CHARGING POLICY

Written December 2025

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Date Approved by Governing Body:

CHARGING AND REMISSION POLICY

1. Aims of the policy

● to explain the school's policy on charging and remissions of charges;
● to set out the legal position;
● to explain the various responsibilities

2. Introduction

The Governing Body acknowledges the right of every student to receive free school education and understands that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching time must be made available to all students regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost. The governors also recognise the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, trips and residential experiences can make towards pupils' education and aim to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

3. The Legal Position

The general principle that no charge can be made for education in school hours (excluding the midday break) in maintained schools was first set out in the Education Reform Act 1988. Guidance came in the Circular 2/89, Education Reform Act 1988: Charges for School Activities.

The Circular explains that:
No charge can be made for any books, materials, instruments, equipment or transport for use in connection with education if the education is:
- within school hours;
- for the National Curriculum programme out-of-school hours;
- for statutory religious education; and
- for a prescribed public examination prepared for by the school.

Admission

No charge can be made in connection with admission to a maintained school.

Finished products

Where parents have expressed a wish in advance to have a finished product made at school (e.g. in craft, art or food and nutrition lessons) a charge can be made at cost price. The parents must know the charge for the product in advance.

Board and lodging

A charge can be made for board and lodging on residential educational visits/activities, but parents who qualify for prescribed benefits and allowances are entitled to a remission of the charges. Guidance on how to check the eligibility (for remission of charges) of children whose families receive tax credits can be accessed via the Teachernet website at www.teachernet.gov.uk

Transport

Transport to and from home to any activity not provided by, but permitted by, the school, can be charged for.

Voluntary contributions

Parents may volunteer to pay for any educational activity. The school may request voluntary contributions for any visits/activities both inside and outside school time. However, NO pupil may be excluded from the activity for not having paid the contribution.

Permitted charges

The following are permitted charges:
- charges for board and lodging on trips;
- costs of lost and destroyed school property and breakages;
- any costs associated with individual tuition in the playing of musical instruments whether in or out of school hours (UNLESS it is provided as part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination or is required by the National Curriculum);
- the cost of optional extras provided outside school hours (or mainly outside school hours), but the charge must not exceed the cost of the provision, and parents must agree to their child receiving the optional extra;
- The cost of entering a pupil for a public examination not prescribed in regulations, and the cost for preparing the pupil for such an examination out of school hours

In all cases where a permitted charge is likely to be made the parents must be told the amount in Advance.

Activities partly during school hours

In order to determine whether an activity that is undertaken partly during school hours and partly out of school hours the 50% rule is applied:
- Non-Residential Activities: if 50% or more is spent on an activity in school time (including travelling time, but excluding midday breaks) the whole activity is deemed to be inside school time, and cannot be charged for; and
- Residential Activities: the number of half-days is counted (a half-day being any 12 hour period ending noon or midnight). If the number of days and half-days spent on the activity is greater than the number of school sessions (morning and afternoon sessions) that a pupil would spend on a normal school day, the activity is deemed to take place outside school hours, and vice-versa. Travelling time is included in the time spent on the activity.

When a departure or return time splits a half-day then all the half-day counts if more than 50% of the half-day is used for the activity.

4 Third parties

The school is permitted to charge for the provision of educational services by a third party, but schools must ensure that the monies are paid directly to the third party organisation.
In such cases, if the activity is in school time, the school has to formally grant leave of absence to the pupils taking part, as the activity would no longer technically be part of the school's official programme.
It is likely, too, that any staff taking part in the activity would also have to be granted leave of absence. The Head must consider carefully the position of accompanying staff, depending on the precise nature and duration of the visit.

5. School Policy

The law allows governing bodies to charge only for the defined activities if they have first made a policy on charging and remissions.
Parents will be made aware of the policy, and where they can consult it. This requirement should be set out in each maintained school prospectus.

The Governing Body therefore reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances for activities organised by the school:
a. Practical subjects
▪ Where parents have indicated in writing that they wish to own a finished product, a charge will be made. The charge shall not exceed the cost of the materials used by the student.
b. Residential Trips
▪ The board and lodging element of approved residential activities deemed to take place in school hours. The cost will not exceed the actual cost of the provision and prior written confirmation from the parent is required that he/she is willing to pay the charge.
c. Activities outside School Hours
▪ The full cost to each pupil of all approved activities deemed to be optional extras taking place outside school hours and therefore not part of the National Curriculum.

6. Voluntary Contributions

The Governing Body reserves the right to ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:
▪ Any activity which takes place during school hours
▪ School equipment
▪ School funds generally
Parents may be advised that the continuance of an activity may depend upon voluntary contributions but once it has been decided to run such an activity, no qualifying child will be excluded on the grounds of voluntary contributions.

7. Private Use of Facilities

Private use of the telephone and photocopying facilities by pupils are not permitted. In the rare case that a private telephone call is made it is deemed to be an emergency and no charge is Made.

8. Remissions

Parents of pupils who are in receipt of the following support payments will, in addition to having free school meals entitlement, also be entitled to the remission of charges:-
▪ Income Support
▪ Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
▪ Support under part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
▪ Family Credit
When arranging a chargeable activity such parents will be invited in confidence for the remission of charges in full or in part.
The Head in consultation with the Chair of Governors will make authorisation for such remission.

9. Equal Opportunities

The governing body and Head will ensure that the school’s equal opportunities polices are observed in making, reviewing and implementing the charging and remissions policy.

10. Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for making and reviewing the policy.
The Head is responsible for the implementation of the policy and ensuring that staff, parents and pupils know the details as appropriate.
Other staff may be responsible for implementing the policy as part of their overall responsibilities. (e.g. the Educational Visits coordinator, Mr Alec Mills) see WG Guidance for Education Visits.

11. Monitoring and Review

The Head will report to the governors' finance committee on any relevant aspects of the working of the policy as appropriate.
The governing body will review the policy every two years.