# Charging and Remissions Policy

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| Vision: | Education is to be provided during school hours and must be free. This includes materials and equipment, |
| Rationale: | Parents and others have a right to information about school hours, and this information is published by the school. |

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| Approved by: | Jane Barker, Chair of Governors |
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**EDUCATION DURING SCHOOL HOURS**

1. No charge can be made for admitting pupils to maintained school. Education provided during school hours must be free. This includes materials, equipment, and transport provided in school hours by the AspirePlus Educational Trust or by the school to carry pupils between the school and an activity. ‘School hours’ are those when the school is actually in session, and do not include the break in the middle of the school day. Parents and others have a right to information about school hours, and this information must be included in prospectuses published by the school.

**MUSICAL INSTRUMENT TUITION**

1. There is an exception to the rule about not charging for activities in school hours. Charges may be made for teaching either an individual pupil, or groups of up to four, to play a musical instrument, if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil.

**VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS**

1. Although schools cannot charge for school-time activities, they may still invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions (in cash or in kind) to make school funds go further. All requests to parents for voluntary contributions must make it quite clear that the contributions would be voluntary. trustees should also make it clear that children of parents who do not contribute will not be treated any differently. If a particular activity cannot take place without some help from parents that should be explained to them at the planning stage. Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, then it must be cancelled. The essential point is that no pupil may be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot, or will not, make a contribution of any kind. The school must first decide which class, or group of pupils, will benefit from the activity and then look for voluntary contributions, either for that activity or by general fund-raising.

**ACTIVITIES NOT RUN BY THE SCHOOL OR AspirePlus Educational Trust**

1. When an organisation acting independently of a school or AspirePlus Educational Trust arranges an activity to take place during school hours and parents want their children to join the activity, such organisations may charge parents. Parents must then ask the school to agree to their children being absent, just as they would if they wanted to take their children out of school for a family holiday. However, where an activity is organised by a third party, and is approved by the school, is educational or is supervised by someone authorized by the school, then it should be treated as if it were provided by the school, and no charge should be made to the parents or pupils. Such an activity, if it takes place outside the school premises, is an ‘approved educational activity’ within the meaning of Regulation 4A(a) of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (as amended).

**EDUCATION OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS**

1. Parents can only be charged for activities that happen outside school hours when these activities are not a necessary part of the National Curriculum or that form part of the school’s basic curriculum for religious education. In addition, no charge can be made for activities that are an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination (see paragraph 13 below).
2. Charges may be made for other activities that happen outside school hours if parents agree to pay. The Education Act 1996 describes activities which can be charged for as ‘optional extras’. It is up to the AspirePlus Educational Trust or Trustees providing the activities to decide whether to make a charge.

**CHARGING POLICIES**

1. The AspirePlus Educational Trust may not charge for anything unless it has drawn up a statement of general policy on charging. A policy statement will take account of each type of activity that can be charged for, and explain when charges will be made. If a charge is to be made for a particular type of activity – for example ‘optional extras’ – parents need to know how the charge will be worked out and who might qualify for help with the cost (or even get it free). Parents have a right to ask for this information, and a summary must be included in the prospectus published by the school.
2. If a charge is made for each pupil, this should not exceed the actual cost. If further funds need to be raised, for example, to help in hardship cases, this must be by voluntary contributions or general fund-raising.
3. The permitted charge may include an allowance for the costs of teachers from the school who supervise the activity, but only if those teachers have been given a separate contract to provide the optional extra. A contract need not be a formal document. It could be a simple letter to a teacher asking him or her to provide a service on a particular occasion.

**EDUCATION PARTLY DURING SCHOOL HOURS**

1. Sometimes an activity may happen partly during and partly outside school hours. If most of the time spent on a non-residential activity occurs during school hours, that activity counts as taking place entirely in school hours and no charge may be made. (Time spent on travel only counts as being during school hours if the travel takes place during school hours.) As an example, a long-distance trip might involve much travel before and after normal school hours, but if the time spent at the destination fell mainly within school hours, the trip would count as happening in school time and be free of charge. By contrast, a trip which involved leaving school an hour or so earlier than usual in the afternoon, but then went on until quite late in the evening, would be classified as taking place outside school time. Charges would then be allowed.

