

THE THINKING SCHOOLS FEDERATION CHARGING & REMISSION POLICY

THE
THINKING
SCHOOLS
FEDERATION



Reviewed/Adopted: March 2024
Next Review Date: March 2025
Review Frequency: Annually
Reviewed By: Resources Committee & Full Governing Body

Chair of Governors/Governing Body

NAME: Ayesha Khanom

SIGNATURE:

DATE: March 2024

Charging and Remission Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This charging policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on [charging for school activities](#) and [the Education Act 1996](#), sections 449-462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England.

1.2 We believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

1.3 Schools refer to Highlands Primary School and Uphall Primary School.

2. Definitions

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

3. Roles and responsibilities of governors, principal learning leader and other staff

3.1 The governing board

The governing board has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy.

The governing board also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

Responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy has been delegated to the Resources Committee.

Monitoring the implementation of this policy has been delegated to the Resources Committee.

3.2 Principal Learning Leader

The principal learning leader is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the charging and remissions policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

3.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- › Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently
- › Notifying the principal learning leader of any specific circumstances that they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies

The schools will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

3.4 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to notify staff or the principal learning leader of any concerns or queries regarding the charging and remissions policy.

4. Where charges cannot be made

Below we set out what we **cannot** charge for:

4.1 Education

- Admission applications
- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- Education provided outside the schools' hours if it is part of:
 - The National Curriculum
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the schools
 - Religious education
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent/carer
- Entry for a prescribed public examination if the pupil has been prepared for it at the schools
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the schools

4.2 Transport

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the schools' premises, where the local authority (LA) has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing board or LA has arranged for pupils to be educated
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for that examination at the schools
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit

4.3 Residential visits

- Education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours
- Education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of:
 - The National Curriculum
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the schools
 - Religious education
- Supply teachers, covering for teachers who are absent from school, accompanying pupils on a residential visit

5. Where charges can be made

Below we set out what we **can** charge for:

5.1 Education

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent/carer wishes the child to own them
- Optional extras (see section 5.2)
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see section 5.3)
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school **and** the pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus

5.2 Optional extras

We are able to charge for activities known as 'optional extras'. In these cases, schools can charge for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. The following are optional extras:

- Education provided **outside of school time** that is not part of:
 - The National Curriculum
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the schools
 - Religious education
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the schools, if applicable.
- Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to the schools or to other premises where the LA or governing board has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education)
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
- Extended day services offered to pupils (such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions)

When calculating the cost of optional extras, an amount may be included in relation to:

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra
- The cost of buildings and accommodation
- Non-teaching staff
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra (including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra)
- The cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not be greater than the actual cost

of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating.

Any charge will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils who wish to take part in the activity but whose parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate.

Parental agreement is necessary for the provision of an optional extra that is to be charged for.

5.3 Music tuition

Schools can charge for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of pupils, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent/carer.

Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff giving the tuition.

Charges cannot be made:

- If the teaching is an essential part of the National Curriculum
- If the teaching is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 instrumental and vocal tuition programme
- For a pupil who is looked after by a local authority

5.4 Residential visits

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

5.5 Nursery charges for unfunded places

The schools can provide additional nursery places to parents/carers that have not received their full 30 hours allocation.

The schools will invoice the parents/carers each half term for every available additional session at a cost of £5.50 per hour.

5.6 Damage/Loss to Property

A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of school property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials), the charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Head teacher may decide.

A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials) belonging to a third party, where the cost has been recharged to the school. The charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Head teacher may decide.

6. Voluntary contributions

As an exception to the requirements set out in section 4 of this policy, the schools are able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents/carers to fund activities that would not otherwise be possible.

Some activities for which the school may ask parents/carers for voluntary contributions include: e.g., school trips, music tuition and sports activities.

There is no obligation for parents/carers to make any contribution, and no child will be excluded from an activity if their parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay.

If the school is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit then it will be cancelled.

7. Activities we charge for

The schools will charge for the following activities, e.g.

