



Charging and Remissions Policy

Name of Policy	Charging and Remissions
Date of last review	Autumn 2024
Date of next review	Autumn 2025
Member of Staff responsible	Headteacher

1. Purpose and basis of the policy

We believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a broad range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities. No child will be excluded from an activity because of their parent's inability to contribute.

This policy has been informed by the requirements of the Education Act 1996 and following the DfE guidance set out in 'Charging for School Activities' (May 2018). The school will follow this policy with due consideration to its GDPR and Equalities policies.

2. School charging

No charging will be made for:

- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment) with the exception of activities referred to under section 6;
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;
- Tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum;
- Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours. Voluntary contributions may be requested.

3. Activities for which charges may be made

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them;
- Music and vocal tuition, in line with 'The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007, which permits charging for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually, or to groups of any size, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. No charge will be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(l) of the Children Act 1989);
- Certain early years provision, in line with 'The Education (Charges for Early Years Provision) Regulations 2012'. This permits schools to charge for places in maintained nursery classes over and above the 15 (or 30) hours funded childcare places (see the latest Nursery Admissions policy for details of rates charged)
- Other optional extras, as set out below.

4. Optional extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as 'optional extras'. Optional extras are:

- Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority/Governing Board 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 by the school (for example breakfast club, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions);

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;
- 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.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary prerequisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

5. Damage to property/equipment

The Governing Board reserves the right to ask for payment/contribution in the event of any breakage or damage to school property/equipment.

6. Voluntary contributions

The Governing Board strongly believes that visits and trips enhance and enrich pupils' learning and enjoyment of learning and it therefore supports the school's desire to offer a wide range of experiences beyond the classroom.

As the school's delegated funds will not cover the cost of such activities, the Governing Board allows the school to ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of activities which take place during the school day and which incur additional costs, for example day trips or visits from external providers.

Voluntary contributions will be requested on the following basis:

- Best value will be sought in planning activities that incur costs for which a voluntary contribution is sought from parents;
- The contribution must be genuinely voluntary and the pupils of parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute will not be discriminated against: no pupil will be prevented from participating because his/her parents cannot or will not make a contribution;

- Letters requesting a voluntary contribution for an activity must indicate that there is no obligation to contribute and that pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request.
- Voluntary contributions will not be requested from the parents of children eligible for Pupil Premium or Pupil Premium Plus.
- Where the shortfall from contributions towards the cost of day activities or visits is 3% or more, then the activity may be cancelled.
- The requested contribution in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of the activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating.
- Although the calculation of costs may include a 5% contingency allowance it will not include any element of subsidy for other pupils participating in the activity whose parents are unable or choose not to contribute.
- The charge will not include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate.
- The cost of any additional days worked by staff who accompany the visit will be considered.

7. Residential activities

Although the school can charge for board and lodging on residential visits, no charge is permitted for educational or travel elements if deemed to be within school hours (or outside of school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education.)

The definition of school hours will be applied based on the guidance within the DfE guidance set out in 'Charging for School Activities' (May 2018):

- If the number of school sessions on a residential trip is equal to or greater than 50 percent of the number of half days spent on the trip it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into two sessions. A "half day" means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

Where a charge cannot be made, a voluntary contribution will be sought to cover these costs on the same basis as set out in section 6.

Pupils whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (see Section 8) may not be charged for board and lodging costs.

8. Families qualifying for remission or help with charges

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the Governing Board has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made can be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances based upon the discretion of the Headteacher. The school will also provide support to families to approach local

charities (e.g. Harpenden Trust or James Marshall Foundation) to support remissions and subsidies in order to minimise the impact on school funds.

Qualification criteria for remission are parents/carers in receipt of:

- Income Support;
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit;
- Child Tax Credit, (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £19,995);
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit;
- Universal Tax Credit

Additional categories of parents may claim help with some costs in some circumstances e.g. via the school's allocation of Pupil Premium.

9. Additional considerations

The Governing Board recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible we shall publish information providing details of each visit in advance so that parents can plan ahead. Parents/carers will be notified of residential trips approximately 6 months prior to the visit taking place;
- We have established a system for parents to pay in instalments;
- When an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip;
- We acknowledge that offering opportunities on a "first pay, first served" basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection if places are restricted;

10. Refunds

In the event that a school activity makes a surplus of more than £5 of the contribution per head, a refund will be offered to parents/carers, otherwise the money will be utilised for a future trip.

11. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The Finance Governors will monitor the impact of this policy by receiving on an annual basis a financial report on those activities that resulted in charges being levied, the subsidies awarded (without giving names) and the source of those subsidies. It will seek to evaluate the impact of the school's extended services on those children most in need of additional support.