



ASTON FIELDS MIDDLE SCHOOL

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Review date: September 2024
Cycle: 1 year
Date of next review: September 2025



Charging and Remissions Policy

1. OVERVIEW

The education we provide wholly or mainly during school hours will be free but, on some occasions, a ‘voluntary’ contribution towards the cost of an activity may be requested by the school. Parents/carers are free to decide whether or not to contribute. This policy sets out the principles upon which the school will operate charges and remissions.

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on charging for school activities and Education Act 1996, sections 449-462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in maintained schools in England.

2. OBJECTIVES

1. This Charging and Remissions Policy covers charges relating to educational and non-educational activities.
2. To make clear what will be provided without charge and what will be offered with a charge being made.
3. To clarify what is meant by any request for voluntary contributions.
4. School visits, which are planned to support classroom work, offer the pupils first-hand experience of topics being studied. This first-hand experience is an invaluable aid to the learning process. Visits also offer opportunities for the development of confidence, independence, responsibility for self and others, and a sense of adventure, which are not available in the same way in school.
5. Extended visits over several days undertaken by the older pupils offer a very special opportunity for social, physical, emotional, and intellectual development outside the usual home/school environment, which would not otherwise be possible.
6. Practical activities such as cookery, and work in art/craft and design technology, are important, and offer special opportunities for active learning and the development of cross-curricular skills

The following guidelines set out the financial arrangements, which will apply when the above activities are under consideration.

Guidelines

General Principles

The school wishes to provide the best possible educational opportunities available within the funds allocated by the Department for Education (DfE). The law states clearly that education during normal school hours is to be free of any compulsory charge to parents/carers, and the school fully endorses that principle. It is recognised, however, that many educationally valuable activities will be dependent on financial contributions in whole or in part from parents/carers. Without that financial support, the school would find it impossible to maintain the quality and breadth of educational programme provided for pupils. Where specialists are involved, or activities are organised to further enhance the curriculum provision parents may be asked for a voluntary financial contribution.

The school’s concern is to ensure financial contributions for additional activities are reasonable and kept to a minimum to ensure as far as possible, that all pupils can take part, regardless of their circumstances. Any calculated contribution will not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity and will be divided equally by the number of pupils participating. Donations from the Parent



Association, Friends of Aston Fields Middle School, or any outside organisation will be taken into consideration when calculating the cost. There will be no levy on those who contribute, to support those who can't or won't.

The school will make clear the criteria to allocate places on any activity before requesting any contribution from parents/careers as part of any information sent out to them. Explaining if insufficient funds are available for an activity requiring a voluntary contribution, it may be necessary to cancel the activities, and parents/carers will be informed of this when the contribution is requested, and any monies returned promptly. The school will decide on an appropriate level of income necessary for the activities to take place or insufficient funds to proceed with it in full.

The main exception to this guidance is music tuition covered under The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007, which sets out the conditions for charging for playing a music instrument, including vocal tuition. The school will clarify this when informing parents/careers. As this is not chargeable if part of any curriculum activity.

3. STRATEGIES

1. No charge will be made for admitting pupils to school.
2. Transport or admission costs for swimming lessons or for visits to museums, etc. during school hours will be met by the school.
3. The school may request voluntary contributions towards the cost of some activities planned during school hours.
4. Where parents are asked to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of an activity which takes place during school hours, or to school equipment or school funds, the contribution will be genuinely voluntary. Pupils of parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute will not be discriminated against.
5. When there are insufficient voluntary contributions to make an activity possible, and when there is no way to make up the shortfall, it will be cancelled.
6. On residential trips that take place wholly, or mainly, during school hours, the school will charge for the cost of board and lodging at the actual cost of provision.
7. Children whose parents are in receipt of some specific support payments will, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, also be entitled to the remission of these charges. A similar entitlement will apply when the trip takes place outside school hours but where it is necessary either as part of the national curriculum or the syllabus for religious education.
8. Where music tuition or singing tuition is not an essential part of the national curriculum, charges may be made.
9. Refunds will be given upon request, if a pupil is unable to attend a trip that the parent/carer has paid for, due to an accident or illness. The only exclusion will be the French Trip and PGL due to automatic insurance cover through the travel companies.
10. If the school receives more contributions towards the cost of the trip and is left with a surplus balance which is more than £10.00 per pupil, the school will agree to pay back any balance which exceeds this cost to the pupils who are attending the trip.

Charges relating to Educational Activities

Type of Activity	Request from Parents/Carers
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Day trip (curriculum) Visits during school time required for curriculum reasons, or for Religious Education	Voluntary contribution
Day trip (optional, outside of hours) Visits which are not specifically required for curriculum reasons or Religious Education, taking place outside of school time	Charge for Allowable Costs*
Optional Activities (outside of hours) For example – cookery club after school	Charge for Allowable Costs*
Residential Trips**	Charge for Allowable Costs*
Classroom Materials (to own) Where the parent has indicated in advance that they would like to own the finished product	Charge for Allowable Costs*
Classroom Materials (for practical activities such as cookery, DT etc.)	Voluntary contribution

* Allowable costs include:

1. The pupil's travel and subsistence costs
2. Materials, books, instruments, and other equipment
3. Teaching and support staff if employed to accompany the visit
4. Entrance fees to museums, castles, theatres etc.

** Charges will be made for board and lodging, except for those pupils entitled to remissions – see section 4. Parents/carers will be charged for all allowable costs* when the number of school sessions missed by the pupil's totals half or more of the number of half days taken up by the activity. In such cases parents will be told how the charges were calculated.

Letter requesting voluntary contributions

The letter requesting a voluntary contribution will

- Explain the nature of the proposed activity;
- Explain its value in educational terms;
- Indicate the level of contribution required;
- Emphasise that there is no obligation to contribute, and that no pupil will be omitted from the activity because his/her parents/guardians are unwilling or unable to pay;
- Indicate the activity may not take place if not enough contributions are received.

Remissions

The school is allocated specific funding for each child who is eligible for free school meals (or have been eligible in the past 6 years). This funding can be used to pay for extra-curricular activities for those children.

Contributions may be reduced or waived for pupils whose parents make a request to the Headteacher.



Charges relating to Non-Educational Activities

Lettings

Hall Hire	£30 per hour
Extended Services Hire	£30 per hour
Holiday Club Hire	£100 per day

Photocopying

A4	B&W	£0.05
	Colour	£0.10
A3	B&W	£0.10
	Colour	£0.20

Use of and charging for photocopying is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Telephone Calls

Staff using the school telephone may do so at the normal telephone costs. Charging for calls is at the discretion of the headteacher.

Breakage and Fines

A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect, or loss of school property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books, or materials), the charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the headteacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team may decide.

This also applies to third party property where the repair or replacement cost has been recharged to the school. In such cases the full cost will be passed onto the individuals involved.

4. OUTCOMES

The funding of activities will be a clear and open process understood by all. We intend that our charging and remissions policy will be in line with that of the Local Authority and that it will meet the requirements of the law.

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body.

Policy agreed by Governing body