



Coppice

Primary Partnership

Growing Together, Striving for Excellence.

Charging and Remissions Policy

Approved: Term 2 2024/25

Next Review: Term 2 2026/27

Summary

- The Trust cannot charge parents and pupils for any activity unless it has drawn up a charging policy. Moreover, when made, charges per pupil cannot exceed the actual costs incurred, which mean that pupils who can pay should not be charged extra to cover the costs of those who cannot afford to.
- This policy is based on the guidance provided by the Department for Education 'Charging for School Activities (May 2018).
- Section 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 sets out the law on charging for school activities in Local Authority maintained schools. Academies are required through their funding agreement to comply with the law on charging for school activities.
- Trustees, subject to the limited exceptions referred to in this policy, must not charge for education provided during school hours which includes the supply of any materials, books, instruments, instruments or other equipment. .
- If the Trust I wishes to run an activity during the school day for which it would need contributions from parents or others, it can invite voluntary contributions. However, no child should be excluded from such activity because his or her parents cannot or will not contribute.
- The Trust can charge for optional, extra activities provided mainly or wholly outside school hours as long as such activities are not an essential part of the National Curriculum or religious education.
- Chapter 23 of A Guide to the Law for School Governors provides further, detailed guidance on residentials, use of mini-buses, public examinations and activities provided during school hours by external bodies

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that, during the school day, all children have full and free access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Please refer to the relevant school website for details of the start and end times of the school day.

Objectives

- To ensure that activities offered in school time should be available to all pupils regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to meet the cost
- To identify those activities for which charges may be levied
- To determine which charges will be remitted for parents experiencing hardship
- To invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school in support of any activity organised by the school, where appropriate
- To ensure that the responsibilities for the charging policy are clearly and appropriately allocated
- To ensure the regular review of operations of the Charging and Remissions Policy.

Roles and Responsibilities of Staff, Governors and Trustees

The Trust Leader and Head Teachers will ensure that the following applies:

During the school day

All activities that are a necessary part of the National Curriculum plus religious education will be provided free of charge. It excludes charges made for teaching individual pupils or groups of pupils to play a musical instrument.

Voluntary contributions may be sought for activities during the school day which entail additional costs e.g. swimming lessons, school trips, special events, art and activity events.

In these circumstances no pupil will be prevented from participating because their parents cannot or will not make a contribution. Children of parents who do not make a contribution will not be treated any differently. However, if a particular activity cannot take place without some financial help from parents, it will be explained at the planning stage that the activity may be cancelled if not enough voluntary contributions are collected. Trust policy is that where it is necessary to cancel a school trip due to insufficient voluntary contributions being received, a full refund of payments received will be made. A voluntary contribution will not be refunded where a pupil is no longer able to attend.

Optional activities outside of the school day

We will charge for optional, extra activities provided outside of the school day, for example, Breakfast Club, Homework Club, After School Club and the Holiday Play Scheme. Such activities are not part of the National Curriculum or religious education, nor are they part of an examination syllabus.

Charges for the Extended Services (Clubs) are publicised on individual school websites.

Education partly during the school day

If a non-residential activity happens partly inside the school day and partly outside of it, there will be no charge if most of the time to be spent on the activity falls within the school day.

Residentials

Where a school activity requires pupils to spend nights away from home, the school is allowed to charge for board and lodging and transport plus any activities. The charge must not exceed the actual cost.

The eligibility criteria that entitles families to an exception from paying the cost of board and lodging on residential visits has been aligned with free school meal eligibility.

Music Tuition

Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, instrumental and vocal music lessons are an exception to that rule.

The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 set out the circumstances in which charges can be made for tuition in playing a musical instrument, including vocal tuition. They allow charging for tuition in larger groups than was previously the case.

Charges may now be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually, or to groups of any size, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff who provide the tuition.

The regulations make clear that charging may not be made if the teaching is either an essential part of the national curriculum, or is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme. They also make clear that no charge may be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

Calculating Charges

When charges are made for an activity (excluding the optional activities), whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. Pupils who can pay should not be charged extra to support those who cannot or are unwilling to pay the full charge.

Support is available to those parents / carers on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits listed below when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits:

- Income support
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

- Child Tax Credit, where the parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Universal credit if applied on or after 1st April 2018 and the household income is less than £7,400 a year
- Guaranteed State Pension Credit

The Trust may also, at the Trust Leader or Head Teachers' discretion, agree to waive or remit charges following consideration of a parent's particular circumstances at the time if they are known to be suffering temporary hardship or economic difficulties but do not fall within one of the above categories. Parents / carers are invited to apply in confidence to the relevant Headteacher, for the remission of charges in part or in full.

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the schools and/or charges to parents.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The Local Governing Bodies will monitor the impact of this policy by receiving on a regular basis, a financial report on those activities that resulted in charges being levied, the subsidies awarded (without giving names) and the source of those subsidies.

The Finance & Audit Committee are responsible for reviewing the Trust Charging and Remissions policy which Trustees approve.