



**Inspiring Primaries
Academy Trust**
Inspiring all to flourish and succeed

Systems of Financial Control

Section 3.1

Charging & Remissions

Section 3.1 – Charging and Remission Policy

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on [charging for school activities](#) and [the Education Act 1996](#), sections 449 to 462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England. Academies are required to comply with this Act through their funding agreements.

It's also based on guidance from the DfE on [statutory policies for schools and academy trusts](#). This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Background

The Trust believes that all pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extracurricular) independent of their parents/carers' financial means. This charging policy describes how the Trust will do its best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

Definitions

Charges and remissions are defined as follows:

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

Roles and responsibilities

The trust board has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy, but can delegate this to a committee.

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

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

Staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently
- Notifying the CEO of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies

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

Where charges cannot be made

Charges **cannot** be made for the following activities:

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- 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
 - 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
- 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 provided in connection with an educational visit
- 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
 - Religious education
 - Supply teachers, covering for teachers who are absent from school, accompanying pupils on a residential visit

Voluntary contributions from parents and carers may be sought for the benefit of the school or any school activities, but there is no obligation to contribute and pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents/carers have contributed (see "Voluntary Contributions" below).

Where charges can be made

Optional activities and events outside the curriculum

A variety of optional extra curricular activities may be provided at school, some of which may be chargeable, but attendance at which is entirely voluntary and parental agreement is a prerequisite for the provision of the optional extra. Optional extras for which we **may** charge include:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not part of:
 - The National Curriculum
 - Religious education
- 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

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- 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.

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

Extra curricular clubs

School staff may provide a range of clubs for the children to join if they wish out of school hours, including homework clubs. A charge **may** be made for contributions towards the costs of the club (incl. non teaching staff; materials or equipment costs) which will be advised to parents prior to the children joining it.

Peripatetic music lessons

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum and the Trust does not charge for this.

However, there is a charge for individual or small group music tuition if this is not part of the National Curriculum, i.e. at the request of the parents. This charge is paid directly to the private provider who provides peripatetic music teachers to teach individuals or small group lessons on the school site. Parents are given information about additional music tuition options at the start of each academic year. The charge cannot exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff giving the tuition.

Optional lessons and activities provided by external agencies

At times parents are offered the opportunity for their child to take part in a range of other activities. In the case of all of these, parents are responsible for the full costs of the activity.

Damage to property

A charge may be made to parents/carers for the cost of repair to any property damaged by a pupil.

Voluntary Contributions

The Trustees, while supporting the concept of free education for all, acknowledge that such activities can only continue if the majority of parents / carers voluntarily continue to make financial contributions which are reasonable and appropriate to the activity in question. Voluntary contributions may therefore be sought from parents/carers in support of any school activity, in or out of school time, residential or non-residential. These contributions **must be genuinely voluntary**.

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It is a requirement that the terms of any request make it clear

- If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions
- That there is no obligation to contribute.
- Those students will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents/carers have contributed.

Parents will be advised that If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, then it will be cancelled. *NB: in the case of residential trips where expressions of interest and confirmations of voluntary contributions are provided by parents, these amounts will become chargeable and no longer voluntary as they have been used to assess and confirm the financial viability of the trip.*

There is no limit to the amount of the contribution or to the use which can be made of it, provided that parents/carers are aware of that use when they contribute.

Refunds will be made in the following instances:

- Overpayment of more than £5.00 per pupil
- Withdrawal from an activity which results in no additional costs to the school.

A template letter to parents is provided as an appendix and is issued to all parents at the beginning of each academic year.

Voluntary contributions for activities as part of the curriculum

When organising school trips, visits or workshop activities which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the Trust invites parents to contribute to the cost of the activity. All contributions are voluntary but if insufficient voluntary contributions are received, the activity may be cancelled.

If a parent wishes their child to take part in a school trip or event, but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, the child is still allowed to participate fully in the trip or activity as long as parental consent has been given.

Swimming

The Trust organises swimming lessons for children. Lessons take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum.

A voluntary contribution is sought towards the cost of transport to and from the pool, provision of a lifeguard/specialist teacher and hire of the pool itself. Parents are informed in advance when these lessons are to take place.

Residential visits

The full cost of board and lodging for residential activities during school hours is chargeable to parents. However, without voluntary financial contributions to the remainder of the costs (transport, staffing), the activity could not take place.

A full breakdown of the likely costs should be available at the planning stage of each activity.

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Additional considerations

The Trust recognises its responsibility to seek to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end it will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible, each school shall publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the school year so that parents/carers can plan ahead
- Where the cost of the activity is high, establish a system for parents/carers to pay by instalments.

