Charging and Remissions Policy

Burnside Primary School

Be Safe, Be Smart, Be Kind

- **Policy Owner:** School Business Manager / Headteacher
- **Approved By:** Governing Board
- **Date of Approval:** September 2025
- **Review Cycle:** Biannual (Every 2 years)
- **Next Review Date:** September 2027

1. Aims and Vision

At Burnside Primary School, our policy on charging and remissions is firmly anchored in our school motto: **Be Safe, Be Smart, Be Kind**. We believe in providing an equitable, transparent, and completely inclusive environment where all children have the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their family's financial background.

To ensure fairness, transparency, and robust governance, our school aims to:

- Establish clear, robust, and compliant processes for all school-related charges and financial remissions.
- Clearly define the specific types of school activities, provisions, and resources that can be charged for, alongside detailing when voluntary contributions will be requested.
- Ensure that no child is excluded from any curriculum-linked activity or educational experience due to a parent or carer's inability or unwillingness to contribute financially.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is formulated in strict accordance with advice from the Department for Education (DfE) regarding charging for school activities and is legally bound by Sections 449–462 of the Education Act 1996, which governs school charging laws for maintained schools in England.

Additional regulatory frameworks incorporated into this policy include:

- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010
- The DfE statutory guidance on 'Charging for school activities'

- The current DfE Governance Handbook and local authority financial value standards

3. Definitions

- **Charge:** A compulsory fee payable by parents or carers for specifically defined, non-statutory activities, provisions, or services provided by the school.
- **Remission:** The partial or complete cancellation of a charge that would otherwise be standardly payable under the school's policy guidelines.
- **Voluntary Contribution:** A non-compulsory financial donation requested by the school to fund educational visits, workshops, or activities that enrich the core curriculum during school hours.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Board

The Governing Board maintains ultimate accountability for approving this policy and monitoring its legal compliance. The board delegates operational oversight to ensure that all charging practices remain fair, legal, and aligned with school values.

4.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher (Miss Ramsay) holds operational responsibility for ensuring that all school staff are fully conversational with this policy and apply its parameters consistently across all phases of the school, from our two-year-old provision through to Key Stage 2.

4.3 School Staff

All teaching and operational staff are responsible for implementing this policy uniformly. Staff must consult the Headteacher or the School Business Manager if they are uncertain whether a planned enrichment activity falls under a statutory "free" category or constitutes an "optional extra." The Senior Leadership Team guarantees targeted administrative support and guidance to staff managing trip logs and contributions.

4.4 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to route any financial queries, application forms for remissions, or funding code validations through the school business office or directly to the Headteacher in complete confidence.

5. Where Charges Cannot Be Made

In accordance with DfE regulations, Burnside Primary School will never apply a compulsory charge for the following provisions:

5.1 Core Education and Admissions

- Formal admission applications to any phase of our school (including our school-led two-year-old and nursery provisions).
- Education provided during standard school hours, including the compulsory provision of any materials, books, stationery, musical instruments, technology tools, or physical safety equipment.
- Education provided outside of standard school hours if it forms an integral part of the National Curriculum, fulfills statutory requirements for Religious Education, or is a core requirement of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination.
- Instrumental or vocal music tuition, unless the lessons are specifically arranged at the personal, explicit request of the pupil's parent or carer.

5.2 Transport

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises where the Local Authority holds a statutory obligation to provide travel assistance.
- Transporting pupils to alternative learning hubs, local educational facilities, or sports complexes (such as swimming baths) where the Governing Board or Local Authority has organized the external provision.
- Transport provided in direct connection with an curriculum-linked educational visit taking place during school hours.

5.3 Curriculum-Linked Residential Visits

- Education provided on any multi-day residential trip that takes place wholly or mainly during standard school hours.
- The cost of supply teachers hired to provide classroom cover for those educators who are absent from the school site because they are accompanying pupils on an approved residential visit.

6. Where Charges Can Be Made

The school is legally permitted to apply charges for specific non-statutory activities, provisions, and services designated as "optional extras."

6.1 Materials and "Ownership" Items

- Any specific materials, text books, musical instruments, ingredients, or design technology resources where the parent or carer has explicitly indicated in advance that they wish their child to own the finished product to take home.

