



Horizon Schools Federation

Charging & Remissions Policy September 2025

Reference Points

- ❖ *DfES Circular 2/89*
- ❖ *Education Act 1996, Section 449-462*
- ❖ *'Charging for school activities: Departmental advice for governing bodies, Federation leaders, Federation staff and local authorities May 2018*

PRINCIPLES

The Executive Headteacher and Governing Body recognise the value of providing a wide range of experiences to enrich and extend pupils' learning and to contribute to their personal development. The Executive Headteacher and Governing Body aim to promote and provide such experiences for the pupils of the Federation, both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and as additional optional activities.

However, many of these activities have an associated cost and cannot be provided unless voluntary contributions are received or parents are charged for the cost.

This policy will set out the circumstances in which charges will or will not be made for school activities and when charges may be waived in order to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to benefit from school visits, curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1996. Where 'parent' is referred to this will include adults with a responsibility for the pupil.

We aim:-

- To make school activities accessible to all pupils regardless of family income;
- To encourage and promote external activities which give added value to the curriculum;
- To provide a process that allows activities to take place at a minimum cost to parents, pupils and the Federation;

- To respond to the wide variations in family income while not adding additional unexpected burdens to the schools budgets.

LEGISLATION – EDUCATIONAL DURING SCHOOL HOURS

The DfE in its guidance to Federation Governors states that 'education provided during school hours must be free. The definition of 'education' includes materials, equipment and transport provided in school hours by school to carry pupils between the school and an activity.' It goes on to advise that 'although schools cannot charge for school time activities, the school can still invite parents/carers to make a voluntary contribution.' When additional costs are incurred by Horizon Schools Federation to enhance the curriculum opportunities for the pupils, parents may be requested to make voluntary contributions. However, no pupil will be left out of an activity because his or her parent/carer cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind.

EDUCATION OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS

The DfE in its guidance to School Governors states that 'a charge can only be made for activities that happen outside school hours when these activities are not part of the national curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education.' Charges may be made for activities that happen outside school hours if parents agree to pay. The Education Reform Act 1988 described activities, which can be charged for as 'optional extras' – see *below*.

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.

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.

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.

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 pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

REMISSIONS

To ensure that access to activities reflects intentions, The Horizon Schools Federation will implement the following Remissions Policy. The fundamental aim of this policy is to ensure that all pupils gain fully from everything that the school is able to offer them and is based on an understanding of the relationship between low income, entitlement and access. This policy takes into account the very real and persistent difficulties which people on low income have in meeting the costs of educational activities for their children.

Where parents are in receipt of:

- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit providing that the parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income does not exceed £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400 or the guarantee element of State Pension Credit, to claim full remission of the board and lodging costs if they so wish.
- Support under part IV of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999

The Governing Body will observe its statutory requirement to remit in full the cost of board and lodgings for any residential activity that the school organised for the pupil if the activity is deemed to take place within school hours. There may be cases of family hardship which make it difficult for pupils to take part in other particular activities for which a charge is made. When arranging a chargeable activity the Governing Body will invite parents to apply in confidence for the remission of charges in part or in full. Authorisation of remission will be made by the Executive Headteacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors.

DATA PROTECTION OF PUPILS & FAMILIES

Teachers will ensure that these children are not publicly identified and stigmatised. This is particularly important as the fear of stigmatisation is often a key element in the non-take up of Free School Meals. This will be accomplished by developing methods of collecting voluntary charges or dinner money, which do not identify children who do not contribute.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Voluntary contributions may be requested to help with providing activities even though they may be part of the normal school day or part of the National Curriculum. If voluntary contributions are requested for an activity it should be clearly understood that there is no obligation to contribute and that if the parent is unable or unwilling to pay, the child will not be excluded from the activity.

If sufficient contributions are not received the activity may be cancelled.

CHARGES

The Governing Body reserves the right to make a charge for the activities and items detailed below:

- Trips which are not part of the school curriculum or are outside the school day

- After school and pre-school clubs
- Damage to school property - the cost of replacing any item, such as a broken window or defaced, damaged or lost book, where this is a result of a pupil's behaviour.
- Visits to school by professionals e.g. Authors, storytellers, musicians, dancers, artists etc.
- Damage to school books (Reading scheme)

Lost School Equipment, Books etc

Parents will be expected to replace or pay for the cost of lost items of School property.

Breakages and Damage to School Buildings, Furniture or Property

Parents will be charged for damage caused as a result of a pupil's behaviour.

RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITY

The DfE in its guidance to School Governors states that 'For a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or essential to the education provided at the school, no charge may be made for either the education or the costs of the travel'.

However, charges will be made for board and lodging in these circumstances.

A voluntary contribution will be requested by the school for the 'Services' (this means the Instructors and all the Safety Equipment for the activities).