



Charges & Remissions Policy

Statement of intent

Sitwell Infant School is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all children, regardless of financial circumstances and have created this policy to ensure we adhere to legal requirements regarding charging for school activities and meet all statutory guidance provided by the DfE.

The school will ensure that this policy is published on its website and provides the school community with details of activities for which the school will charge parents, and the circumstances in which they will waive any charge parents would otherwise expect to pay.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 1989
- DfE (2024) 'Maintained schools governance guide'
- DfE (2024) 'What maintained schools must or should publish online'
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for School Activities'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures
- Data Protection Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Freedom of Information Publication Scheme
- The school's Scheme of Delegation

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions will be used:

Charge: a fee payable for specifically defined activities.

Remission: the cancellation of a charge, partly or wholly, which would normally be payable.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- The management of the school's delegated finances.
- Ensuring the school acts in accordance with this policy at all times.
- Ensuring money is spent for the educational benefit of children attending the school, and for the benefit of children in other schools.
- Recognising its legal requirements regarding charging for school activities under the Education Act 1996 and meeting all additional guidance provided by the DfE.

The Headteacher will be responsible for:

- Prioritising and allocating financial resources appropriately, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and probity in the use of public funds.
- Informing parents on low incomes and in receipt of specific benefits of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.
- Liaising with parents and staff regarding any charges being applied and making decisions regarding appropriate remissions on a case-by-case basis.

The school Business Manager will:

- Process and record payments for activities, considering any remissions applied.
- Ensure that the correct invoices are sent to parents, and that payment is received.

Charging for education

The school will not charge for:

- Admission applications.
- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment).
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the child is being prepared for by the school, or part of religious education.

We may charge parents for the following:

- Educational activities including transport involving a visit to a theatre or similar facility.
- Educational visits involving an admission or travel fee.
- Education, including transport, provided outside school hours.
- Materials or ingredients to enable parents to own a finished product.
- Any activities which are organised by persons or organisations other than the Governing Board or the Local Authority and where charges are made by those persons or organisation.
- Replacement reading diaries if the original is misplaced.
- Costs for an individual child to attend activities outside school hours e.g. breakfast club, tea club and after school clubs.
- Use of community facilities and other commercial activities.
- Music tuition and hire of musical instruments.
- Provision of information within the scope of freedom of information.

- Certain early years provision.

Optional extras

We may charge parents for the following optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - Part of the national curriculum;
 - Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the child is being prepared for at the school;
 - Part of Religious Education.
- Transport, other than that required to take children to school or to other premises that has been arranged by the LA for the children to be provided with education.
- Extended day services offered to children.
- Board and lodging for a child on a residential visit.

When calculating the cost of optional extras, the school will only take into account the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in relation to the optional extra.
- The cost of buildings and accommodation.
- The employment of non-teaching staff.
- The cost of teaching staff (including teaching assistants) under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra.
- The cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide vocal tuition or tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

The school will not charge in excess of the actual cost of providing the optional extra divided by the number of participating children. We will not charge a subsidy for any children wishing to participate but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge. If a proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, we will not charge for the cost of alternative provision for those not participating.

The school will not charge for supply teachers to cover for teachers who are absent from school accompanying children on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Therefore, parental agreement is a pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

If a charge is to be made for a particular activity, such as optional extras, parents will be informed of how the charge will be calculated.

Voluntary contributions

We may, from time-to-time, ask for voluntary contributions towards the benefit of the school or school activities. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, we will make this clear to parents at the outset. We will also make it clear

that there is no obligation for parents to make a contribution, and notify parents whether assistance is available.

No child will be excluded from an activity simply because their parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal opportunity to take part in the activity. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity, and the school cannot fund it via another source, the activity will be cancelled and this will be made clear to parents.

We will strive to ensure that parents do not feel pressurised into making voluntary contributions.

Music Tuition

Music tuition is the only exception to the rule that all education provided during school hours must be free. The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 allow for charges to be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of any size - provided that the tuition is at the request of the child's parents. The charges will not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff providing the tuition.

Charging will not be made if the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum.

Charging will also not be made if the teaching is provided under the first access to the KS2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme.

No charge will be made in respect of pupils who are looked after by the Local Authority (LAC).

Transport

We will not charge for:

- Transporting registered children to or from the school premises, where the LA has a statutory obligation to provide the transport;
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing board or LA has arranged for children to be educated;
- Transporting children to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for the examination at the school;
- Transport provided for an educational visit (this is asked for as a voluntary contribution).

Damaged or lost items

The school may charge for the cost of replacing items that are damaged or lost due to the negligence or poor behaviour of pupils or their parents. Parents will only be charged the replacement cost to purchase the same or equivalent item. The school will consider waiving costs in exceptional circumstances, e.g. financial hardship.

Remissions

The school will set aside a fund to enable parents in financial difficulty to send their children on visits and activities. The funding will be limited and there is no guarantee

that all requests can be met. Assistance will be allocated on a needs basis, and if the full cost of the trip or activity cannot be met through assistance funding and voluntary contributions, the trip or activity will be cancelled.

Parents in receipt of any of the following benefits may request assistance with the costs of activities:

- Universal Credit (if parents apply on or after 1st April 2018, their household income must be less than £7400 a year);
- 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) did not exceed £16,190 in the previous financial year;
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
- An income related employment and support allowance.

To request assistance, parents should contact the school Business Manager.

School Educational Visit refunds

All monies paid for educational visits will be non-refundable. Parents will be informed of this when they are provided with initial information about the visit.

In the event that the school has to cancel a visit due to unforeseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded. In the event that a visit is cancelled by a party other than the school due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The Headteacher will consult with the governing board on the matter, taking into account the cost to the school.

In the event that parents cancel the child's place on an educational visit, it is at the Headteacher's discretion if a refund is given. The Headteacher will consult the governing board on the matter, taking into account the reason for cancellation, whether the school will be reimbursed for the child's place, and whether the place will be offered to another child.

Where parents have previously cancelled a place on a visit and received a full refund, the school has the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future visits.

In the event that a child cannot attend a visit at the last minute e.g. due to illness, it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The Headteacher will consult the governing board on the matter, taking into account whether the school will be reimbursed for the child's place on the visit and whether the place on the visit can be offered to another child.

In the event that a school visit is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the visit. The Headteacher will discuss options with the governing board, which could

include carrying forward the money until the visit takes place, transferring the money to another visit, or refunding parents.

In the event that the decision is made to postpone a visit due to foreseen circumstances, it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the visit. The Headteacher will discuss options with the governing board, which could include carrying forward the money until the visit takes place, transferring the money to another visit, or refunding parents.

Once visit arrangements have been booked and confirmed, if contributions exceed the total cost of the trip, a refund will be given where the excess is greater than £1 per pupil. If the excess is less than £1 per child, this will be paid into the school's account. Excess expenditure will be subsidised by the school fund.

The school will deal with cancellations and refunds on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all children and their families are treated equally. If a parent wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they can do so via the Complaints Procedures Policy.

Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

The school's Freedom of Information Policy and Freedom of Information Publication Scheme sets out where fees may be charged for the provision of information.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed by the Resources Committee of the Governing Board.

*This policy will be reviewed annually during the Summer term.
Summer 2025*