

PLYMSTOCK SCHOOL

Charging and Remissions Policy

HEAD TEACHER:	Stuart Koehler-Lewis
SCHOOL BUSINESS ACCOUNTANT:	Chris Hayter
Reviewed:	October 2024
Next Review:	October 2026

Policy Lead: School Business Accountant (Finance Lead)

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The purpose of the policy is to ensure that there is clarity over those items which the school will provide free of charge and for those items where there may be a charge.

1. Aims

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 be made.

2. Legislation and guidance

- This policy is written in line with guidance from the DfE on 'Charging for school activities Departmental advice for governing bodies, school leaders, school staff and local authorities' May 2018
- Academies are required through their funding agreements to comply with the law on charging for school activities.

3. Definitions

Charge: a fee payable for specifically defined activities

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

The school day: is defined as: 8.40am to 3.10pm – 32 hours and 30 minutes per week.

4. Responsibilities

Head teacher

- The Head teacher is responsible for working with the school finance team to ensure 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 Head teacher or School Business Accountant of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies.

The school will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation, as necessary.

Parents

Parents are expected to notify staff or the Head teacher of any concerns or queries regarding the charging and remissions policy.

5. Where charges cannot be made

Below we set out what schools **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:
 - i. The national curriculum;
 - ii. 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, 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;
- Educational visits, where these are compulsory for the completion of the curriculum subject.

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:

- The national curriculum;
- A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school;
- Religious education;
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

If the number of school sessions taken up by the 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).

6. Where charges can be made

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

Education

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes them to own them;
- Optional extras (see below);
- Music and vocal tuition, by external providers;

- Community facilities.

7. Optional extras

Schools 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).
- Educational visits that are not compulsory for the completion of a curriculum subject

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 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.

8. Music tuition

Schools can charge for vocal or instrumental tuition provided individually, 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; and for a pupil who is looked after by a local authority.

9. Residential visits

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

10. Voluntary contributions

As an exception to the requirements set out in 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: school trips, sports activities.

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.

11. Activities schools can charge for

The school can and will charge for the following activities:

Activities outside school hours

Non-residential activities which take place outside school hours, but only if most 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

Board and lodging costs (but only those costs) of residential trips deemed to take place during school time. Residential trips deemed to take place outside school time.

Music tuition

Music tuition for students

12. Additional considerations

The school 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 have established a system for parents to pay in instalments;

When an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip;

We acknowledge that offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis discriminates against students from families on lower incomes, and we will avoid that method of selection.

13. Calculating charges

When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who cannot or will not. Support for cases of hardship will come through voluntary contributions and fundraising.

14. Remissions

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 Head teacher and will depend on the activity in question.

15. Hardship

In cases of hardship the school will consider in their absolute discretion the remission of fees (either in full or in part) for those pupils who they consider will benefit from such tuition. Families eligible for FSM funding which is paid to the school also have access to a personal budget which can be used towards the cost of activities covered by this policy.

Eligible benefits - September 2024

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers' Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit

Children who get paid these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or guardian, can also get free school meals funding.

Monitoring arrangements

The School Business Accountant monitors charges and remissions, and ensures these comply with this policy.

This policy will be reviewed by the School Business Accountant every two years. Following every review, the policy will be approved by the Head teacher of Plymstock School.