**OUT OF SCHOOL CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES**

1. The school offers a range of out-of-school clubs – and reserves the right to charge for such sessions to cover the cost of provision where those activities are not directly aimed at providing core educational benefit to pupils.

**RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITIES**

1. Special rules apply for residential activities. A trip counts as falling within school time if the number of school sessions missed by the pupils amounts 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 at midnight. On this basis, a term-time trip from noon on Wednesday to 9 pm on Sunday would count as seven half-days, including three school sessions, and would be classified for charging as taking place outside school time. If 50% or more of a half-day is spent on a residential trip, the whole of that half-day should be treated as spent on the trip.
2. For a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or which meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination, or is to do with the National Curriculum or religious education, no charge may be made either for the education or for the cost of travel. However, charges can be made for board and lodging in these circumstances, except for pupils whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits, do not have to pay for board or lodgings on residential courses. The Headteacher should tell all parents of the right to claim free activities if they are receiving these benefits.

**PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS**

1. No charges may be made for entering pupils for public examinations that are set out in regulations. The governing body must enter a pupil for each examination in a public examination syllabus that the school has prepared the pupil for. This does not need to apply if the Trustees or Local Governing Advisory Board thinks there are educational reasons for not entering the pupil, or if the pupil’s parents ask in writing that the pupil should not be entered.

An examination entry fee may be charged to parents if:

* The examination is on the set list, but the pupil was not prepared for it at the school;
* The examination is not on the set list but the school arranges for the pupil to take it;
* A pupil fails without good reason to complete the requirements of any public examination where the Local Governing Advisory Board or AspirePlus Educational Trust originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

1. Charges may not be made for any cost associated with preparing a pupil for an examination. But charging is allowed for tuition and other costs if a pupil is prepared outside school hours for an examination that is not set out in regulations.

**SCHOOL/HIRED MINIBUSES**

1. Only the school’s pupils, staff or parents may travel at a charge in a hired/school’s minibus.
2. Schools may charge for transport in school/hired minibuses only if they hold a permit issued under Section 19 of the Transport Act 1985. The permit exempts the school from Public Service Vehicle (PSV) operator and driver licensing requirements. A permit is not required if no charge is made. A permit is required for each minibus.
3. Schools may not raise funds to make a profit by charging for travel in their own or hired minibuses.
4. Charges may recover some or all of the costs of running the vehicle, including loss of value. But the service may not make a profit, either directly through the fares charged or incidentally as part of a profit making activity, even if any profit would go into the school’s other running costs or for charitable purposes. A charge is any payment made in cash or kind (for example, a club subscription) by or on behalf of a person which gives him or her a right to be carried.
5. Further information is available from AspirePlus Educational Trust or the regional Traffic Commissioners, addresses may be found in the ‘phone book.

***TRANSPORT TO EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES***

1. Parents/carers may be charged to cover the transport expenses associated with the extracurricular activity. Charges for transport will be strictly based on covering the actual costs (as defined in legislation) with no profit element.

***LOSS OF/DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY***

1. Parents/carers may be asked to meet the costs of repair/replacement of school property lost or damaged as a result of a pupil’s misbehavior.

**IN BRIEF**

**The Trustees or the Local Governing Advisory Board:**

* May not charge for any activities which take place in school time, apart from instrumental tuition for individual pupils or pupils in groups of up to four;
* Must draw up a charging policy, which does not have to be the same as the AspirePlus Educational Trust policy as long as it meets the requirements of the law;
* May invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions towards any part of the school’s work;
* May charge for activities that are provided wholly or mainly outside school hours, as long as these activities are optional extras;
* May charge for board and lodging on residential courses.

Signed by

Headteacher Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Next review date: Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_