- Breakfast clubs: a contribution towards non-teaching staff costs, materials and equipment.
- After-school clubs: a contribution towards non-teaching staff costs, materials and equipment.
- Sports clubs: a contribution towards non-teaching staff costs, materials and equipment.

7.1 Additional considerations

The governing body 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 publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the school year so that parents can plan ahead
- We have established a system for 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 pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

For regular activities, the charges for each activity will be determined by the governing board and reviewed in July each year. Parents/carers will be informed of the charges for the coming year in September each year.

8. Remissions

In some circumstances, the school may not charge for items or activities set out in sections 5 and 7 of this policy. This will be at the discretion of the principal learning leader and will depend on the activity in question.

8.1 Remissions for residential visits

Parents/carers who can prove they are in receipt of any of the following benefits will be exempt (wholly or in part) from paying the cost of board and lodging for residential visits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance

- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit – provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit – if you apply on or after 1 April 2018, your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

8.2 The principal learning leader, Resources Committee or Governing Board may remit in full or part charges/ or penalty fees in respect of a pupil, if it feels it is reasonable in the circumstances.

9. Absence Charges

The schools have adopted the Local Authority's (LA) "zero tolerance" policy towards:
i) Unauthorised absence and ii) Late collection of pupils after end of the school day.

Late collection – penalty

The purpose of the penalty is to focus on parent(s) or carer(s) of children who are collected persistently or significantly late. This mechanism will be reviewed annually.

The current penalty fee:

Period of lateness	Fees (£)
Up to 3:40 p.m.	No charge
3:40 – 4:10 p.m.	£10.00
4:10 – 5:10 p.m. (*)	£15.00

Social Services Care: Any child still uncollected from 5:45pm may be taken into social services care. Alternatively, the principal learning leader/ senior leader will contact the local police to notify them that a child has been left at the school.

Unauthorised Absence

Should your child be absent due to unauthorised holiday or event, it will automatically be referred to the LA who will enforce an immediate fine of £60.00 currently and is subject to government changes (or as determined by the LA) due to be paid within 28 days. The fine will increase to £120 currently, and is subject to government changes, for non- payment after the 28 days. This is a per pupil charge per parent.

THE LAW ON CHARGING: Extended Schools

Where the schools offer extended activities through third-party providers from the

voluntary and private sectors, whether on the schools' sites or elsewhere, those providers are not subject to any of the following legal constraints. However, schools providing activities direct must comply with the law, as follows:

- a. Every school governing body must devise and publish a charging and fee remission policy. A school cannot make any charges to parents unless this policy is in place. (The relevant regulations are summarised in the Guide to the Law for School Governors and in DfE's Guidance on Charging for School Activities.)
- b. Schools governing bodies have powers to provide any facilities or services that further any charitable purpose for pupils, their families and for people who live and work in the local community. This includes childcare.
- c. Any profits made by the schools from providing facilities or services must be reinvested in the schools or in the services.
- d. Schools may use their delegated budgets to subsidise a child's access to chargeable extended activities, where they consider that the activities are provided for the purposes of the schools, because they are of educational benefit to the child.
- e. Schools may not charge for: any study support activities provided during the school day, except for music tuition, or for provision before or after the school day which delivers the National Curriculum or prepares a child for a public examination.
- f. Schools may lawfully charge for other study support (for example, additional sport, drama and music clubs, holiday activities, visits, and additional courses, such as first aid), following consultation.
- g. Extended day services are chargeable – for example: breakfast clubs, after-school clubs and multi-sports clubs.

Extended schools offer particular benefits for the most disadvantaged children and young people. It is important that they have free access to at least some study support activities, especially those designed for children who have fallen behind in attainment, to enhance their achievement and enjoyment and support personalised learning.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The School Business Leader monitors charges and remissions, and ensures these comply with this policy.

This policy will be reviewed by the School Business Leader on an annual basis.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the Resources Committee.

11. Relationship to other policies (Linked policies)

The policy compliments the school's equality policy, curriculum policy, finance policy and procedures, educational visits policy, attendance policy and the teaching and learning policy.