



St Alban's

Catholic Primary and Nursery School

Member of St Clare's Catholic Multi Academy Trust, Diocese of Hallam

Let God's love shine in our lives as we grow and learn together

CHARGING & DEBT RECOVERY POLICY

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| Approved by: | Local Academy Committee | Date: 15th December 2022 |
| Last reviewed on: | 25.05.2023 | |
| Next review due by: | July 2025 | |

Introduction

The purpose of the policy is to ensure there is clarity over those items which the School will provide free of charge and for those items where there may be a charge.

The policy has been informed by the DfE guidance.

Definition of a school day

A school day is defined as 8.55 - 3.25 for FS2 & KS1 and 8.50 - 3.20 for KS2. The midday break does not form part of the school day.

Responsibilities

The Headteacher will ensure that staff are familiar with and correctly apply the policy.

The Governors will review the policy at least annually.

Policy statement

During the school day all activities that are a necessary part of the National Curriculum plus Religious Education will be provided free of charge. This includes any materials, equipment and transport to take pupils between the school and the activity. It excludes charges made for teaching an individual pupil to play a musical instrument.

Voluntary contributions

Voluntary contributions may be sought for activities during the school day which entail additional costs (for example field trips and visits). These activities are seen to enhance provision and offer new learning experiences which are of benefit, however no pupil will be prevented from participating because parents /carers are unable to make a contribution. *(However if insufficient funds are available it may be necessary to curtail or cancel a planned activity)*

- such contributions are genuinely voluntary and there is no obligation on a parent to make any contribution
- pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not parents have made a contribution
- parents will be informed of the level of contribution and whether the activity could take place if parents were reluctant to support it.

Optional activities outside of the school day – including before and after school clubs

A charge may be incurred for optional activities that are provided outside of the school day, as such activities are not part of the National Curriculum or Religious Education.

Education partly during the school day

If a non-residential activity happens partly inside the school day and partly outside of it, there will be no charge if most of the time to be spent on the activity falls within the school day. Conversely, if the bigger proportion of time spent falls outside of the normal school day, charges will be made. When such activities are arranged parents will be told how the charges were calculated.

Calculating charges

When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who can't or won't. Support for cases of hardship will come through fundraising. Parents and/or carers who qualify for support are those in receipt of eligible benefits outlined in the following link:

[Children, young people & families - City of Doncaster Council](#)

<https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/schools>

or in other exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher. The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the school and/or charges to parents and/or carers.

Application of Charges

All payments are to be made in advance and through Parentpay. Systems on Parentpay will continue this year as will arrangements for Rise and Shine and After School Clubs so that we can offer this wrap around care and enhanced curriculum for all of our children from FS1 to Y6. Frequent late booking or cancelling will incur an additional charge each time which will be debited to your ParentPay account. This is because staffing at legal ratios have to be organised in advance of the club to ensure a safe provision. We will cancel your child's place at an After School Club if they have been sent home ill and no charge will be made to yourselves.

[Rise and Shine \(previously Breakfast\) Club charges](#)

8.00 am – 8.55 am for children from Reception to Y6.

8.00 am – 9.00 am for children in Nursery FS1.

Cost available at the school office

Children can only attend Rise and Shine Club if they arrive between 8.00 am and 8.05 am each day as the gates are locked to safeguard all children on the premises. Parents are expected to bring children to the pedestrian gate entrance to the

playground at 8.00 am having already paid for the session in advance on Parentpay. Frequent late arrivals after 8.05 am will incur an additional charge each time which will be debited to your ParentPay account.

After School Club charges

End of the school day – 4.25 pm for children from Reception to Y6.

Cost available at the school office

3.30 pm – 4.30 pm for children in Nursery FS1.

3.00 pm – 4.30pm for children in Nursery FS1.

Children can only attend After School Clubs if they are regularly collected on time at 4.25pm for Reception to Y6 children and 4.30 pm for Nursery FS1 children each session. Parents are expected to collect children at the pedestrian gate entrance to the playground which will be opened at 4.20 pm and locked at 4.30 pm. Frequent early or late collections after 4.30 pm will incur an additional charge each time which will be debited to your ParentPay account.

*Please note the cost Rise and Shine and After School clubs for an FS1 Nursery child is costed at the same price as Doncaster Council recommended costs and is higher due to the smaller ratios of adults to children and the qualified staff who are needed to cover this for our youngest children in school.

System on Parentpay:

Book your child's place(s) on Parentpay by selecting days or dates, add to your basket and pay in advance.

Once you have paid for the selected days/dates/sessions, the booking will be confirmed.

If you do not have the funds on your account, the booking will not be confirmed and your child will not be added to the register. Cash payments on the day cannot be accepted.

