

# Charging & Remissions Policy

**Reviewed:** March 2023

**Approved:** 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (Resources Committee)



## Introduction

This policy outlines the underlying principles and values central to the ethos of Ryhill Junior, Infant and Nursery School. It promotes the rights and responsibilities of our learning community based on respect, fairness and social inclusion. This policy describes circumstances under which we may make a charge and how we will ensure any charges that are made will be to cover costs and not make a profit.

Ryhill Junior, Infant and Nursery School recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including trips, clubs and residential experiences can make towards education. Ryhill Junior, Infant and Nursery School promotes and provides these activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for all students.

The law states that education provided during school hours must be free. This definition includes materials, equipment and transport provided in school hours.

No learner may be left out of an activity because their parents or carers cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind.

The aim of the charging and remission process is:

- to make activities accessible to learners regardless of family income
- provide a process which allows activities to take place at a minimum cost to parents or carers and learners.

We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the national Curriculum.

### 1. School Meals & SchoolGrid

School meals are currently provided by our catering partner Dolce Schools Catering. Healthy, fresh nutritious meals are prepared and delivered to site daily that offer our students a wide choice.

Universal Infant Free School Meals - Since September 2014 pupils in Reception Class and Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to Universal Infant Free School Meals. Parents are asked to confirm whether they would like their child to receive a free school meal.

For the financial year 2023-24, school meals are available for pupils in KS2 (Years 3-6) at a cost of **£2.55 per day, £12.75 per week**.

Pupils of parents in receipt of certain benefits as listed in the exemptions section below may be eligible for Free School Meals. A record of pupils entitled to free school meals is maintained and regularly reviewed. The record is kept confidential. Please contact the main office if you think your child may be entitled to receive this benefit.

Dolce operate SchoolGrid to control payments for school meals and ask that all SchoolGrid accounts are kept in credit at all times and any meals taken will be deducted from this balance.

Account holders can make a Payment by logging on to their SchoolGrid account and clicking [account] - [make card payment]. This can be topped up as often as they like and for their chosen amount.

Should an account fall into arrears, the account holder will be sent an automated arrears notification e-mail reminding them to top up their account.

If their account falls into arrears of three meals, their child's account will automatically be frozen. The account holder will need to immediately credit their SchoolGrid account (as above) as they will no longer be provided with a school meal until the arrears have been cleared.

## **2. School Milk**

Milk for the under-fives is free until the beginning of the term in which the child turns five. Please refer to the school term dates for this academic year. All children in the school also have access to water whenever they are thirsty.

Children in receipt of certain benefits as listed in the exemptions section are entitled to free school milk. These are ordered by the school on behalf of the eligible pupils and are available daily. If you are eligible and would like your child to receive free milk please inform the school office in writing so that milk can be ordered for your child.

## **3. School Trips / Visits / Residential**

When organising school trips, visits or visitors which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to contribute to the cost of the trip. All contributions are voluntary. If we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, we may cancel a trip. If a trip goes ahead, it may include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. We do not treat these children differently from any others.

The school may subsidise a visit from the School Fund at the discretion/agreement of the Governors. The subsidy applies equally to all parents.

If a parent wishes their child to take part in a school trip or event, but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, we do allow the child to participate fully in the trip or activity. Sometimes the school pays additional costs in order to support the visit. Parents have a right to know how each trip is funded. The school provides this information on request.

The following is a list of additional activities organised by the school, which require voluntary contributions from parents. These activities are known as 'optional extras'. This list is not exhaustive:

- Visits to museums; bird/animal sanctuaries, etc.
- Sporting activities which require transport expenses
- Outdoor adventure activities
- Visits to the theatre
- Musical events
- Visitors into the school

In the unlikely event that a child is absent on the day of the visit, recoverable costs will be reimbursed. On all visit letters, recoverable costs will be stated.

## **4. Residential Visits**

If the school organises a Residential Visit in school time, the school will charge for costs to cover board, lodgings and activities (on costs determined by the provider – currently

Robinwood Activity Centres) and travel costs. A non-returnable deposit is requested to secure a place.

