



# CHARGES, VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS & REMISSIONS POLICY



**Wood Bank School**

From strong roots we grow and blossom

Policy Ratified	January 2024
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Signed (Headteacher)	
Signed (Chair of Governors)	

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## 1. Summary

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education on charging for school activities and the Education Act 1996, sections 449-462 which set out the law on charging for school activities in England.

## 2. Aims

Our school aims to:

- Have robust, clear processes in place for charging and remissions
- Clearly set out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will be made

## Key points

- The school, subject to the limited exceptions referred to in this policy, cannot charge for education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment).
- The school must ensure that they inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of benefits of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

## 3. Definitions

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

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor or the head teacher.

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 Governor Policy Committee and the governing board.

Monitoring the implementation of this policy has been delegated to the head teacher, who is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the policy and that it is being applied consistently.

Staff are responsible for implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently and for notifying the head teacher of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies.

Parents are expected to notify staff or the head teacher of any concerns or queries regarding this policy.

## 5. Where charges cannot be made

## 5.1 Education

- 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
  - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
  - 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
  - Entry for a prescribed public examination if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school
  - Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school

## 5.2 Transport

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

## 5.3 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 school
  - Religious education
  - Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit

## 6. Where charges can be made

The school **can** charge for:

### 6.1 Education

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him or her to own them
- Optional extras (see section 6.2)

- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see section 6.3)
- 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
- Property or equipment that has been damaged as a result of a pupil's behavior

## 6.2 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 school
- Religious education
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school
- Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority 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 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.

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

### **6.3 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.

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

### **6.4 Residential visits**

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

## **7. 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. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the school or head teacher should make this clear to parents at the outset

**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.**

If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the school cannot fund it from some other source, then it must be cancelled. When making requests for voluntary contributions, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. School should avoid sending colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments and direct debit or standing order mandates should be sent to parents when requesting contributions.

Some activities for which the school may ask parents for voluntary contributions include:

School trips, sports events, residential visits.

## **8. Remissions**

In some circumstances the school may not charge for items or activities set out in sections 6 and 8 of this policy. This will be at the discretion of the governing board and will depend on the activity in question.

### **8.1 Remissions for residential visits**

Parents who can prove they are in receipt of any of the following benefits will be exempt 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 that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's annual gross income does not exceed £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (this is paid for 4 weeks after an individual stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit (if the application was made on or after 1 April 2018, the family's income must be less than £7,400 per year – after tax and not including any benefits)