



Charging and Remission Policy

This policy is applicable to all regardless of gender, sexuality, religious belief or none, culture, ethnicity, ability or disability, individuals with protected characteristics and those with none; it does not determine to discriminate against any individual whilst ensuring the smooth operation of our school.

Approved by Finance and Personnel Committee:	
Date:	2024
Review Date:	2025

Introduction

At Lea Nursery School, the majority of children are in receipt of their free 15 hour entitlement. There are a limited number of 30 hour places available. The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that a wide range of additional activities can make towards each child's personal and social development in this time. E.g. cooking, short walking trips to the park or shops, special visitors, hatching eggs, butterflies, visits to the farm. The Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the children.

The school also offers additional hours that can be paid for by parents. School uniform and book bags are available and parents can pay for these. Please see Appendix 1 for the current price list.

The school aims to charge in advance in every situation to prevent parental debt to the school. Should debts accumulate, we will take all reasonable measures to vigorously collect debts as part of our management of public funds. A debt will be written off only after all reasonable measures (commensurate with the size and nature of the debt) have been taken to recover it. The school's debt recovery policy will observe the relevant financial regulations and guidance set and any other legal requirements.

Charging

Any charges made by the school must meet the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1996. The governors endorse the guiding principles contained in the Act, in particular that no child should have his/her access to the curriculum limited by charges. The Governing Body may, from time to time, amend the categories for which a charge may be made and our debt collection model will be applied to these circumstances. The Governing Body reserve the right to revise this Policy as necessary.

Charges

No charge can be made for education and care during a child's 15/30 hour entitlement. However, a voluntary contribution will be asked for activities within school. The governing body or head teacher make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the governing body or head teacher will make this clear to parents at the outset. It is important to note that no child will be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. All children will still be given an equal chance to engage in visits and activities in the nursery.

The Governing Body reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances.

- Voluntary Contributions – the Governing Body may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of any activity that takes place during school hours. At Lea Nursery we have historically suggested a weekly contribution to cover the cost of snack food. In September 2020 we moved away from this, asking parents instead to contribute fruit for snack directly. Parents are still free to make voluntary contributions should they wish to; however, we are no longer actively asking for money.
- Lunch Club the school offers lunch club sessions. For 15 hour places these sessions are over and above the 15 hour free entitlement and therefore carry a cost, which is paid for in advance of the sessions.
- Additional Nursery Sessions –The school offers some additional paid for nursery sessions. These sessions are over and above the 15 hour free entitlement and therefore carry a cost.
- Loss, damage and breakages - in cases of loss, damage or breakages of school books or activity packs on loan to parents the school make a charge to cover the cost of replacements.
- Uniform – The school sells uniform from the office and aims to do this and make no profit on this. Uniform items are paid for at the point of sale.

Charging Procedures

Payment for charged sessions in the nursery:

1. A contract for additional hours is signed. (Appendix 2)
2. The contract details the dates that payments are due and the amounts to be paid. The payments are all made in advance, for the week ahead.
3. **Initial 'overdue payment' reminder and first written 'overdue payment' reminder.** If a payment has not been received by the allocated date, nursery staff will contact the parents within 2 working days. An email will then be sent to parents to re-iterate this information, and a copy will be kept in the school files.
4. **Second written 'overdue payment' reminder** (Appendix 3). Within a week of an outstanding balance not being received an email will be sent to parents reminding them of the balance owed and setting a new deadline for payment of 2 weeks after the original deadline for payment. A copy of this email will be kept in the school's files. At this point parents will be offered the opportunity to talk to the office manager or the head teacher about the remissions procedures. Parents will be informed at this stage that their child's space in the additional paid sessions will be offered to another family if the balance is not received.
5. **Failure to settle the debt.** (Appendix 4) Should the balance remain outstanding by the extended deadline the child will not be able to attend the charges sessions at the Nursery. A letter will be sent to parents from the head teacher informing them of this, and a copy of the letter will be kept in the school's files and the finance committee will be informed.

Difficulties with payment

Debtors are expected, whenever possible, to settle the amount owed by a single payment as soon as possible after receiving the first 'overdue payment' reminder. As part of our charging process, parents are offered an opportunity to discuss difficulties with making a payment with the head teacher or office manager. It may be possible for the school to break the payments down into more manageable chunks through a payment plan, in all cases, a letter will be issued to the debtor confirming the agreed terms for repayment. The settlement period should be the shortest that is judged reasonable.

