



# The Fernwood School

*High Achievement with Care & Discipline for All"*

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## Charging and Remissions Policy

This policy will be monitored regularly and evaluated so that it remains responsive to current issues. This will be co-ordinated by the Chief Financial Officer.

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## 1. Objectives

The Fernwood School recognises the valuable contribution that a wide range of additional activities, including clubs, educational visits and residential experiences make to pupils' all round educational experience and their personal and social development (*Throughout this policy, the term "parents" means all those having parental responsibility for a child*).

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 and will not be made
- ✿ Offer a range of activities and visits whilst minimising the financial barriers that may prevent some pupils from taking full advantage of these opportunities

### Legislation and guidance

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.

### Definitions

**Charge:** a fee payable for specifically defined activities

**Remission:** the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

### The Trustee Board

- ✿ The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy
- ✿ Responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy has been delegated to the Finance Audit and Risk Committee

### Headteachers

- ✿ The Headteacher is responsible for its implementation and ensuring staff receive appropriate training in relation to this policy so that staff are familiar with the charging and remissions policy, and that it is being applied consistently

### Staff

- ✿ Staff are responsible for:
  - ✿ Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently
  - ✿ Notifying the Headteacher of any specific circumstances that they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies



## Parents/carers

- ✿ Parents/carers are expected to notify staff or the Headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding the charging and remissions policy

## 3. Where charges **cannot** be made

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. If 50% or **more** of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours.

School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

The Fernwood School will **not** charge for:

### Education

- ✿ Admission applications
- ✿ Education provided during school hours, (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments, or other equipment)
- ✿ Education provided outside school hours where it forms 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/carer
- ✿ 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. See *exception below*

### Transport

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

### Residential visits

- ✿ Education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours
  - ✿ If the number of school sessions taken up by the residential visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, it is deemed to



have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A 'half day' means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

*Example - pupils are away from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 9 half days including 5 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken 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, covering for teachers who are absent from school, accompanying pupils on a residential visit

#### 4. Where charges can be made

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. Where **less** than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require pupils to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

Below we set out what we **can** charge for:

##### Education

- ✿ Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent/carer wishes the child to own them
  - ✿ The cost of materials or ingredients for Art, Design and Technology subject areas
- ✿ For lost or damaged textbooks, exercise books and breakages of any academy equipment at cost if damaged or broken as a direct result of misconduct on the pupil's part
- ✿ Charge at cost, for any materials purchased by the Academy and offered to pupils for sale, e.g. stationery, calculators, art folders that may enrich pupils' learning, but is not a statutory requirement of the Academy to provide
- ✿ Departments selling other goods not linked to the National Curriculum
- ✿ The Fernwood School reserves the right to recover part, or the whole cost, of damage to buildings or equipment which is the result of vandalism or negligence by a pupil
- ✿ Optional extras (see Optional extras section below)
- ✿ Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see Music Tuition section below)
- ✿ Community facilities – See *lettings* section below
- ✿ Examination re-sit(s) if a pupil fails, **without good reason**, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the fee can be recovered from the pupil's parents



## Optional extras

We can 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 (LA) 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, 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 venues and accommodation
- ✿ Any insurance costs will be included in charges made for trips or activities
- ✿ 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/carers 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 arrangements 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 will be made.



## 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 also allow charging for tuition in larger groups.

- ✿ Charges can be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided:
  - ✿ Either individually, or to groups of any size
  - ✿ That the tuition is provided at the written 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

Parents will be required to make a term's commitment in advance of tuition (parents will be invoiced termly).

To terminate music tuition parents will need to give at least one term's notice in advance by writing/email to the Head of Music or the Finance Office. Should a pupil decide not to attend tuition at any time during a term, no reimbursement of fees will be given. Tuition will be cancelled if payment is not received on receipt of invoice. However, parents will still be liable for settling any outstanding amounts.

The Fernwood Academy Trust reserves the right to terminate tuition if it does not consider groups to be viable, or if progress/commitment is unsatisfactory. This will always be done after consultation with the instrumental teachers and parents.

- ✿ 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

## Residential visits

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

Parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging. *See Remissions section below.*

**We can charge for the whole visit if the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is less than 50% of the whole number of half days spent on the visit, then it is deemed to have not taken place during school.**

*Example - Pupils are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours and is chargeable.*



## 5. Voluntary contributions

The restrictions on charging for activities do not in any way prohibit the school from seeking voluntary contributions from parents for the benefit of the school or towards any school activities. Any such contributions must, however, be genuinely voluntary. It will therefore be made clear to parents if contributions are requested that:

- a. There is no obligation to contribute; and
- b. That pupils will **not** be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have contributed

If the school is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit, then the school reserves the right to cancel any activity or trip should insufficient voluntary contributions be received. An initial letter to parents in these circumstances would explain the nature of the proposed activity and its educational value. The letter would indicate the contribution per pupil which would be required if the activity were to take place. It would also emphasise that there would be no obligation to contribute, and that no pupil would be excluded from the activity because their parents/carers were unwilling or unable to contribute. However, the letter would also make it clear that the activity would not take place if insufficient contributions were received to support it.

There is no limit to the level of voluntary contribution which parents or others can make towards school activities.

## 6. Remissions (Wholly or partly)

Parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging. The list of benefits to which this applies can be found below and are equal to the criteria for free school meals eligibility:

- ✿ 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 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 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- ✿ Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

This also applies where children who get paid these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or carer.

In some circumstances, the school may not charge for items or activities set out in this policy. This will be at the discretion of the Board of Trustees and will depend on the activity in question. Queries about the remission of charges should be directed to the pupil's Head of Year.



## 7. Lettings and Use of Sports Facilities

**Charges for Use of the Site:** The Head of Operations is responsible for setting and reviewing charges annually. Charges are bookable through the Lettings Administrator and vary based on the hours and day of hire.

**Booking and Pricing Structure:** All users must complete a booking form and will receive a copy of the conditions of use as applicable. Charges may be adjusted annually by the Head of Operations in conjunction with the Chief Financial Officer.

All users must complete a booking form and receive a copy of conditions of use when applicable.

**Payment and Cancellation Terms:** Payment terms include a deposit requirement to secure each booking. Full payment must be made prior to the booking date. Cancellations must be made by email at least 7 days in advance to receive a full refund; cancellations made within 7 days may be subject to a partial or full charge, depending on the notice provided.

**For further details please see the Premises Hire Policy.**

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

The Headteacher monitors charges and remissions and ensures these comply with this policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Chief Financial Officer.

At every review the policy will be approved by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.