

Heart of the Forest Community Special School

Charging and Remissions Policy



Approved by:	HoF Governing Body	Date:	May 2024
Signed by Chair of Governors:	Awaiting ratification on 15/04/2024	Date:	Awaiting ratification on 15/04/2024
Last reviewed on:	May 2024	Next review date:	May 2025
Website:	Yes	Type:	Statutory

1.0 Aims

The school aims to provide for all pupils the best possible educational opportunities available within the funds allocated by the Local Authority, and by the funds in the Unofficial School Fund. The law states very clearly that education during normal school hours is to be free of any compulsory charge to parents and the school endorses that principle and is committed to uphold these legal requirements.

It is recognised, however, that many educationally valuable activities have been and will continue to be dependent on financial contributions in whole or in part from parents. Without that financial support the school would find it difficult to maintain the quality and breadth of the educational and therapeutic programme provided for pupils. Although the school recognises the need for voluntary contributions it intends to keep such financial contributions to a minimum and ensure, if appropriate (reflective of individual needs), that all our pupils are able to take part, irrespective of their circumstances.

The law recognises that charges may be made to parents in certain defined circumstances.

2.0 Where charges cannot be made below we set out what we cannot 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 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
- 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

- 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 that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he or she has 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
- Education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of:
 - o The national curriculum
 - o A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
 - o Religious education
 - o Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit

3.0 Where charges can be made below we set out what we can charge for:

Education

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him or her to own them
- Optional extras (see below)
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities

Optional extras

We are able to 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 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

- 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.

Music tuition

Schools can charge for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of pupils, 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 giving the tuition.

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.

4.0 Voluntary contributions

As an exception to the requirements set out in section 5 of this policy, the school is able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents to fund activities during school hours which would not otherwise be possible.

Some activities for which the school may ask parents for voluntary contributions include:

Parents/Carers may be invited to provide voluntary contributions towards ingredients for cookery, drinks and snacks or activities such as visiting performers, story tellers etc. Class teacher will inform Parents/Carers as to the requested amount.

For visits occurring during school time the school may invite a voluntary contribution from parents to meet/part meet the costs. There is no obligation for parents to make any

contribution, and no child will be excluded from an activity if their parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If the school is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit then it will be cancelled.

Parents may make a voluntary class contribution at any point of the school year, this can be used by the class for a treat such as end of year party/snacks etc.

5.0 Remissions

In some circumstances the school may not charge for items or activities set out in sections 6 and 8 of this policy. This will be at the discretion of the governing board and will depend on the activity in question.

Remissions for residential visits

Parents who can prove they are in receipt of any of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging for residential visits:

- 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 guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's annual gross income does not exceed £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (this is paid for 4 weeks after an individual stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit (if the application was made on or after 1 April 2018, the family's income must be less than £7,400 per year – after tax and not including any benefits)

6.0 Telephone Calls

The school recognises, in this communication age, the wide use of mobile phones, but also the exceptionally poor reception in this area. The school does not charge staff for personal phone calls based on the assumption that they are for essential use only. However, this will be kept under review.