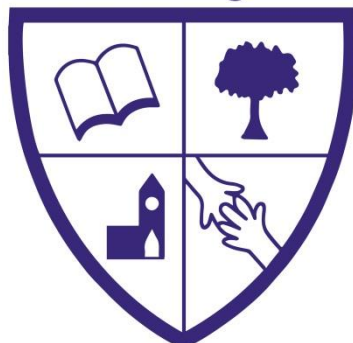


Turton & Edgworth



C.E.M.P.S.

Charging, Remissions & Debt Policy

Compiled by:	Headteacher, School Business Manager and Office Co-Ordinator
Presented to staff:	19 th March 2007 13 th September 2021
Presented to Governors:	19 th March 2007 & 22 nd June 2021
Presented to Parents/Carers:	April 2007 & 13 th September 2021
To be reviewed:	Annually
Review dates:	June 2022, May 2023, May 2024
Amendments:	May 2023 - No amendments

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The Governing Body of Turton & Edgworth C.E./Methodist Primary School recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of activities, including trips, clubs and residential experiences can make towards pupils' education. They also acknowledge the significant impact that additional activities during the school day can have on the enrichment of our curriculum.

The Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of The National Curriculum.

The following lists the categories of activities and charges made:

Free Activities:

Before, lunchtime or after school clubs run by our own staff.

Charges:

The Governing Body reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances for activities organised by the school:

Residential Experiences

If school organises a residential trip in school time, this will be fully funded by parents. If we cannot raise sufficient funds through parent's contributions, then the residential trip may be cancelled. No refunds can be given if a child cannot attend the visit for any reason as school will still be charged by the Outdoor Educational facility.

Voluntary Contributions

When organising school trips or visitors during the school day which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school invites parents and carers to contribute to the cost of the trip. Please note that each activity is carefully costed to give best value for money but relies on **all** parents or carers contributing. If we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, we may have to cancel the visit or visitors. If a trip goes ahead, it may include children whose parents or carers have not paid any contribution and the cost has been covered by school. We do not treat these children differently from any others. Parents and carers have a right to know how each trip is funded and the school will provide this information upon request.

All charitable donations to school are voluntary contributions.

Activities outside School Hours

The full cost to each pupil of all approved activities deemed to be optional extras taking place outside of school hours e.g. all external club providers.

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Music Tuition

All children study music as part of the National Curriculum and this is not charged for. Children in junior classes also have the option of having individual or small group peripatetic music lessons which are provided by Bolton Music Service. A charge is made by Bolton Music Service for these lessons and for instrument hire if required.

Swimming Lessons

Swimming lessons are organised as part of The National Curriculum and take place during the school day.

School Meals

Under new Government guidelines and with effect from 1 September 2014, children who are in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a Universal Free School Meal. If however, your child is in this year group and is also entitled to a benefits means tested Free School Meal, please do let the school know as this would enable school to receive Pupil Premium. The extra Pupil Premium funding allows the school to offer more support and specialist education to your child. If a parent / carer believes their child might be entitled to a benefits means tested Free School Meal, please contact the Benefits Office at the relevant Local Authority for more information. Children who are in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 and wish to have a school meal will be charged by the school via our online payment system - ParentPay.

Remissions

The Head Teacher may wish to remit in full or in part the cost of activities for particular groups of parents, for example, in the case of family hardship e.g. when a child is in receipt of free school meals. When arranging a chargeable activity, such parents may be invited, in confidence, for the remission of charges in full or in part.

Damaged Property

Costs incurred through loss or damage to school property and equipment (e.g. reading books, etc.). Children will be asked to cover the cost of damage to another child's property.

Debt Recovery Procedure

This procedure has been created to ensure the process is fair, consistent and transparent. From 1 January 2015 Turton & Edgworth C.E. / Methodist Primary School adopted a sensitive but strict Debt Recovery procedure relating to services within the school such as dinner money. Parents / carers will be asked to pay in advance for services provided by the school and these can be paid by using our online payment system, ParentPay.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that any money owed to the school has an impact on the school budget and may affect the resources we can provide to all children. We hope that parents understand this and will make every effort to avoid owing the school money. Should you require information relating to the amount of your own

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outstanding debt, please contact the school office on 01204 852932 or email office@turtonedgworth.blackburn.sch.uk.

The school will take all reasonable measures to collect debts as part of its management of public funds. Confidentiality will be at the forefront of any debt concerns and the reporting of debt to the Finance Committee will be reported anonymously.

