



BRADGATE
Education Partnership

Stronger Together

POLICY:

Charging, Remissions and Debt Policy

Approved: Trust Board (Finance, Audit & Risk Committee)
Review Date: June 2025
Responsible Officer: Chief Finance Officer

Ambitious
Collaborative
Ethical



BRADGATE
Education Partnership

MISSION:

Through strong collaboration between our schools, Bradgate Education Partnership is committed to providing an ambitious and inclusive education for all.

We want our children and young people to realise their full potential academically, socially and personally. We celebrate the distinctive ethos of each individual school. We ensure that all who are part of our Trust have a deep sense of belonging and a supportive opportunity to grow.



Stronger Together



VALUES:



Ambitious

We aim high and are aspirational for all.



Collaborative

We work closely together to encourage, support, challenge and share.



Ethical

We treat everyone fairly, within a culture of kindness and respect.

VISION:



PUPILS

All our pupils are equipped with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to thrive in life and make a positive difference.



SCHOOLS

All our schools provide a safe and happy space where pupils study an ambitious curriculum which unlocks their personal potential so that they achieve exceptional outcomes.



WORKFORCE

All staff have positive impact in their roles whilst feeling supported and valued both personally and professionally.



COMMUNITY

All our schools embrace the local area they serve within a deeply embedded culture of community partnership.



WIDER WORLD

All our pupils and staff understand, respect and embrace the diversity of the wider world in which they live.



SUSTAINABILITY

Across our partnership, everything we do is aligned to meet the needs of the present without compromising a sustainable future.

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1.0 Introduction

Bradgate Education Partnership is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of financial circumstances, and has established policies and procedures to ensure that no child is discriminated against by offering of school trips, activities and educational extras throughout the schools.

All education during school hours is free. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum, however there may be a charge for school dinners , pre-school and any activities that take place outside of the school day.

If debts are incurred on these activities then the cost will have to be met from the school budget which takes resources away from providing education to the pupils.

This policy is in place to ensure the repayment and recuperation of any outstanding debts incurred by a school on behalf of a pupil.

Each case is to be treated individually and the circumstances that have led to the outstanding debt will be considered to determine the best course of action, and whether it is fair and reasonable to pursue the debt in its entirety if at all. Bradgate Education Partnership is committed to adhering to legal requirements regarding charging for school food, activities and materials, and meeting all statutory guidance provided by the DfE.

2.0 Scope & Principles

This policy has also been written to ensure a consistent approach to charging and debts. It provides clarity and consistency in managing debts and provides parents and carers a clear understanding of what is expected of them.

3.0 Legal Framework

This policy will adhere to the relevant legislation and statutory guidance surrounding school payments and debt recovery, including the following:

- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2018) 'Schemes for financing schools'
- DfE (2017) 'Governance handbook'

4.0 Where Charges Cannot be Made

Charges cannot be made for the following:

- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- Admissions applications
- Education provided outside of schools hours, if it is part of the National Curriculum.
- Exam Entries if the pupil has been prepared for it in school.
- Transport to and from the school premises where the local authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the Trust Board has agreed for them to be educated.



- Educational Visits that take place during school hours
- Educational visits outside of school hours that are part of the National Curriculum.

5.0 Where charges can be made

Charges can be made for the following:

- Educational materials, books, instruments or equipment where the parents wish for the child to own them.
- Music and vocal tuition where it is not part of the national curriculum
- Community facilities
- Examination entry where the school has not prepared the pupil for the exam
- Board and Lodging for a residential pupil
- Extended Services such as Breakfast and After School clubs

6.0 Voluntary Contributions

As an exception to section 4 above the school is able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents to fund activities during school hours which would not otherwise be possible such as social outings.

7.0 Music Lessons

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. There will be no charge for this. There is a charge for individual or group music tuition if this is not part of the National Curriculum. Parents or carers should be advised of the cost in advance of registering for music lessons. Payment for lessons should be made in advance, if payments is not received then the child will not be permitted to attend the lesson.

8.0 School Lunches

Pupils in receipt of free school meals and pupils in reception and Key stage one are entitled to one free meal a day. This would be up to the value of a meal deal

All other meals should be paid for in advance.

If a parent or carer genuinely forgets to pay the school may grant a debt allowance of one meal. A letter will be sent to the parent/guardian advising the debt should be paid by **9am the following morning**. No further meals will provided and the parents/guardians will be asked to provide a packed lunch until the debt is cleared. If Parents/guardians are struggling financially they may be entitled to Free School Meals they can apply online Via Leicestershire County Council.

If a child forgets their packed lunch the school will call the parent to bring a lunch in, if the parent genuinely cannot get to the school then the child's school meal account should be topped up to cover the cost of a hot meal.



9.0 Before and After School Club

Before and After School club fees must be paid in advance. If debts are incurred then these have to be paid from the school budget and takes resources away from providing education in the school.

If a child's account goes into debt then the school will contact the parent/guardian and ask them to pay as soon as possible.

The child will be allowed to attend the club for up to 5 days, if the debt has still not been cleared after 5 days the school will contact the parent again, if no payment is received or payment plan agreed the child will no longer be permitted to attend the club

10.0 Monitoring and Collection of debts

The School:

- Will regularly review details of its debts and what recovery action is needed
- Will adhere to the privacy rights of pupils and their guardians in all cases.
- May decide to leave a case of debt recovery to the decision of Headteacher.
- May escalate management of the debt to the trust.

The Headteacher /Trust will ensure:

- Debt reminders are recorded, and retained for a period of seven years – dates and times of letters, phone calls, emails, conversations or any other correspondence.
- Instances of debt are judged on an individual basis, with consideration of the nature of the debt and the circumstances of the family involved.
- The privacy of the pupil and their family will be protected by all staff.
- The level of outstanding debt owed to the school can be determined at short notice.

The Bradgate Education Partnership :

- Will implement procedures.
- Will liaise with the School Headteacher before taking legal action against a debtor.
- Will retain any documentation in relation the debt recovery in line with the Trust retention policy (current financial year plus 6 years).
- Retain confidentiality of the debtor's details unless required to divulge by legal process.

11.0 Acceptable 'credit period'

- Where possible payment periods should be negotiated with the debtor and the Headteacher/Office Manager.



- Lines of communication should remain open at all times between the debtor and the School, to increase chance of payment and reduce the need to escalate the recovery process.
- This period of time may vary, at the discretion of the Headteacher dependent on the nature and size of the debt.

12.0 Declaring outstanding debt levels

- The outstanding debt level in school will be reviewed monthly by the Trust's Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
- The review will determine if current debt levels are acceptable and under control
- If the debt is not deemed under control and / or the school recovery process has been exhausted then consideration will be given to escalating the debt recovery procedure to Trust level.

13.0 Debt recovery procedures

Where there is an outstanding payment yet to be received and the acceptable credit period has been surpassed, the debt recovery processes will be followed. And the debt will be escalated to Trust Level

An Invoice will be raised and sent to the debtors home address outlining the value of the debt and the date it must be paid.

If at this point, the debtor makes contact with the school and engages in communication to arrange payment of the debt, the escalation will be temporarily placed on hold and the debtor will be made aware of this verbally and followed up in writing.

If payment has not been received after this date has passed then the Trust can make the decision to escalate the debt to the small claims court.