



Charging and Remission Policy

The staff and Governors of Hester's Way Primary School 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 that a good range of visits and activities are offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

The 1996 Education Act requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities, which will be kept under regular review. The review date for this policy is recorded at the end of the document.

The DfE "Charging for School Activities" guidance, October 2014, has been used in writing this policy.

The policy identifies activities for which:

- **charges will not be made**
- **charges will be made**
- **charges may be waived**

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.

Separately from the matter of charging, schools may always seek voluntary contributions in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to pupils. All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that pupils of parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have.

No charges will be made for:

- An admission application to any state funded school - paragraph 1.9 (n) of the 'School Admissions 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 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.

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;
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

Activities for which charges may be made:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them;
- Optional extras (see page below);
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see page 6 of DfE Charging for Schools Activities Guidance October 2014);
- 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;
- 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.

Activities outside school hours

Charges may be made for non-residential which take place outside school hours but only if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside school hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours).

Residential activities

For residential trips deemed to take place during school time no charges may be made for any part of the trip other than for the board, lodging costs and transport. Consideration will be given to parents whose children are on benefits or income support, however, we can make no guarantees about the level of financial support given.

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).

Families qualifying for remission or help with charges.

If remission or help is available in relation to a particular the criteria for qualification for remission may include:

Parents in receipt of

- Universal Credit in prescribed circumstances
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue) does not exceed £16, 190
- The guarantee element of the State Pension
- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.

Parents who feel they have other special circumstances requiring assistance with payment will be offered an appointment to discuss these with the Head teacher. The final decision with regard to assistance payments lies with the Head teacher.

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:

- We shall publish notification of school trips and their approximate cost as far in advance as possible so that parents can plan ahead.;
- We have established a system for parents to pay in instalments;
- 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.

This policy was written by the Head Teacher.

Reviewed in December 2018; To be reviewed again in December 2021.

Ratified by: _____ Date: _____