If a child's place is cancelled by the parent, money will be refunded in accordance with the refund made by the Residential Provider – the non-returnable deposit will not be refunded. In the extreme case of a child's place being cancelled by the school, all monies paid will be refunded.

## **5. Music Tuition**

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum through the **First Access Wider Opportunities** - whole class weekly vocal and percussion sessions in Year 5 and 6. In addition to this, some children access small group music tuition which is currently funded by the school. However, this may be subject to review and become chargeable at a later date after an agreed rate between the school and Wakefield Music Services.

## **6. Breakfast Club**

The school offers a Breakfast Club starting at 7.45am each morning during term time and costs £2.00 per day. Payment for this activity is payable via ParentPay.

Parents do not have to pre-book attendance at breakfast club although we do ask that payment is daily.

## **7. Swimming**

The school organises swimming lessons for pupils in Year 5. These lessons take place in school time and are part of the schools taught curriculum. We make no charge for this activity. We inform parents and carers when these lessons are to take place and we ask parents for their written permission for their child to take part in swimming lessons.

## **8. After School Clubs**

The school sometimes provides after school clubs, including the services of a qualified sports coach, where parents are asked for a contribution towards the cost of resources.

It is necessary for the school to make a charge for these clubs and so children attending these sessions may be asked to contribute financially toward the cost of the sessions.

A club offer letter is sent to parents in advance, each half term outlining available clubs and the cost for each. Clubs can be paid for online using the facilities on ParentPay. Clubs are available on a first come first served basis.

It is not possible to reimburse parents when a pupil is absent from the school or if they decide to drop out of a club once they have secured a place.

On occasions teacher led / outside agency clubs may need to be cancelled due to staff absence. Where possible these sessions will be re-scheduled either to a different day or over a lunch time.

The school is unable to offer any exemptions or discount for pupils eligible for FSM to attend After School Clubs.

## **9. ParentPay**

Arrears are promptly identified and outstanding balances are pursued via email.

Where there is an outstanding balance and the debt is not cleared within 2 weeks a letter is posted home requesting that the debt be cleared. If this has still not been cleared after another week, a second letter is sent to inform the parent that the pupil will no longer be able to participate in the activity until the debt has been cleared.

For all outstanding debts on ParentPay a detailed report will be produced for the governors at each Resources Committee meeting to determine whether the school should take court proceedings via the county court or whether to write off the bad debt.

## **10. Damage / Loss to Property**

A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of school property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials) the charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide.

## **11. Exemptions**

Parents who have applied and are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) i.e. because they are in receipt of the following benefits are exempt from paying certain charges:

- Universal Credit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,480)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

Further details and an application forms are available from the school office - all queries are dealt with confidentially.

Please note that exemptions do not cover parents whose children are eligible for free school meals based on age i.e. pupils in Reception Class, Year 1 and Year 2 who qualify for Universal Infant Free School Meals.

## **12. Payments / Refunds**

The school uses ParentPay as its main form of managing payments from parents with the exception of school meals. ParentPay has a facility to pay electronically for breakfast club, after school clubs and trips. Parents are encouraged to pay via this online facility.

There may be times when a trip or club is cancelled and a refund is necessary. When refunds are made these will be via ParentPay.

There may also be occasions at the end of the year for example, when an account holder has a surplus dinner money balance and a refund is applicable. Refunds can be arranged by contacting Dolce Customer Care on 01924 707709 (option 1).

For more information on school meal payments, please refer back to section 1 - School Meals & SchoolGrid.

### **13. Penalty Notices (Fines for Unauthorised absences)**

Ryhill Junior, Infant and Nursery School follow Wakefield Council's guidelines on issuing penalty notices.

### **14. Monitoring and Review**

Ryhill Junior, Infant and Nursery School will regularly review the appropriateness of the Charging Policy and report on the financial implications to the Resources Committee during the academic year.