Parents must pay in advance for both Rise and Shine and After School Clubs through Parentpay by 3.30 pm the previous day at the latest so that staffing is in place for the ratios expected in order to meet health and safety risk assessments in place.

We advise parents to set up an email balance alert so that you know funds are always available. Please do not attempt to set up a text alert as this will not work. It is vital you check emails and have email notifications set up so you are aware of all alerts and notices sent from School and Parentpay.

Nursery Charges for additional time

In order to keep costs to families at a minimum we will follow the current Doncaster Council recommended costs which are available at the school Office

You will be invoiced the termly cost and this is expected to be paid for by the specified date each term. If payments are not paid on time, your child's place will not be guaranteed the second half of that term. Please speak with Mrs Ebsworth or Mrs Hays if you are struggling to meet these payments before the deadline date as arrangements could be put in place to support your payment of these additional sessions. You can set up monthly instalments for this which may help you to meet these costs over time. Please contact Mrs Hays to arrange this.

| Term: | Deadline date to pay by: |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Autumn Term 2022 (September to Christmas holiday) | Friday 14 th October 2022 |
| Spring Term 2023 (After Christmas holiday to Easter holiday) | Friday 3 rd February 2023 |
| Summer Term 2023 (After Easter holiday to Summer holiday) | Friday 19 th May 2023 |

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| Autumn Term 2023 (September to Christmas holiday) | Friday 3 rd October 2023 |
| Spring Term 2024 (After Christmas holiday to Easter holiday) | Friday 2 nd February 2024 |
| Summer Term 2024 (After Easter holiday to Summer holiday) | Friday 17 th May 2024 |
| Autumn Term 2024 (September to Christmas holiday) | Friday 11 th October 2024 |
| Spring Term 2025 (After Christmas holiday to Easter holiday) | Friday 7 th February 2025 |
| Summer Term 2025 (After Easter holiday to Summer holiday) | Friday 16 th May 2025 |

School Meals Charges

Children in EYFS and KS1 are all entitled to Universal Free School Meals therefore no charges to parents are made for school lunches as they are free to parents and carers. This said, all families should complete documentation to seek Free School Meals as different incomes and benefits may deem you eligible for reduced payments for visits etc. Families who do not meet the FSM eligibility criteria in Appendix 1, must pay for their child's school meals in advance on ParentPay like you would for Clubs and Visits etc.

School Menus are available to view in school and also on the school's website:

<http://www.st-albans.doncaster.sch.uk/for-parents/school-meals>

The current charge for a daily school meal is available at the school office and on Parentpay and must be paid in advance on ParentPay.

Debt Recovery

We are aware of the [cost-of-living crisis](#) which is affecting us and families, however we do need to recover any debts owed to us by yourselves.

If you are frequently paying for dinners, clubs or visits late and have not already agreed a staged payment eg. Monthly instalments for residential visits with our Pupil Administration Manager, then we will follow the following procedure:

Stage 1 – Debt Recovery – Initial reminder via phone call and follow up email – from Pupil Administration Manager

A phone call will be made to you by our Pupil Administration Manager who will remind you of debts outstanding and offer support with an agreement to settle the debt as soon as is possible. The Pupil Administration Manager will follow up this initial phone call with an email to confirm all that was discussed in this initial meeting.

Stage 2 – Debt Recovery Letter 1 – reminder – from School Business Manager

If this agreement is not met by the parent/carer then you will receive a letter from our School Business Manager detailing the arrangements for the debt to be paid and to invite you into a meeting to so we can offer support. If you attend the meeting and/or comply with these arrangements then no further action will be taken providing the debt is started to be paid off in accordance with what was agreed.

Stage 3 – Debt Recovery Letter 2 – final reminder – from Headteacher

If stage 2 does not see the debt paid off, as a last resort, a second letter will be sent to you from the Headteacher who will outline the expectations which may result in stopping pupils' access to school meals if parents haven't paid these costs until they are paid in full or not allowing pupils to access clubs if parents haven't paid the necessary fees for the clubs.

This is a stage we do not want to deploy as we will support our families best we can as our children's well-being is our prior concern therefore we ask that any parents and carers who find themselves in financial difficulties speak to our Parents and Child support worker or Mrs Jane Hays in the first instance so we can plan support which will not negatively impact your child's well-being.

As an absolute last resort, once all the above has been exhausted, the Headteacher will inform the Trust Board to seek advice regarding any writing off of the debt which cannot be guaranteed.

Parents not providing enough food for their child could also be a sign of neglect, which is a safeguarding issue, as set out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (page 137). If we suspect that a pupil is not eating enough at home, we will not limit their access to school meals and we will approach parents and carers to offer support.

