



Charging & Remissions Policy

Policy Statement and Guidelines

Policy Date: Summer 2024
Review Date: Summer 2025

Policy Statement

We acknowledge that the school must meet the statutory requirements laid down in the 1996 Education Act relating to charging for educational activities. We concur with the objectives behind this aspect of the Act which are detailed below.

The objectives of the charging provisions in the 1996 Education Act are:

- a. to maintain the right to free school education
- b. to establish that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching times should be available to all pupils regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost
- c. to emphasise that there are no statutory requirements to charge for any form of education or related activity, but to give the local authority and schools the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours
- d. to confirm the right of local authorities and schools to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school, whether during or outside school hours.

Aim

Our school aims to:

- ☑ Have robust, clear processes in place for charging and remissions
- ☑ Clearly set out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will be made

Definitions

Charge: a fee payable for specifically defined activities

Remission: the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

Responsibilities

1. The Governing Body has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.
2. The Executive Headteacher is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the charging and remissions policy, and that it is being applied consistently.
3. The Director of Operations will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.
4. All Staff are responsible for:
 - ☑ Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently
 - ☑ Notifying the Director of Operations of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies
5. Parents are expected to notify staff or the Executive Headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding the charging and remissions policy.

DfE Guidance to Schools

The Governing Body recognise that legislation means we **cannot** charge for:

- ☑ Admission applications
- ☑ Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- ☑ Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- ☑ Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent;
- ☑ Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school; and
- ☑ Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school.

The school **can** charge for:

- ☐ Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them;
- ☐ Optional extras;
- ☐ Music and vocal tuition, in certain circumstances;
- ☐ Community facilities;
- ☐ School trips that are not required by the curriculum.

Activities in school hours

All education during school hours is free, including the supply of materials, books, equipment and transport provided by the school to carry students between the school and an activity.

For school-time activities with an additional cost parents may be invited to make a voluntary contribution, these may include:

- ☐ Activities within a curriculum area
- ☐ Support towards educational trips and visits
- ☐ Associated travel costs

Any request made to parents will specify if it is for a voluntary contribution which means it does not represent a charge. In terms of voluntary contributions, the school will make the following clear to parents:

- a) That the contribution is genuinely voluntary and a parent is under no obligation to pay;
- b) That students at the school will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request.
- c) From the outset, whether the trip/activity may be cancelled if insufficient voluntary contributions are raised and the school cannot fund it from another source.
- d) A voluntary contribution may be made in cash or kind (i.e. ingredients or materials for catering or technology).

Students whose parents do not make contributions will not be left out of activities or treated differently in the course of the lessons from those whose parents contribute, but any finished projects or artefacts remain the property of the school unless the Executive Headteacher decides otherwise.

Music Tuition

The school can charge for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of pupils, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff giving the tuition.

Charges cannot be made:

- ☐ If the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum
- ☐ For a pupil who is looked after by a local authority

Parents will be informed in the preceding term of any increase in charges. Parents whose children are eligible for pupil premium funding or receive free school meals may apply to the Executive Headteacher for remission of costs.

Damage/Loss to Property

There is no reference to breakages or fines in the Act's charging provision.

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 will be the cost of replacement or repair, or a lower cost may be set at the decision of the Executive Headteacher.

A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials) belonging to a third party, where the cost has been recharged to the school. The charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or a lower cost may be set at the decision of the Executive Headteacher.

Activities outside school hours*

Charges may be made for activities outside school hours when they are not:

- ☐ part of the National Curriculum
- ☐ part of Religious Education
- ☐ part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school.

Charges may be made for 'optional extra' activities provided by the school outside school hours. The Executive Headteacher decide whether a charge should be made. Parents are informed about how the charge is worked out. Where charges are made, the charge for each student is not more than the actual cost although it may cover some of the costs of teachers from the school who have been asked to supervise the activity.

