances, steps being taken to refer the debt to a recovery agency or even the Small Claims Court.

As we have contacted you previously regarding non-payment of the outstanding debt, it is vital you make contact urgently. If payment of the debt is not received, or contact made, within 10 working days, the headteacher reserves the right to begin legal proceedings.

We hope that you will work with us to clear this debt, in a manageable way, as quickly as possible.

Regards

Governing Body
Yew Tree Primary School

Appendix C – Payment Agreement Form



**Yew Tree Primary School
PAYMENT AGREEMENT FORM**

SCHOOL COPY

CHILD		DATE	
DEBT BALANCE		DEBT REASON	(e.g. school meals, residential)
COMMENTS			
AGREED ARANGEMENTS			
SIGNED	HT		DATE
	PARENT		

PARENT COPY

CHILD		DATE	
DEBT BALANCE		DEBT REASON	(e.g. school meals, residential)
COMMENTS			
AGREED ARANGEMENTS			
SIGNED	HT		DATE
	PARENT		