Charging and Remissions Policy

Date effective	July 2026
Review Cycle	2 Yearly
Review Date	July 2028
Date of Approval by Governors	July 2026
Committee approved by	Foxford Local Governing Body
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Date	Notes

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1. Introduction

This policy has been formulated in accordance with guidance from the Trust Education Law advisors, the Department for Education (DfE) 'Charging for School Activities' guidance (latest applicable version), The Key for School Leaders, sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996, the School Admissions Code, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and other relevant statutory guidance including Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest version in force) and Free School Meals guidance (updated 2026).

2. Aim

The aim of this policy is to set out what charges will be levied for activities, what remissions will be implemented and the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested from parents. The Governing Body of Foxford Community School is committed to providing the best education for all and will endeavour, within reason, and as funding resources allow, to ensure that all activities offered wholly or mainly during the school day are available to all students, regardless of their respective parent's/carer's ability to pay. Governors reserve the right, however, to request voluntary contributions from parents/carers and, in the event of insufficient funding, to cancel an activity. However, the school will ensure that no student is excluded from participation in any activity on the basis of inability to make a voluntary contribution, in line with statutory guidance.

3. Responsibilities

The Governing Body of Foxford Community School is responsible for determining the content of the policy and the Headteacher for implementation. The Headteacher will ensure that the policy is applied consistently and in accordance with current statutory requirements and DfE guidance.

4. Charges

The Governing Body recognises that legislation (as defined in section 1) does not allow charges for certain activities/trips/provisions but that nothing in legislation prevents the school from requesting voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities (see section 9). The school will ensure that no charges are made for education provided during school hours, in line with the Education Act 1996.

5. Publication of Information

This policy will be made available on the school website. The policy will be referred to in the school prospectus and parents will be able to receive a summary of the policy by request. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required. The school will ensure transparency of any charges and clearly communicate these to parents in advance of activities.

6. Charges

The governing body has determined that the school intends to charge for the following:

a) Board and lodging on residential visits (not to exceed the costs, and also see note in the Remissions Section)
b) The proportionate costs for an individual child of activities wholly or mainly outside school hours ('optional extras') to meet the costs for:
    a. travel, other than in connection with an educational visit
    b. materials and equipment
    c. non-teaching staff costs
    d. entrance fees
    e. insurance costs
c) Extra-curricular tuition of an individual or groups of any appropriate size to play a musical instrument or to sing
d) Re-sits for public examinations where no further preparation has been provided by the school
e) Examinations where no further preparation has been provided by the school
f) Any other education; transport or examination fee; materials, equipment and/or instruments (where the parent wishes for their child to own them) unless charges are specifically prohibited
g) Breakages, damage and replacements as a result of damages caused wilfully or negligently by students
h) Extra-curricular activities and school clubs.

Charges will not exceed the actual cost of provision and will not include an element of subsidy for other students.

Information will be made available to parents as applicable in order that parents understand how any charges have been worked out. Charges made in respect of individual students will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of students participating.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

7. Remissions

Students whose parents are in receipt of free school meals will, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, also be entitled to the remission of charges for board and lodging costs during residential school trips.

Eligibility for Free School Meals and remission will be determined in line with current DfE guidance (2026), including the expansion of eligibility to households in receipt of Universal Credit.

a) Universal credit in prescribed circumstances, in line with current national eligibility criteria
b) Income Support
c) income-based Jobseeker's Allowance support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
d) The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
e) Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs) below the threshold figure for the year in line with TC602 Inland Revenue award notice.
f) An income and related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008 (account will be taken of any revision to the amount as advised by the HMRC or other body)
g) Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for four weeks after ceasing eligibility)
h) Income-related Employment and Support Allowance

The school will apply the most up-to-date eligibility criteria as defined in national FSM guidance at the time of application.

8. Financial Assistance Towards the Cost of 'Optional Extras', Activities and Other Charges as Identified in Section 7

The school will consider providing financial assistance towards the cost of charges as listed in section 6 when:

- There is a request for financial assistance by a student, parent or carer (this request should be made to a member of the SLT linked to the year group), or
- Staff believe that a student will need financial support to take advantages of opportunities that are charged for as listed in section 6.

In determining whether financial assistance will be provided, the SLT member, in consultation with the Headteacher, will make use of one or more of the following criteria:

a) Students whose parents are in receipt of support payments as detailed in section
b) Where the IDACI (The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index) score and rank, for the SOA (Super Output Area) in which the postcode (of the home of the student) falls, is in the bottom 20% for England
c) OB2L students (four or more factors):
d) Students with SEND
e) Students whose day to day lives are impacted by family members with disabilities/illness
f) Students with exceptional family circumstances which have led to temporary financial hardship
g) Any safeguarding considerations or vulnerability indicators, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest version)
h) Trips which will bring benefit to groups or communities outside of Foxford.

Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis and will take into account equality of opportunity.

The process for agreeing financial assistance will be as follows

- The decision to grant financial assistance will rest with the SLT member linked to a year group in consultation with the Headteacher
- The level of assistance will range from 25%, 50% or 75% of the cost
- Families will normally be asked to provide some contribution to the cost
- Families will be asked to provide evidence of the criteria used as above, as applicable
- Normally financial assistance will be a one off discretionary amount but there may be an agreement to cover more than one charge over a specified period of time
- All financial assistance decisions will be handled sensitively and confidentially and recorded appropriately in line with school data protection requirements.
- There will be no guarantee that financial assistance will be agreed as the request or benefit from the activity will be considered on an individual case by case basis and based on budget availability.
- Alternatively, individual payment plan arrangements (ie extended payment terms/payment by instalment) can be requested subject to the criteria listed in section 8 above. Payment plans would be agreed on the following basis:

    1. Payment must be made in full two school weeks before the trip/activity
    2. Instalments must equate to a minimum of 25% of the full cost to be made at regular agreed intervals with the finance department (up to a maximum of £100 for the total cost of the trip/activity)
    3. Payment plans where the cost exceeds £100 will require authorisation from a member of the leadership team via the finance department.

For item 6(c), the school would only agree to an individual payment plan arrangement. Exceptional circumstances to this must be driven and approved by the school at the outset. Completion dates for payment plans, in this scenario, must be agreed with the finance department at the outset.

9. Voluntary Contributions

The Governing Body recognises that nothing in legislation prevents the school from requesting voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if insufficient voluntary contributions are received to cover the cost of activities, the headteacher will ensure that parents are informed at the outset that the school may need to cancel the activities if there is no alternative method to make up the shortfall. **There will be no obligation for a parent/carer to make any contribution.** The school will ensure that no student is treated differently according to whether or not their parent has made any contribution in response to a request for voluntary contributions. No child will be excluded from an activity because their parents or carers are unable or unwilling to contribute.

Parents may be invited to make a voluntary contribution for:

- Educational visits
- Transport linked to visits
- Materials (e.g. technology products)

The responsibility for determining the level of voluntary contribution is delegated to the Headteacher.

Note 1

Non-residential activities

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require students to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

Note 2

Residential visits

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) . Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, Regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A “half day” means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

Example 1: Visit during school hours
Pupils are away from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 9 half days including 5 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place during school hours.

Example 2: Visit outside school hours
Pupils are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.