





Charging and Remissions Policy

2024-2027 (SS-11)

Ratified by Trustees:	Mr A Rankin, Chair of Trustees
Signature:	
Date:	June 2024

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Signature:	
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Policy on Charging for and Remission for school activities

1. Introduction

Cockermouth School believes that all our students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extracurricular).

This Charging and Remissions Policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some students taking full advantage of the opportunities.

The 1996 Education Act requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities, which will be kept under regular review. The review date for this policy is recorded on the cover sheet of this document.

The policy identifies activities for which:

- Voluntary contributions may be requested.
- Charges will be made.
- Charges will not be made.
- Charges may be waived.

2. Voluntary contributions:

Separately from the matter of charging, schools may always seek voluntary contributions in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to students. All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that students of parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have.

The Law states:

If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the Academy Trust Board or Headteacher will make this clear to parents from the outset.

No child will be excluded from an activity because his or her parents are unable or unwilling to pay.

If insufficient contributions are received, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal chance to take part in the visit.

3. No charges will be made for:

- a) An admission application to this school.
- b) Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment) except where the materials become the personal belonging of the student e.g. marking a text book for personal use.
- c) 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 student is being prepared for at the school, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education.

- d) Tuition for students learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.
- e) Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours (see 4b below).
- f) Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours (see 4a below).
 - If it is part of the National Curriculum, or
 - Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or
 - Part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;
- g) Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying students on a residential trip.
- h) Transport provided in connection with an educational visit where the visit is part of the delivery of the curriculum.
- i) Public examinations – no charge can be made for entry to prescribed public examinations where the student is being prepared for entry to the examination by the school. This does not apply if the Academy Trust Board thinks there are educational reasons for not entering the student, or if the student's parents ask in writing that the student should not be entered. The cost of the examination may be passed to the parents/carers only:
 - If a student is entered for an examination for which he/she has not been prepared by the school;
 - If the examination is not on the set list but the school arranges for the student to take it;
 - Where the student "fails without good reason to meet the examination requirements for that syllabus";
 - If a student, or his/her family, request that he/she resits a module or whole examination then the full cost of this will be borne by the family;
 - If a student, or his/her family, request that an examination be remarked then the school will pay if the Headteacher agrees it is appropriate otherwise the cost is borne by the family. However, if the result is an improvement in grade, the family will be reimbursed by the school.

4. Charges may be made for:

- a) Activities outside school hours

Residential and non-residential activities (other than those listed in Section 3 above) which take place outside school hours, but only if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside school hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours).

- b) Residential visits during school hours

The board and lodging costs (but only those costs) of residential trips deemed to take place during school time, however students whose parents are in receipt of qualifying state benefits (see remissions policy below) will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging. Details of appropriate benefits can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

We understand that parents should be informed of this when they are asked for money. Parents are encouraged to discuss their circumstances in confidence with the Business Manager and/or Finance Manager.

Where there is a need for additional staff to attend a residential activity as a result of the special needs of an individual child, the additional costs incurred in taking staff will generally be included in the total cost of the residential experience and costed out according to the number of students attending. However, the Academy Trust Board may decide to meet the additional costs themselves from a budget managed by the

school. When any trip is arranged parents will be notified of the policy for allocating places. This should recognise that parents may not be able to pay quickly and may have to budget for the trip over a reasonable period of time.

Is a trip inside or outside of school hours?

To work out whether the trip should be classified as taking place largely during school hours, two factors are considered – “school sessions” and “half-days”.

A residential activity counts as falling within school time if the number of school sessions missed by the students amount to half or more of the number of half days taken up by the activity. Each school day is normally divided into two sessions and each 24 hour period is divided into two half days beginning at noon and midnight.

On this basis, a term-time trip from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday would last for nine half-days, including five school sessions, and would count as taking place in school time. However a trip from noon on Thursday to 9pm on Sunday would count as seven half-days, including three school sessions, and would be classified as taking place largely outside school time. If 50% or more of a half day is spent on a residential trip, the whole day is counted as spent on the trip.

c) Music tuition

Music tuition for individuals or appropriate sized groups (up to 4) of students to play a musical instrument or to sing and which is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus for all students.

d) Optional Extras

Charges may be made for optional activities that are known as ‘Optional Extras’. Any charges made will not exceed the actual cost (per student) of provision.