Financial support & remission

Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM) and Pupil Premium

Pupils might be eligible for free school meals if their parents are in receipt of any of the following:

- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods)
- 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 guarantee 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 four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

In addition, the following pupils will be protected against losing their free school meals:

- Since 1 April 2018, all existing free school meals claimants have continued to receive free school meals whilst Universal Credit is rolled out. This applies regardless of any change in household circumstances, including if their earnings rise above the threshold during that time. Protections will remain in place until the end of the 2025/26 school year.
- From the start of the 2026/27 school year, the Department for Education will extend entitlement to free school meals to include all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit. It is the DfE's intention to end transitional protections alongside this change in threshold, with eligibility for all pupils reverting to whether they meet the eligibility criteria, regardless of whether they were previously protected. The DfE will issue further guidance ahead of September 2026.

Pupils registered for free school meals are exempted from paying for board and lodging charges for residential trips.

They **may** also be entitled to some remission of other charges or for support which can be funded from the school's Pupil Premium Grant from the DfE. Parents are actively encouraged to register for free school meals if eligible so that the school receives this grant. **However, each school within the Trust determines how its own Pupil Premium grant is spent and remission & support arrangements may therefore vary by school.**

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Parents can check whether they are eligible for free school meals registration by contacting Leicestershire County Council School Food Support Service on 0116 305 5770 who will also be able to process any subsequent applications.

Financial Support

The Trust recognises that education places financial demands on parents and there are some occasions when parents/carers will find it hard to meet these demands. Although funds are very limited the Trust aims to support parents/families in exceptional circumstances where possible.

Application for financial support will be considered for:

- Obligation items of school uniform
- Costs of educational visits that are integral to the curriculum

Consideration will be given to students whose parents/carers are:

- In receipt of income support benefits but are not eligible for Free School Meals
- Experiencing temporary situations which are causing difficulty, for example caused by recent job loss, bereavement or other serious and unforeseen circumstances

Priority will be given to parents/carers who have not already been in receipt of financial support from the Trust.

Applications must be made using the Financial Support application form (appendix A). This can be completed by the parent/carer or a member of staff in their place and sent to their school Office. Evidence should be provided to support the eligibility criteria.

All information provided on this application form will be kept in the strictest confidence. If support is available, the parent/carer and the finance team will be notified.

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Financial Support Application

Name:

Pupil Name:
Class:

Address:

Description of the financial support you are applying for and the cost	
Item	Cost

Explanation of financial hardship (Please attach any evidence you feel would support your application)

Signature:	Date:
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Analysis of criteria & Conclusion:
Head to sign

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Template covering letter for trips

Dear Parents/Carers,

Learning outside the classroom is widely recognised as a valuable and effective means of extending pupil knowledge, enriching pupil understanding and promoting personal and social development. Ofsted also acknowledges the importance of quality learning experiences outside the classroom for raising pupil attainment. Consequently, we promote and encourage the organisation of educational visits for all our pupils and hope that parents will recognise the value and importance of these visits and give their full support.

There is some confusion regarding ‘voluntary contributions’ towards these trips and activities and through this letter I hope to clarify some of these issues.

In guidance written by the Department for Education ‘Charging for school activities’ (May 2018) it sets out that a school cannot ‘charge’ parents for any element of the National Curriculum, this includes materials for learning or educational activities. However, parents can be asked for ‘voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities’. In essence, this means that any costly activities can be subsidised by reasonable contributions by parents to enhance the experience of learners at the school.

The Trust believes wholeheartedly in the value of these experiences and tries to ensure that these opportunities are accessible and affordable to all. However, the Trust does not have the financial resources to pay the full costs and, consequently, a voluntary contribution has to be requested from parents/carers to make up the shortfall. This contribution is genuinely voluntary and neither you nor your child will be excluded if you choose not to contribute. The school cannot demand payment as, of course; a voluntary contribution is by definition voluntary. However, please note that without all such voluntary contributions, trips and activities may have to be cancelled, due to a lack of funds.

The Trust also makes allowance for those who simply cannot afford to contribute and uses some of its Pupil Premium funding to support those who are unable to pay with an additional contribution. Parents who feel they cannot contribute are encouraged to discuss this on an individual basis with the Head of School. These discussions take place with the utmost discretion and no child will ever be excluded from an activity due to lack of parental contribution.

There are, however, some in school activities that are not part of the national curriculum or run outside of the school day; for these activities the school can ask for payment. For example, additional musical instrument tuition, clubs that run before or after school, board and lodging costs for overnight stays etc.

Further details can be found within the Trust’s Charging & Remissions policy:

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<https://inspiringprimaries.uk/document/policies/>

I hope that this letter has clarified the issues regarding contributions to trips and activities. At Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust, we aim to give the children the best possible chances in their education whilst trying to balance the cost for both ourselves and parents. I hope that you will support us in this.

Kind regards

Chris Hall
Director of Finance & Operations

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