Special rules apply for residential activities. For those which are required for the syllabus of a public examination or are to do with the National Curriculum or Religious Education, no charge is made for the education or the cost of travel. However, charges may be made for board and lodging except for students who receive free school meals.

*'School hours' are those when the school is actually in session and do not include the breaks. Information about the timing of the school day is included on the school website.

Trips

Residential and day trips that do not form part of the national curriculum syllabus but are available as an optional extra during a student's time at school will be charged for. Charges will be made for the full cost of the activity and the full payment must be received prior to the activity for the student to take part.

Day trips: Full payment will be required at least one week prior to the departure date.

Residential trips: The school will request a non-refundable deposit to secure a place on any residential trip. Once the trip has been confirmed by the school, parents are thereby agreeing to make all future instalments as per the payment plan set out by the school. Parents are advised that any cancellation will be at their cost. If a student is unable to attend, or no longer wishes to attend a trip the school will liaise with the travel company to see what money can be recouped (if any). The school will not bear the cost of any student cancellation or withdrawal from a trip and any loss incurred by the school will be passed on to the parent for payment.

Should a trip be over-subscribed, a fair process will be agreed to reduce the numbers. Students that are not successful will be placed on a waiting list.

Full payment will be required at least one month before the departure date or as specified on the individual trip letter. Any student who has not paid in full will not be allowed to go on a trip, but the school will still expect payment in full to cover the cost of the place that was booked and paid for by the school.

The safety of both students and staff is paramount. The school will therefore review student inclusion on any trip at two stages, at initial acceptance and again just before the trip takes place; participation will be based on a positive attitude to learning. The school reserves the right to remove a student from attending a trip if there are significant concerns regarding behaviour or conduct in any aspect of school life. In these exceptional cases, the school will not make any refund to parents.

Public Examinations

No charges are made for entering students for public examinations for which they have been prepared in school. The school enters students for each examination in a public examination syllabus for which the student has been prepared unless:

- ☐ They think there are educational reasons for not entering the student OR
- ☐ The student's parent asks in writing that the student should not be entered.

Examination fees may be charged if:

- ☐ The examination is on the set list but the student has not been prepared for it at the school.
- ☐ The examination is not on the set list but the school arranges for the student to take it.
- ☐ The student fails without good reason to complete the requirements of any public examination where the governing body originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as "optional extras". Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment.

For clarity, optional extras are:

- ☐ education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - a) part of the national curriculum;
 - b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school; or
 - c) part of religious education.
- ☐ examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- ☐ transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority/governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education);
- ☐ board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit;
- ☐ extended day services offered to pupils (for example breakfast club, after-school clubs, and supervised homework sessions);
- ☐ small contribution for Technology / Food Technology projects.

In calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- ☐ any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- ☐ the cost of buildings and accommodation;
- ☐ non-teaching staff;
- ☐ teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
- ☐ the cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It will not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

Remissions

In some circumstances the school may not charge for 'chargeable' items or activities as set out in this policy such as board and lodgings for residential trips. The school will take account of indicators such as eligibility of free school meals. This will be at the discretion of the governing board and will depend on the activity in question.

Financial support for pupils with extra-curricular activities in cases of economic hardship

The school will make parents aware of their right to claim free activities if their child is eligible for pupil premium funding or if they are on low incomes or receiving eligible benefits. Parents are informed of this through individual trip/activity letters and regular whole school communications with parents.

- ☐ In cases where a trip is a compulsory part of the curriculum and/or involves the whole class or a whole year group, the school will support cases of financial hardship.
- ☐ In the case of trips which are voluntary, the initial letter should state this
- ☐ In cases of genuine hardship but where qualification in terms of such benefits is not apparent, the view of the Heads of School will be sought and then a judgement made by the Executive Headteacher.

Monitoring arrangements

The Director of Operations monitors charges and remissions, and ensures these comply with this policy.

This policy will be reviewed by the Executive Headteacher every year. At every review, the policy will be approved by The Governing Body.