



Charging and Remissions Policy

This policy sets out when schools in the Willow Learning Trust will charge parents and when parents will be entitled to remission of charges. **Aims**

Our Trust 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 and will not be made.
- Offer a range of activities and visits whilst minimising the financial barriers that may prevent some pupils from taking full advantage of these opportunities.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on charging for school activities and the Education Act 1996, sections 449 to 462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England. Academies are required to comply with this Act through their funding agreements. The Trustees have also used the DfE guidance on 'Charging for school activities (May 2018)' in drawing up this policy.

Definitions

- **Charge:** a fee payable for specifically defined activities
- **Remission:** the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable or subsidy of that charge.

Roles and responsibilities

The Trustees

The Trustees in liaison with the school Local Governing Bodies have overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor or the headteacher.

The Local Governing Body has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring 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 Headteacher of any specific circumstances that 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.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are requested to notify staff or the Headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding the charging and remissions policy.

Charges

List of activities for which charging by the school is permitted:

Education

- Music and vocal tuition (see below)
- Optional extras (for example, a workshop, internal experience for the pupils or educational visit).
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities
- Exams in specific circumstances (see below)

Music tuition

Willow Learning Trust schools charge for the full cost of vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of pupils, whether in school time or not, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent/carer. Details will be included in the contract for instrumental tuition made between the Peripatetic Music Teacher and the parent/carer.

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

Educational visits

Willow Learning Trust schools charge the full cost of board and lodging, insurance, travel, and additional staff on residential visits.

The following is a list of additional educational visits organised by the school, which may require voluntary contributions from parents. This list is not exhaustive:

- Visit to museums
- Visits to educational places of interest
- Sporting activities which require transport expenses
- Outdoor adventure activities
- Visits to the theatre

When organising school trips or visits which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school asks for voluntary contributions from parents/carers to fund educational visits. All contributions are voluntary; however, the trip or activity will be cancelled if insufficient funds are received.

If a trip goes ahead, it may include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. We do not treat these children differently from any others.

If a parent wishes their child to take part in a school event but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, we endeavour to facilitate the child's full participation in the trip or activity. Sometimes the school pays additional costs in order to support the visit. Parents have the right to know how each trip is funded. The school provides this information on request.

Every request for a voluntary contribution must carry this wording:

"No pupil will be excluded from this activity or treated differently because of the unwillingness or inability of parents to contribute. However, the visit must be self-financing and cannot take place without parental support; if the school is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit, then it will be cancelled. Parents of disadvantaged children should be aware funds are available to support children. Please contact the School/Finance office to arrange this."

Please note that refunds or partial refunds for school trips may be provided, but only in the following circumstances:

- On submission of medical evidence demonstrating that the pupil is unable to participate in the trip: in these circumstances, the school will request reimbursement from our insurers.
- With sufficient advance notice, if the school is able to find a replacement to participate in the trip.
- Please note that deposits are non-refundable unless the trip is cancelled.
- Once school trip accounts are finalised, if there is a surplus of £10 per pupil or more, then this will be refunded to parents.

Activities we charge for

Willow Learning Trust schools charge the full cost of activities that take place outside school hours, but which are not provided for the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or to fulfil statutory duties related to the national curriculum, including:

- Transportation if not using TfL.
- Lease of Laptops
- Music activities and events
- The full costs of any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the pupils parent wishes their child to own them.
- The full costs of entering a student for a public examination where the student has not been prepared by the school for examination.
- Exams (as follows)
 - Examination re-sit(s) for which the pupil is not being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school.
 - The full cost of entering the student for public examination not prescribed in regulations and for preparing students for such examination outside school hours.

- The full costs of entering the student in an exam for which the school has prepared the student if the student fails without good reason to meet examination requirement for that syllabus. It shall be for the school to determine what a good reason is. The decision to be taken in the first instance by a Deputy Head. Parents may ask the Head to review the decision taken.
- Breakfast, after-school clubs, Nursery and lettings (please refer to the school's website for current charges)

Remissions

In some circumstances, the school may not charge for items or activities if they can be covered by the PTA/Friends of the School and or School Fund.

Willow Learning Trust schools promote equal opportunities and do not want any pupils to miss out on charged activities if possible; in cases of hardship schools will endeavour to accommodate. These decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

If the parent/carer of a pupil is disadvantaged, charges in respect of residential trips may in part be covered by Pupil Premium funding.

If you believe you may be eligible for Free School Meals, please contact the school for an application form.

Curriculum-related residential activities

- For disadvantaged pupils, the school will remit in full the cost of boarding and lodging for any curriculum-related residential activity that is organised for the pupil, and which takes place within school time. This will also be the case where the residential activity forms part of the syllabus for a public examination. Music Tuition
- The cost of individual instrumental music tuition will also be subsidised in all cases where the individual tuition is provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or is required by the National Curriculum.
- No charge may be made for individual music tuition in school hours in respect of a pupil looked after by the local authority (within the meaning of section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989)

Other cases of Hardship

- Funds may be available to assist with the remission of charges (either in whole or in part) not covered by the above under the Pupil Premium Strategy or the 16-19 Bursary (see the school's website for further information).

PTA/Friends of Schools

PTAs raise money through a variety of fundraising events throughout the year. Participation by pupils is voluntary. Money raised is used to enhance the facilities, equipment, and education for all pupils. Parents will be informed of how much is raised and how the funds are spent.

Donations to School

The School Fund is a registered charity and enables the school to improve facilities for all pupils for example through the purchase of extra equipment, visits from theatre companies, payment of fees for sporting and other associations and by subsidising transport.

Parents are asked to make a voluntary contribution payable at the beginning of the Autumn Term.

It is possible for Parents to make a Gift Aid declaration on their School Fund contributions that allows the school to reclaim tax from the Inland Revenue.

Damage/Loss of Property

Where school property has been wilfully or recklessly damaged or lost by a student or parent the school may charge those responsible for some or all of the cost of repair or replacement. Where a student has damaged property belonging to a third party, and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible. The Headteacher depending on the circumstances will decide whether or not the charges will be made.

Reviewed – June 2024 Next review – June 2026