



Charging and Remissions Policy

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Agreed by governing body: Summer 2026

Review date: Summer 2030

Signed

Chair of Governors:

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1.0 Introduction, aims, purpose of policy

We aim to provide a broad, balanced curriculum for all pupils within our care. However, it is recognised that many educationally valuable activities need to be partly funded by voluntary contributions from parents. Without that financial support, the school would find it impossible to maintain the quality and breadth of educational experiences provided for the pupils.

Whilst this curriculum enrichment is not compulsory these activities are considered to be a valuable part of the education we offer at Chase Bridge. We positively encourage all children to participate and will make every reasonable effort to ensure all are included.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that statutory regulations with regards to charging are met by the school and that there is clarity about aspects for which it is the school's responsibility to fund activities, where it is reasonable to request voluntary contribution and where it is reasonable to pass on a charge to parents.

This policy aims to clearly set out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will and will not be made.

2.0 Policy summary

To provide a broad and enriching curriculum for the children means that on occasion trips, visits and activities may be provided either on-site or off-site for which a cost is attached. In order to provide these additional activities it is necessary for us to ask parents for an annual contribution towards costs and it is recognized that without this contribution these activities would not be possible. However, it is also recognized that some families that are entitled to benefits will need assistance with contributions and the school budget supports families with the payment annually. No child will ever be excluded from an activity for financial reasons.

Please also refer to the following policies and documents

- Chapter 23 of A Guide to the Law for School Governors.
- The law on charging for school activities is set out in Sections 449-462 - Education Act 1996

3.0 Day and part day educational visits including workshops

Parents are asked to make an annual one off contribution towards the cost of trips, visits and workshops at the beginning of the academic year. This does not cover the cost of the year 5 and 6 residential trips. Every effort will be made to keep these costs reasonable, but if insufficient contributions were to be received, it is likely that there would be limitations to the activities offered. In some instances, it may be necessary to cancel an activity if insufficient voluntary contributions are made.

4.0 Residential visits

Residential trips are currently offered in years 5 and 6 and both provide important educational experiences for the children. Whilst not compulsory they are considered to be a valuable part of the curriculum and as such all children are positively encouraged to take part.

Parents will be asked for contributions to cover the cost of transport, accommodation, food and activities for the duration of the trip. The school will make it clear that parents in receipt of certain benefits, such as free school meals, are entitled to ask for assistance with costs whilst at the same time highlighting the fact that insufficient contributions may result in a trip being cancelled.

Initial deposits for residential trips will be non-refundable. Parents will be informed of this when they are provided with initial information about the trip.

In the event that a pupil cannot attend a trip at the last minute, e.g. due to illness, it will be at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school will take into account whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

5.0 Swimming lessons

There will be no charge for swimming lessons as they are an integral part of the curriculum. The school will budget annually to cover the cost of lessons, pool hire and transport.

6.0 Instrumental and music tuition

Some instrumental music tuition is provided free of charge during the school day as part of the National Curriculum. The Richmond Music Trust offers additional instrumental tuition during the school day for which they charge. Parents deal directly with the Music Trust for these lessons.

7.0 School lunches

Currently, there is no charge for school meals provided for infants or junior children.

- Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are funded via the government's Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) scheme.
- Years 3 to 6 are funded via the Mayor of London's Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) scheme.

Prepayment of at least one week's value is expected and all accounts must remain in a credit position as arrears should not be seen. Where meals have been issued and payment has not been received in advance, parents will be notified either by telephone or by email. Any money outstanding after 14 days after the final notification, the parent may be informed that their child can no longer have school meals and that a packed lunch should be arranged from a specified date. This term will be paused during the trial year of Universal Free School Meals for children in key stage 2 for the academic year 2023 to 2024.

8.0 Lions wraparound care - breakfast and after school

Lions is our wraparound care provision, available term time for parents with children in reception to year 6. Prepayment of at least one week's value is expected and all accounts must remain in a credit position as arrears should not be seen. Where payment has not been received in advance, despite reminders by telephone or email for payment to be settled by a specified date, the space will be withdrawn and offered to the next child on the waiting list.

9.0 Before and after school extra-curricular clubs

At Chase Bridge, our vision is for children to excel at learning, express their talents and to care for others. Our commitment to this vision includes having the widest possible range of clubs which goes beyond the curriculum.

Our clubs will be charged for by the provider which may be the school or an external provider. For school led clubs, prepayment for a club space is required. Payment failure will result in the club space being withdrawn and offered to the next child on the waiting list.

10.0 Nursery

A charge will be made to nursery parents in excess of hours funded by the Universal Entitlement or the Extended Entitlement should they accept a 30 hours per week nursery placement. The hourly Nursery top-up rate will be reviewed annually. The additional hours will be chargeable should the child be absent, as the staffing ratios will be maintained throughout the term. Parents are required to maintain a credit balance on their account.

11.0 Unauthorised late collection from school

Any child collected after the timetabled collection time and is deemed persistent in habit by the school is subject to a charge of £15 up to 4pm. After 4pm, the child will be placed in our Lions after school care where an additional ad hoc session charge will be further levied. Parents will be notified of any such charges in advance. We would hope every effort is made to pick up at the end of the school day. Lions also operate a late collection charge which will be applied from 5.50pm onwards at £1 per minute.

12.0 Loss and damage

Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a pupil, and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible. Each incident will be dealt with on its own merit and at the Executive Headteacher's discretion.

Where school property has been lost or damaged, either wilfully or through neglect by a pupil or parent, the school may charge those responsible for some or all of the cost of repair or replacement.

The school may ask parents to pay for items of school property which their child wilfully or carelessly damages or loses, for example, library books.

13.0 Classroom learning materials

On occasion, the school may recommend additional textbooks, practice books, equipment or resources for a specific themed activity which would be beneficial for the children's learning. In these circumstances it is the parent's choice to purchase or contribute.

14.0 Other chargeable activities

- *Attendance confirmation letters* - The school charges £15.00 to produce an official attendance or address confirmation letter for children currently attending the school. The charge for requests from past pupils and families will be £25.00.
- *References for independent schools* - The school will charge £25 for a standard Chase Bridge reference. This reference will then be sent out to all schools who request it. If specific references are required for a certain school, then an additional charge of £25 will be incurred for each additional reference.

Any requests will only be fulfilled once payment has been received. This money is put into the school fund, which is to be used to support teaching and learning across the school.

The school is unable to service any requests to countersign passport applications. We encourage parents to refer to official government guidelines.

15.0 Payments and refunds

The school requires all payments using the online payment system. Please note, we are unable to accept cash payments. Please contact the school office should you require assistance or further information concerning our online payment platform.

In general, any agreed refunds will appear as a credit amount in the parent's online payment account. Payments for school led extra-curricular clubs are only refundable in exceptional circumstances. If a child cannot attend an activity such as a trip, residential or workshop, any contribution will not be refundable if the activity is still taking place.

16.0 Remissions

No child or family will be discriminated against or made to feel self-conscious about making no payment or part payment towards school visits and other chargeable activities.

Families that are in receipt of income support or universal credit, or are facing financial constraints will be invited in confidence to discuss the remission of charges in full or in part.

Pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium may be funded for extra-curricular clubs, trips, residential and other activities. Details of remission arrangements will be stipulated when parents are advised of individual charges.

The school will endeavour to continue to offer assistance to families experiencing financial difficulty.#

17.0 Debt recovery

The school will take all reasonable measures to collect debts. A debt will only be written off after all measures, commensurate with the size and nature of the debt, have been taken to recover it. The school may seek advice from the legal team within the local authority regarding the recovery of debt.