

# Charging & Remissions Policy

*A policy for all stakeholders*

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# Charging & Remissions Policy

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## 1. Legislation & Guidance

The policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on charging for school activities and the Education Act 1996, sections 449-462, which sets out the law on charging for school activities. Academies are required to comply with this Act through their funding agreements. This policy complies with the Trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

## 2. Definitions

- Charge: a fee payable for specifically defined activities
- Remission: the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

## 3. Roles & Responsibilities

### 3.1 The Trust Board and its Finance and Resources Committee

The Trust Board has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy but has delegated this to its Finance and Resources Committee.

The monitoring of the implementation of this policy at school level has been delegated to each Headteacher or Head of School.

### 3.2. The Headteacher

The Headteacher's monitoring includes ensuring that staff are familiar with the policy, trained appropriately and applying it consistently.

### 3.3. The Staff

Named staff in each school (usually the Office Manager or a senior leader) are responsible for:

- Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently
- Notifying the Headteacher of any specific circumstances about any areas of uncertainty or conflict

### 3.4. Parents

Parents are advised to notify staff or the Headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding the charging and remissions policy.

## 4. School Charging Introduction

We are committed to providing quality education based on equality of opportunity, access and outcome. In practice this means that pupils are entitled to:

- Benefit from all educational activities
- Participate fully in the curriculum
- Contribute to all aspects of school life
- Be a valued partner in the process of education

These objectives must be seen to inform educational activities and are therefore, integral to the process of charging for school activities and to the remission which is available to parents on low incomes.

We aim to:

- Make school activities accessible to all pupils regardless of family income
- Encourage and promote external activities which give added value to the curriculum

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- Provide a process which allows activities to take place at minimum cost to parents
- Respond to the wide variations in family income while not adding unexpected burdens to the school budget

The development of a range of activities forms part of the school's forward planning process and is linked to the annual budget cycle. A number of factors are taken into account including cost sources and the setting of costs against educational value. As far as possible activities are based upon the school's curriculum priorities but do not inhibit flexibility nor the capacity of the school to take advantages of opportunities which arise.

Funds are placed in the budget annually to cover the costs of transport, insurance, entrance fees, residential visits, visiting musicians, drama groups and guest speakers.

### 5. Education during school hours

We believe that education during school hours should be free and that this should include materials, books, equipment and, as far as possible, transport.

### 6. Education outside school hours (optional extras)

Parents have only been charged for education outside school hours when activities are not a necessary part of the national curriculum. In practice this has rarely applied because virtually all our activities fall within school hours. However, extended day service provision is changing the way that schools operate and there is now an increasing expectation that holiday activities will require some form of payment, particularly where there are visits to be organised. Current areas where the school can charge include:

- Extended days services offered to pupils such as breakfast clubs or after-school clubs
- Board and lodgings for pupils on a residential visit
- Transport to and from residential visit locations
- Music and vocal tuition 1 to 1 sessions
- Hire of facilities to the community

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not be greater than the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity and will be divided equally based on the number of pupils participating.

### 7. Residential Visits

Schools can charge for board and lodging on residential visits, but the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

### 8. Voluntary Contributions

As an exception to the requirements set out in section 5 of this policy, the school is able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents to fund activities during school hours which would not otherwise be possible. Some activities for which the school may ask parents for voluntary contributions include educational visits, sports activities, visiting theatre groups and activity providers.

There is no obligation for parents to make any contribution, and no child will be excluded from an activity if their parents are unwilling or unable to pay; however, if the school is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit, then it may be cancelled.

### 9. Remissions

In some circumstances the school may not charge for items or activities set out in sections 6 to 8 of this policy. This will be at the discretion of the Headteacher following discussion with the CEO/Deputy CEO and will depend on the activity in question.

If you are facing any hardship or financial difficulty and are struggling to pay for anything related to school, please contact the Headteacher through the School Office.

#### 9.1 Remissions for residential visits

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Parents who can provide evidence of receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging for residential visits:

- Universal credit in prescribed circumstances
- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- An income related employment and support allowance

### 10. Monitoring Arrangements

The Headteacher monitors charges and remissions and ensures compliance with this policy. This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Finance & Resources Committee at least every two years or whenever there are updates to the DfE advice.

### 11. Informing Parents

Parents are informed of the school's charging and remissions policy by letter each time their child takes part in an educational visit. Parents are informed of the cost of each visit. The charging policy also forms part of the admission process on entry to school and is on our parent partnership agreement form. Staff are mindful of the cost of educational visits and always try, where possible, to use public transport and book visits that are local and where there is no entry fee. The full policy is available for parents on request and a copy posted on the school website.

### 12. Recovery of Non-Payment

The Trust reserves the right to take reasonable debt recovery steps in the case of outstanding monies owed.