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**Charging & Remissions Policy**

Highters Heath Nursery School is committed to providing quality education based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. In practice, this means the children have an entitlement to benefit from all education activities and to:

 Participate fully in the Nursery’s curriculum;

 Contribute to all aspects of centre life;

 Be a valued partner in the process of education.

These objectives must be seen to inform educational activities, whether in or outside the centre and are, therefore, integral to the process of charging for nursery activities and to the remission which is available to parents / carers who are on a low income.

**We aim to:**

 Make nursery activities accessible to all children regardless of family income;

 Encourage and promote external activities which enhance the curriculum;

 Provide a process which allows activities to take place at a minimum cost to parents / carers, children and the nursery;

 Respond sensitively to the wide variations in family income while not adding additional nursery unexpected burdens to the nursery budget;

 Ensure parents / carers are aware of the voluntary nature of financial contributions.

**When considering activities to support and enhance the curriculum, the following considerations are always made:**

 The value of the activity in relation to age / needs of children;

 The cost of the activity set against their educational value;

 How the activity will be paid for;

 The appropriate process of raising funding;

 An assessment of whether the educational aims can be met in any other way;

 Reference to additional or hidden costs, e.g. lunch money and pocket money.

**Legislation**

**Education during Nursery hours**

The DfES in its guidance to centre governors states that "*education provided during nursery hours must be free"*. The definition of *"education"* includes materials, equipment and transport provided in centre hours, by the LA or the nursery, to carry children between the nursery and an activity. It goes on to advise that *"although nurseries cannot charge for nursery time activities, they may still invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions (in cash or in kind)*.”

 The essential point is that no child may be left out of an activity because his or her parents / carers cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind.

**Education Outside Nursery Hours**

 Parents/Carers can only be charged for activities that happen outside nursery hours when these activities are not a necessary part of the national curriculum or religious education;

 No charge can be made for activities that are an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination;

 Charges may be made for other activities that happen outside nursery hours if parents / carers agree to pay.

The Education Reform Act 1988 described activities, which can be charged for as *"optional extras".* It is up to the LA or governing body providing the activities to decide whether to make a charge.

For a residential activity taking place largely during nursery time, or essential to the education provided at the nursery, no charge may be made either for the education or the costs of travel. However, charges can be made for board and lodging in these circumstances, except for children whose parents / carers are receiving Income Support or Family Credit. The Head should tell all parents / carers of the right to claim free activities if they are in receipt of these benefits.

All relevant legislation is contained in the Educational Reform Act 1988: Sections 106-111, 117 and 188. Guidance is contained in the DES circular 2/89: Charges for Nursery Activities.

**Remissions Policy**

To ensure that access to activities becomes a reality and that outcomes reflect intentions, Highters Heath Nursery will implement the following Remission Policy.

The fundamental aim of this policy is to ensure that all children gain fully from everything the nursery is able to offer them and is based on an understanding of the relationship between low income, entitlement and access. This policy takes into account the very real and persistent difficulties which people on low income have in meeting the costs of educational activities for their children.

 For Families who are in receipt of Income Support, Council Tax or Housing Benefit, or Family Credit and are unwilling or unable to pay all or part of any cost of any educational visit/activity, no charge will be made;

 For children in receipt of Free Nursery Meals, arrangements will be made for them to receive, a packed lunch from the nursery when on a visit.

**Informing Parents / Carers**

 Highters Heath Nursery will follow DfES guidelines: *"If a charge is made for each pupil, this will not exceed the actual cost";*

 Parents / Carers will be notified of proposed trips and probable costs well in advance, and opportunities to pay in instalments will be offered.

**Implementation**

Planning is part of the process of budget building and at Highters Heath Nursery we recognise equality of access. We will, therefore, endeavour to produce a programme of activities based on a clear set of priorities identified by the Nursery and Foundation Stage requirements.

Such a process, however, will not inhibit flexibility and the capacity of the Nursery to take advantage of opportunities which arise during the course of the year. These will be implemented in a way, which is consistent with the nursery’s overall policy.

***Charging and Remissions Policy Reviewed and Ratified by Governing Body on on Thursday 27th March 2017***

***Signed by Chair of Governors – Phil Styles Dated 27/03/2017***