



# Charging and Remission Policy

**GEORGE STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
*"Believing in Every Child"*

Approved by:	Full Governing Body
Head Teacher:	Angela Hughes
Last reviewed on:	17 <sup>th</sup> March 2026
Next review due :	Spring 2027

## Status

Statutory

## Purpose

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 and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

## What was consulted?

The policy has been informed by *A Guide to the Law for School Governors* and the Department for Education guidance "*Charging for School Activities*" (May 2018).

## Relationship to other school policies

The policy complements the school's Equality Policy, Offsites visits and LOtC Activities Policy and the Teaching for Learning policy.

## Roles and responsibilities of Headteacher, other staff and Governors

The Headteacher, Staff and Governors will ensure that the following applies:

### 1. No charges will be made for

- An admission application to any state funded school – paragraph 1.9 (n) of the 'School Admission Code 2012' rules out requests for financial contributions as any part of the admissions process.
- 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, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of the school's basic curriculum for 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 all at school; and examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re sit(s) at the school.

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)
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see page 6)
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities

## **Optional extras**

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as 'optional extras'. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment.

Optional extras are:

- education provided outside of school time that is not:
  - a) part of the national curriculum;
  - b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school; or
  - c) part of 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/governing body have 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 (for example breakfast club, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions).

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;
- the cost of buildings and accommodation;
- non-teaching 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 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 must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It must not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

Furthermore 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. Therefore no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit. 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 prerequisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

## **2. Voluntary contributions**

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body or local authority from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the governing body or head teacher should make this clear to parents at the outset. The governing body or head teacher must also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her 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. Schools must ensure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. Schools should make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

When making requests for voluntary contributions, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. Schools should avoid sending colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments and direct debit or standing order mandates should not be sent to parents when requesting contributions.

### **3. Music Tuition**

Although the law states that, in general, all education provided during school hours must be free, instrumental and vocal music tuition is 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).

### **4. Transport**

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 authority has arranged for pupils to be educated;
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school; and
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

### **5. Families qualifying for remission or help with charges**

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the Governing Body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances. This would include those in receipt of Pupil Premium Grant or other benefits. This remissions policy sets out the circumstances in which charges will be waived. If remission or help is available in relation to a particular charge it is indicated in the right hand column of the table above.

Additional financial help may be considered under exceptional circumstances. This would be reviewed by the headteacher when a need arises.

Activity or thing which will or may be charged for	Notes	Remitted or help available
Charges will/may be made for music tuition	The cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument or singing, where the tuition is an optional extra for an individual pupil or groups of up to four pupils	Help available
Charges will be made for the board and lodging component of residential trips	The charge will not exceed the actual cost	Help available
Charges will be made for any transport costs incurred for trips.	The charge will not exceed the actual cost	Help available

## 6. 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

## 7. Payment for school meals and debt procedures

As the Local Education Authority is no longer accountable for the administration of a dinner money debt the responsibility now falls on the school to pursue instances of non-payment. As a result the school budget will have to directly fund any outstanding debts that cannot be recovered thereby directly affecting the amount of money that is available to provide education to all pupils.

### Provision of School Meals

Free School Meals are available for parents who meet certain criteria. Parents who think they may qualify for Free School Meals are advised to contact the school office for guidance or alternatively can apply online via Hertfordshire County Council. Information about applying for Free School Meals can be found on Hertfordshire County Council's website:

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/>

If a child's entitlement to free school meals expires or the parent or carer's personal circumstances change a packed lunch must be provided or payment in advance for a school dinner.

## **Cost of School meals**

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a legal duty on all state-funded schools in England, including academies and free schools to offer a free school lunch to all pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2 from September 2014.

Therefore, school meals are free of charge for children in Foundation 2 and KS1. School meals are available to children in KS2 at a cost of £3.20 per day or at no cost to those in receipt of Free School Meals entitlement. School meals must be paid for in advance on a Monday. Parents and carers will be notified of any change to the cost of School meals the term before the change takes place.

## **Payment for School Meals**

Payment of School meals can be made on School Comms using the link on the school website (School Comms is the school preferred method of payment) a cheque made payable to Herts Catering Services or cash.

Parents are advised to send in payments in a sealed envelope clearly marked with child's name and class and the amount enclosed. Envelopes containing payments can be handed to the class teacher, posted in the red box outside the school office or handed to the office staff.

School meals should be paid for in advance weekly, monthly, half termly or termly.

The School must ensure that all dinner money collected is banked in a timely manner in accordance with the School's financial procedures.

## **Management of School Meal Debts**

To ensure the school budget is not adversely affected by the cost of School Meal debt the Governors consider the fairest system to all families is a Zero tolerance approach.

Text messages will be sent home on a regular basis showing any outstanding balance.

Once a debt has reached £20.00 a text will be sent asking for payment. At this stage we will request that a packed lunch be provided until full payment of the debt has been made.

If no payment is received, a phone call home will be made to make arrangements for the settlement of the debt.

Where a child continues to require school dinners the parent will be invited to apply for Free School Meals or speak confidentially with member of the Senior Leadership Team.