



Heathfield Schools' Partnership

Charging and Remissions Policy

This policy was reviewed:	Spring 2022
This policy will be reviewed again:	Spring 2023
Governor Committee Responsibility:	Finance Committee
Statutory policy	Yes
Source:	Governing Body

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Charging and Remissions Policy

1.0 Rationale

- 1.1 The Headteacher and Governing Body are committed to providing further opportunities to inspire and develop interests and experiences beyond the statutory National Curriculum.

2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 The Headteacher will ensure that the following applies:

3.0 Charging Policy for school activities

- 3.1 School governing bodies and local authorities **cannot** charge for:
- an admission application to any maintained school;
 - during school hours all activities that are a necessary part of the National Curriculum plus religious education will be provided free of charge (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
 - education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
 - tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
 - entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school; and
 - examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school.
- 3.2 Schools and local authorities **can** charge for:
- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them;
 - optional extras (see below); and
 - music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see Section 6 below).

4.0 Optional Extras

- 4.1 We may charge for optional, extra activities provided outside the school day e.g. some clubs run by external providers. Such activities are not part of the National Curriculum or religious education, nor are they part of an exam syllabus.
- 4.2 The school reserves the right to ask a parent to clear any outstanding debts before they can register a place on an optional extra e.g. school journey or club.

4.3 In 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;
- support staff;
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra; this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
- the cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

5.0 Voluntary Contributions

5.1 Voluntary contributions will be sought for such activities as visiting theatres, artists, poets, authors, drama groups, etc.; off-site visits to museums, theatres, activity centres, etc.; and for materials needed to enhance the life experiences of the pupils.

5.2 Voluntary contributions will not raise funds above and beyond the actual costs incurred for the activity; voluntary contributions will be worked out for the actual cost of the activity including, if appropriate, entrance fees, teaching costs, including the cost of travel and board and lodging, where a teacher/instructor has been engaged specifically for the purpose of providing the activity (the cost of any teachers employed by the Authority under a contract of employment will not be included).

5.3 Children of parents who do not contribute will not be treated any differently. 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. Schools must make sure that they make this clear to parents.

5.4 The Governing Body have agreed to reduce voluntary contributions by 50% for pupils in receipt of FSM.

5.5 Wording to be contained in all school trip letters;

“It is necessary for us to request a voluntary contribution for this trip/activity. The suggested voluntary contribution is £xxx. If your child is entitled to free school meals, this cost is subsidised to £xxx. If we do not receive enough contributions or funding from elsewhere to cover the cost of the trip/activity, it may be necessary to cancel. You will be informed if this happens.”

6.0 Swimming

The School offers swimming lessons to pupils in the Junior School. Parents are asked for a contribution to the cost of transport, this is calculated by dividing the total cost of the transport by the number of pupils in the year group. The cost per child will not be escalated to account for any non-payers.

7.0 Residential Visits

- 7.1 Not offered within the Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 curriculum at Heathfield Nursery and Infant School.
- 7.2 Charges will be made for board, lodging and transport. Parents / Carers who qualify for financial benefit can make a request to the Headteacher for support.
- 7.3 A non-refundable deposit will be required to secure a child's place on a residential journey. This deposit can only be refunded if another child takes their place. Parents will be expected to meet stipulated deadlines for each instalment, dates will be set in line with payment dates from the travel company. If a residential trip is cancelled by the provider parents are entitled to request a full refund.

8.0 Music Tuition

- 8.1 The law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, but music lessons are an exception.

9.0 Transport

- 9.1 Schools **cannot** charge for:

- transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local education authority has arranged for pupils to be educated
- transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when s/he has been prepared for that examination at the school

10.0 Calculating Charges

- 10.1 When charges are made for any activity, 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. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who can't.
- 10.2 Parents / Carers who qualify for financial benefit can make a request to the Headteacher for support.
- 10.3 If the voluntary contributions or funding from elsewhere is insufficient to cover the cost of the trip/activity, it may be necessary to cancel. Parents will be informed of this on each trip letter.

11.0 Services provided by the Schools

11.1 School Meals

- School meals are required to be paid for in advance.
- If debts start to accumulate written statements will be sent out via email or text regularly.
- If a family's account goes into arrears by £30 or more, or any smaller debt continues for more than two months, school meals will no longer be provided. It will be the parent's responsibility to provide a packed lunch for their child.

- Parents who experience difficulty in settling the debt will be contacted to discuss the situation with a view to arranging a suitable payment scheme.
- Failure to comply with any agreed payment scheme, will result in the matter being escalated. The parent will be called into a meeting with a member of Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- Meals will be resumed once the debt is settled in full.

11.2 Before & After School Care (The Club)

- Provision for The Club must be booked and paid for in advance. If a debt occurs of £50 or more the following action will be taken:
- An invoice will be issued with a 7 day payment period.
- If the invoice is not settled within 7 days the parent will be called to discuss a suitable payment plan.
- After 7 days, if the parent fails to comply with the payment plan they will be written to be called by a member of the SLT and The Club facility will be withdrawn.

12. Methods of Payment

12.1 Both Schools' preferred method of payment is online via Scopay.

12.2 The Schools reserve the right to refuse payment by cheque.

13. Debt Recovery

The school will make every effort to recover debts.

- First stage – sending reminders from the office via text or email.
- Second stage – to agree on a suitable repayment scheme.
- Failure to stick to the repayment scheme would result in the parent being called in to a meeting with a member of SLT.
- If a parent has an outstanding debt and pays money for another optional extra e.g. residential journey, the school reserves the right to write to the parent explaining a provisional place on the journey has been held until all debts are cleared (*see 4.2 above*).

In line with the Scheme of Financing Schools Version 1.0 (April 2018), the Governing Body can write-off debts that have been outstanding for more than 6 months if they are certain it is unrecoverable. Written-off debts will be reported to the Director of Children's Services when requested.

This policy will be reviewed by the Finance Committee annually.