6.2 Music Tuition

- Vocal or instrumental music tuition delivered individually or to small groups of pupils, provided that the lessons have been explicitly requested by the parent or carer. These elective charges will never exceed the true cost of the provision, including specialist tutor fees, and cannot be applied if the tuition is an essential component of the National Curriculum or if the child is Looked After (LA) by a local authority.

6.3 Certain Early Years and Extended Childcare Provisions

- Extended hours, supplementary care sessions, or private-pay allocations that sit entirely outside a child's statutory government funding entitlement within our **Budding Explorers (2-Year-Old Provision)** and **Burnside Nursery**.
- Core school-run extended day childcare services accessed voluntarily via the **School Money App**, which includes:
    - **Breakfast Club:** Operating from 7:30 am to 9:00 am (with distinct price tiers for Nursery age upwards and 2-year-olds).
    - **After-School Care:** Operating from school end until 4:15 pm, 5:15 pm, or 6:00 pm.
    - **School Holiday Clubs:** Full-day or half-day out-of-term provisions.

6.4 Optional Extras (Extracurricular Out-of-Hours Activities)

- Elective educational activities, sports academies, or creative clubs provided entirely outside of standard school time that do not form part of the National Curriculum or statutory Religious Education.

When calculating the precise cost of any optional extra or extended childcare service, the school may factor in:

- Materials, books, and specialized equipment used directly during the activity.
- Non-teaching support staff costs, site caretaking overtime, or specialized coaches engaged under individual service contracts.
- Teaching staff engaged under specific out-of-hours contracts purely to facilitate the optional extra.

Any charge levied per individual pupil will never exceed the actual cost of delivering that specific activity divided equally by the number of participating pupils. The charge will never incorporate a financial subsidy to cover the costs of other participating children whose families are unable or unwilling to pay. Parental consent must always be acquired in writing before an optional extra is delivered.

6.5 Residential Board and Lodging

- The actual cost of board, lodging, and meals for a pupil on an educational residential visit, regardless of whether the trip occurs inside or outside of school hours. This charge must never exceed the exact cost charged by the residential activity provider.

7. Voluntary Contributions

To enrich our curriculum and bring learning to life, the school frequently organizes external trips, immersive historical workshops, and visits from inspirational authors or experts. While these events take place during the school day, they cannot be sustained out of our core budget alone.

Therefore, the school may ask parents and carers for **voluntary contributions** to make these valuable experiences possible.

- There is absolutely no legal obligation for a parent or carer to make any contribution.
- No child will ever be excluded from an activity, marginalized, or treated differently if their parents are unable or unwilling to make a financial contribution.
- If a parent is unable to pay, their child will still be granted an entirely equal opportunity to participate in the experience.

The Shortfall Principle: If an enrichment activity cannot be funded without voluntary financial support, this reality will be communicated transparently to all families at the outset. If insufficient voluntary contributions are received and the school cannot find alternative contingency funds or subsidies to cover the deficit, the activity will unfortunately be cancelled, and all voluntary payments previously made for that event will be refunded in full.

8. Remissions and Financial Assistance

To deliver on our commitment to **Be Kind**, Burnside Primary School maintains a supportive remissions structure to ensure that financial hardship never creates an educational barrier for our children.

8.1 Statutory Remissions for Residential Visits

Parents and carers who can provide valid documentation proving they are currently in receipt of the following statutory state benefits will be completely exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging on any school-organized residential trip:

- Income Support

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided that the family is not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and maintains an annual gross income that does not exceed the statutory limit of £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks after an individual stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit (provided the family has a verified annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of the most recent assessment periods)

8.2 Discretionary Subsidies and Hardship Funds

For families experiencing temporary or exceptional financial distress who may not qualify for the statutory benefits listed above, the school offers a confidential application pathway for discretionary financial assistance.

Parents and carers are encouraged to submit a written request or arrange a private discussion with Miss Ramsay (Headteacher) or Mrs Jen Ramsay (School Business Manager). The Governing Board allocates a dedicated annual contingency fund to subsidize elective school uniform costs, curricular clubs, or essential trips for families navigating hardship, ensuring every child remains safe, supported, and included.

9. Monitoring and Review Arrangements

The School Business Manager maintains ongoing operational monitoring of all charges, trip cost breakdowns, and app transactions to ensure strict compliance with this policy.

This policy will be formally reviewed **biannually** by the Governing Board and the Headteacher. At every formal review cycle, the document will be updated to match current DfE financial limits or statutory benefit thresholds and republished openly on the Burnside Primary School website.