The school's Debt Recovery Procedure will observe the relevant financial regulations and guidance set out in the Scheme for Financing School and any other legal requirements.

If a parent / carer believes their child might be entitled to 'Benefits Means' tested Free School Meals, please contact the Benefits Office at the relevant Local Authority for more information. Under current Government guidelines and with effect from 1 September 2014, children who are in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a Universal Free School Meal. If however, your child is in one of these year groups and is also entitled to 'Benefits Means' tested Free School Meals, please do let the school know as this would enable school to receive Pupil Premium. The extra Pupil Premium funding allows the school to offer more support and specialist education to your child.

Outstanding Debt

The school uses an online payment facility called ParentPay to record school lunches and process payments. Parents and carers are encouraged to keep their child's dinner money account in credit at all times if their child is having school meals. All parents/carers have the option to access to their child's ParentPay account - please contact the school office for further information. In the event that a child's dinner money account falls into debt, the school office staff will:

1. Send an initial text or email to the parents / carers at the end of the month.
2. If the debt remains unpaid after approximately a further 14 days (mid-month), a reminder text or email will be sent to the parents / carers.
3. If the debt remains unpaid after approximately a further 14 days (end of month), a phone call or text or email will be sent from the Head Teacher or School Business Manager to discuss the repayment options.
4. Should the parent/carers fail to make a payment within 14 days following the text/email from the Head Teacher or School Business Manager, a letter may be sent from the Head Teacher and Governing Body advising that legal proceedings may begin. If the debt is for dinner money, the Head Teacher may remove the option of school meals to stop the debt from increasing further and ask that a lunch is provided from home until a repayment scheme has been agreed by both parties. If this decision is made, parents/carers will be notified in writing. If action is to proceed further, it is necessary to prove that all reasonable attempts have been made to recover the debt, and that these attempts have been made in a timely manner. The parent may also be advised that they will be required to pay in advance for all future

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supplies/services or the supply/service may no longer be available to them. The decision and its basis will be recorded and reported to the Finance Committee anonymously.

Where a child has left the school and there is an outstanding debt:

1. A letter will be sent from the Head Teacher or School Business Manager requesting the outstanding debt payment in full by cheque by a given date. An offer to discuss alternative payment arrangements will be included in the letter.
2. Should the parent fail to send the payment by the given date, this will trigger a letter to be sent from the Governing Body advising that legal proceedings may begin. If action is to proceed further, it is necessary to prove that all reasonable attempts have been made to recover the debt, and that these attempts have been made in a timely manner.

Reporting of Outstanding Debt Levels

The Head Teacher will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is regularly monitored. Suitable, confidential records will be maintained to detail individual debts and the total value of debt to the school in order that it can be determined at any time and reported anonymously to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee will review the level of outstanding debt every term to determine whether this level is acceptable and whether action to recover debt is effective.

Negotiation or repayment terms

There are various options for repayment which will be discussed on an individual basis.

If parents / carers are unable to pay

The Head Teacher may reduce or cancel a debt in certain circumstances. A sensitive approach to debt recovery will be carried out, taking the following factors into account:

- Hardship - Where paying the debt would cause financial hardship.
- Ill Health - Where our recovery action might cause further ill health.
- Time - Where the debt is large compared to the person's income that it would take an unreasonable length of time to pay off.
- Cost - Where the value of the debt is less than the cost of recovering it.
- Multiple debt - Where a parent owes more than one debt to the school. In this situation an attempt to agree one repayment plan to include all debts will be established.

If a parent requests for repayment terms, these may be negotiated at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

A record of all such agreements entered into will be recorded and retained for seven years.

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In all cases a letter will be issued to the parent confirming the agreed terms for repayment. The settlement period should be the shortest that is judged reasonable. The Head Teacher will decide whether any parent who has been granted extended settlement terms is offered any further credit and will in future, be required to pay in advance.

Bad debts

The Debt Recovery Policy should be cross-referenced to the Scheme for Financing Schools. Write off of any debt up to £150 requires the written approval of The Finance Committee, debts between £150 and £500 will be referred to The Full Governing Body. Debts of over £500 must be reported to the Local Authority.

A record of the write-off, the reason for it and the approval of it will be retained for seven years.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. However, it may be reviewed earlier if new government regulations are introduced or if applicable.

Independent advice

Citizens Advice Bureau
Blackburn Central Library
Town Hall Street
Blackburn
BB2 1AG

Telephone 03444 889622

Website: www.blackburncab.org.uk

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