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 so large compared to the person's income that it would take an unreasonable length of time to pay it all off.
- Cost – where the value of the debt is less than the cost of recovering it.

Remissions

Where the parents of a child are unable to meet any one of the charges the school may make they can apply in confidence to the head teacher for the remission of charges in part or full. The head teacher in consultation with the finance committee will make authorisation of remission.

Writing off debt

In general, payment for all goods and services supplied by the School should be collected in advance or 'at the point of sale'. The Governing Body is empowered to write off debts providing the debt has been outstanding in excess of six months and the Governing Body is certain the debt is unrecoverable.

Reporting of outstanding debt levels

The Head teacher will ensure that the level of outstanding debt is monitored each half term. 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 as detailed in Appendix 5. These details will be reported to the finance committee with any action that has been put in place to recover the debt.

APPENDIX 1

Current Price List

Additional hours (charged by hour)	£6.27 (3-4 year olds) £7.00 (2 year olds – due to staff ratio required)
Breakfast Club	FOC Pupil Premium / Working Parent Priority Spaces
Sweatshirt	£7.50
T-shirt	£5.00
Book Bag	FOC covered by funding
Day Trips	To cover the cost of coach hire and entrance tickets. Nursery does not make a profit.
Voluntary contribution	Voluntary- parents are not directly asked to contribute.
Damage, loss or breakage of school property	Cost of replacement

Appendix 2

Extended Hours Contract

Name of Child: Date of Birth:

Keygroup: Start Date:

Nursery is open from 8:35- 15:20 each day. Please note that children cannot be dropped off or collected during story times. Story times run from 11:10- 11:30 and between 14:50- 15:20.

Please write down the hours you would like your child to start and finish.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Start time					
Finish time					
Total number of hours (including lunch)					

Total number of hours per week:

Minus total number of hours covered by the free entitlement (15/30):

Total number of paid hours per week:

Please Note:

- If your child will be staying for lunch, a healthy packed lunch must be provided.
- Charges are applied by the hour.
- Hourly charges are reviewed on a termly basis. Parents will receive one full calendar month of written notice of any amendments in charges.
- Fees are payable in advance. A payment method must be agreed prior to your child starting.
- Please note that the extended hours place will be withdrawn if fees are not paid. Please speak to the Headteacher if you are experiencing difficulties making your payment on time.
- Fees are still payable if your child is absent- this is because we have to cover anticipated staffing costs for the day.
- Written notice is required two weeks in advance if you wish to stop using extended hours for your child.

Signed (Parent/Carer): Date:.....

APPENDIX 3

Date:

Dear Parents of: *(insert name)*

Re: Outstanding fees for *(insert)*

The deadline to pay for the outstanding fees was due *(insert date)*. Despite contacting you on the *(insert date)*, we are yet to receive this payment. In order for you to retain your child's place in the extended provision we will need to receive your payment by *(insert date)* at the very latest. Failure to make payment by this date will subsequently forfeit your child's extended hour place.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that fees are payable in advance. If you have difficulties making a payment by this date or you wish to discuss this further please contact me via Reception on 01753 536492.

I thank you in advance for making your payment.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher at Lea Nursery School

Lea Nursery School

Headteacher: Linda Stay
Chair of Governors: David Maclsaac



APPENDIX 4

Date:

Dear Parents of: *(insert name)*

Re: Withdrawal of extended hours

The deadline to pay for the outstanding fees was *(insert date)*. Despite contacting you on *(insert date)* and sending you a further letter on *(insert date)* providing you with an extended deadline to make this payment, we still have not received this payment.

As a result of this, you have now forfeited your child's extended hour place. This place has now been offered to the next child on the waiting list.

If you wish to discuss this letter further please contact me via the reception desk on 01753 536492.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher at Lea Nursery School

**Appendix 5
RECORD OF DEBTS**

Debtor	Details of debt	Amount (£)	Invoice reference and date (<i>where applicable</i>).	Reason for write-off (<i>including brief details of measures taken to secure payment - as appropriate</i>).	Authorisation of write off – <i>name and signature of the authorising individual and date. Cross reference to entry in the accounts where applicable.</i>