It is the policy of Cockermouth School that charges will (or may) be made as indicated below:

- Charges will/may be made for any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where a parent wishes their child to own them; e.g. a clay model – a charge to cover the cost of the clay;
- Charges may be made where damage or loss of any item of school property or equipment has been caused by a student;
- Charges will/may be made for music tuition to cover the cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument or singing, where the tuition is an optional extra for an individual student or appropriate groups students;
- Charges will be made for the board and lodging component of residential trips (remissions available);
- Charges will/may be made for Extra Curricular Activities (remissions available);
- Charges will/may be made for Optional Courses (remissions available).
- Any charges resulting from cheques that have been re-presented by the bank will be recharged to the originator.

5. Remissions

In order to remove financial barriers from students, the Academy Trust Board has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances. This remissions policy sets out the circumstances in which such charges will be waived.

Families qualifying for remission or help with charges

Where the parent of a child is in receipt of a qualifying state benefit, the Academy Trust Board will remit an amount proportionate to the cost of board and lodging for a residential activity that is organised for the student and which takes place in term time.

This will be the case where the residential activity forms part of the syllabus for a public examination.

Details of appropriate benefits can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

Additional categories of parents may claim help with some costs in the following circumstances

Support with charges as determined at the sole discretion of the Headteacher and/or Business Manager by written application and demonstration of financial hardship.

Additional considerations

The Academy Trust 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 make parents aware of future visits (and their approximate cost) well in advance so that parents can plan ahead;
- Where time permits we allow 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 students from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

6. Charging Policy - Summary for Parents

Voluntary contributions

We cannot charge for activities which are part of the normal school day or part of the National Curriculum but we can ask for **voluntary** contributions.

Examples of circumstances in which we might ask for voluntary contributions include:

- Transport on trips
- Admission charges

Why do we need to ask for voluntary contributions?

We want to offer a wide range of activities to broaden your child's experience but we can't afford to do everything we would wish without help from parents.

What happens if I am unwilling to pay?

Your contribution is voluntary. Your child will not be excluded from the activity BUT if we do not receive enough voluntary contributions we may have to cancel the activity.

What happens if I am unable to pay?

Parents in certain financial circumstances (overleaf) will not be expected to make voluntary contributions.

Will my voluntary contribution pay for people who have not paid?

No. The amount we ask in voluntary contribution must not exceed the actual cost of the activity per student. Your voluntary contribution covers the cost of the trip/visit for your child only.

We promise that:

We will tell you at the outset if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions. We shall give as much notice as possible of any activities which will require voluntary contributions.

At Cockermouth School we want to provide a range of experiences which add excitement and enjoyment to children's' learning and personal development. All our students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school visits, curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Many of these activities have a cost associated with them and, unfortunately, cannot be provided unless we ask parents for voluntary contributions and, in some cases, make a charge. But there are some strict rules we have to abide by. Our charging policy, which has been agreed by Trustees, sets out what we will charge for, how we will try to make it manageable for parents and how we will help parents with limited incomes.

We can charge for optional extras:

We can charge for any materials, books, instruments or equipment if you wish your child to own them. This means that we will make a charge for:

- Materials used in technology if your child is expecting to bring the finished product home.
- Cookery ingredients if your child will bring the result home.
- Trips which are not part of the school curriculum and outside the school day e.g. some theatre trips, football matches, music concerts.
- After school clubs.

We can charge for music tuition if it is not required as part of the National Curriculum and is provided for an individual student or for appropriate sized groups of students.

We promise that

The charge will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra. We will obtain your agreement before we provide the optional extra.

Charging for residential visits

We believe that every child has an entitlement to a residential visit during their time at Cockermouth School. This will be built into the school curriculum.

We can't charge for transport for a curriculum activity although we shall usually need to request voluntary contributions.

We may charge for board and lodging (unless parents are in receipt of one or more of the benefits listed at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>. We understand that parents should be informed of this when they are asked for money. Parents are encouraged to discuss their circumstances in confidence with the Business Manager.

The charge will be set so as to not exceed the expected actual cost. Charges are set to cover the costs expected to be incurred and we do not seek to make profit from these activities.

We promise to help you to plan for these costs by:

- Giving notice of visits/activities to ensure that you have as much notice as possible.
- Having clear procedures to enable you to pay by instalments.
- Publishing a fair, objective and transparent procedure for allocating places in case of oversubscription (we shall avoid 'first come, first served' payment which may favour some students more).

Special financial arrangements:

Parents who are in receipt of any of the relevant benefits (evidenced) will not be required to pay for:

- Board and lodging on residential visits.
- Technology materials.
- Music tuition.
- Transport to out of school activities.

In addition, reduced rates may be applied for in writing for those experiencing financial hardship:

- Extra-curricular activities.
- Skiing trips.

Headteacher:
Mr R J King BSc

Chair of Trustees:
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