



Charging and Remissions Policy

Version	November 2019
Approved by Governors On:	
Review Cycle:	Every three years
Date of next Review:	

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher Date: _____
_____ Chair of governors Date: _____

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.

We recognise the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including educational visits, clubs and residential experiences can make towards pupils' education. We aim to promote and provide such activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

We believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents'/carers' financial means. This policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities are offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

2. 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 449-462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in maintained schools in England.

3. Definitions

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

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board

The governing board has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor or the headteacher.

The governing board also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

In our school, responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy has been delegated to the Governor Finance Committee.

4.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the charging and remissions policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

4.3 Staff

Our staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently.
- Notifying the headteacher of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies.

4.4 Parents

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

5. Where charges cannot be made

Below we set out **what the school cannot charge for**:

5.1 Education

- Education provided during school hours within the school environment (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment).
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of:
 - The national curriculum.
 - Religious education.
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, which is required as part of the National Curriculum during school hours. *“Pupil’s should be taught to play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using their voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression.”* National Curriculum 2014, Years 3 to 6. (Nb. This does not include music tuition which is provided at the request of a pupil’s parent, refer to 6.4 below for more details.)

5.2 Transport

- Transport to and from school sporting events during school hours.

5.3 Residential visits

- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

5.4 School meals

- Meals provided by the school for pupils who are entitled to Free School Meals (FSM).
- Meals provided by the school for pupils who are infant age, and so eligible for universal infant FSM (UIFSM).

6. Where charges can be made

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not be greater than the actual cost of providing the extra activity/service, divided equally by the number of pupils participating.

Parental agreement is necessary for the provision of any service/activity which is to be charged for.

Below we set out **what the school can charge for**.

6.1 Education

The school can charge for:

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment intentionally damaged or broken by a pupil – parents/carers would be required to make a contribution towards the cost of a replacement.
- Any school materials used by a pupil which the parents/carers wish to own - parents/carers would be required to make a contribution towards the cost.
- Community facilities e.g. hire of the school hall.

6.2 Extended Day Services/Activities

The costs of all clubs are agreed in advance and are based on a fixed number of sessions. Payment is due prior to the club commencing. Please note, that once the school or the provider has received payment for a club for a fixed number of sessions, this will be non-refundable if a child attends at least one session. However, there may be occasions where a refund is applicable. Refer to 9.2 for further detail.

The school can charge for:

- Extended day services offered to pupils, such as the Before School Care and after-school clubs.
- Extended day activities offered to pupils by external providers who charge the school for their services, such as Premier Sports delivering a Dodgeball club.
- Education provided outside of school time that is not part of the National Curriculum.

6.3 Residential Visits

Widening children's experiences are an integral part of Thurton Church of England Primary School's curriculum. All residential visits are well considered by School Leaders and best value is always sought to keep costs as low as possible. If finances are a barrier to a child participating on a residential visit, refer to 9.1 below to see how our school could help.

The school can charge for:

- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.
- Transport to the residential accommodation and to any activities which are not located at the accommodation.
- Extra-curricular activities which take place during a residential visit which have been organised by School Leaders. For example, the entrance price for the Tower of London or the London Eye.
- Extra-curricular activities which take place during a residential visit which have been organised by the Providers. For example, raft building at the Millennium Centre, Brancaster.
- Any meals which take place during a residential visit which have been organised by School Leaders outside of the catering facilities of the accommodation. For example, dining at New China Gate restaurant in Chinatown, London.

Please note, the school pays for residential visits in advance to guarantee the booking of accommodation and activities. Therefore, once the school has received the deposit payment and a signed permission slip for a residential visit, agreement and confirmation of attendance is made. If for any reason, the child does not attend the residential visit, any monies paid to that date will not be refunded. If for any reason during the residential visit, the child is unable to take part in an activity or has to return home early, any monies paid to that date will not be refunded. In some exceptional circumstances the school may cancel the charge for an educational visit and offer a refund. This will be at the discretion of the governing board (Refer to 9.1)

6.4 Music tuition

Currently, the school offers music tuition through external peripatetic providers who implement their own charging and remissions policy. The school does not have any involvement with the charging or payment procedures for these services.

Charges will not be made:

- If the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum (refer to 5.1).
- For a pupil who is looked after by our local authority.

If a pupil is entitled to free school meals, tuition fees will be part funded (up to 50%) through the Pupil Premium grant.

6.5 School Lunches

The school can charge for:

- Lunches which are provided for the children by a contracted supplier.

Payment for school lunches should be made on a weekly basis and within **14 days** of the lunches being taken.

*If parents/carers fall into arrears with payments for school lunches which have been provided for their child/ren to an amount of **£55** per child, then the school will refer to **section 11** of this policy: **Recovering debts from parents**.*

Please note: the school has the right to refuse to provide further school lunches for the child/ren until the outstanding balance has been settled or an alternative payment arrangement has been made. This will be at the discretion of the governing board and will depend on the circumstances of the family in question and what is in the best interests for the health and well-being of the child.

“There is no requirement to provide meals for pupils who are not eligible for FSM if they have requested a meal but their parents/carers have not paid for it.” DfE representative, website: schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com.

Charges will not be made:

- If the meals provided by the school are for pupils who are entitled to Free School Meals (FSM).
- If the meals provided by the school are for pupils who are infant age, and so eligible for universal infant FSM (UIFSM).

7. Voluntary contributions

As an exception to the requirements set out in **section 5** of this policy, the school is able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents/carers to fund activities during school hours which would not otherwise be possible. For example, a school visit (such as Norwich Cathedral) or an activity/experience (such as the evacuee day on the Poppyline).

There is no obligation for parents to make any contribution, and no child will be excluded from an activity if their parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay. However, if the school is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit then it will be **cancelled**.

8. Payments

Thurton Church of England Primary School is able to accept payments in the following ways:

- Cash.
- Cheques made payable to 'Thurton Primary School'.
- Bank transfer:

Account name: Thurton Primary School, Account number: 30174327, Sort Code: 20-62-61.

Any payment by cash or cheque should be in a named and dated sealed envelope and posted into the deposit box outside the school office. For any bank transfer payments, details for payment references would be provided in a letter prior to asking for payment - for example, 'J Bloggs dodgeball.

9. Remissions, Refunds and Exemptions

In some circumstances the school may not charge for items, activities or services set out in Sections 6 and 7 of this policy. This will be at the discretion of the governing board and will depend on the activity in question.

If, in an exceptional circumstance, a charge made in respect of individual pupils is greater than the actual cost of providing the extra activity/service, divided equally by the number of pupils participating, then a refund will be made to the sum of the overpayment if the owed balance is greater than £5.00.

Parents/carers with a child who is currently eligible for income-based Free School Meals, or who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits, will be exempt from paying the full cost of any of the services/activities outlined in Section 6 or in Section 7:

- Universal Credit (provided the family has an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to 3 of the most recent assessment periods)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (providing the family is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run on – paid for four weeks after a claimant stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit

(Please refer to the **Parents** section of our school website and click on '**Eligibility for entitled Free School Meals**' for further information.)

*The reduced charge to parent/carers will be **up to 50%** of the total costs per child.*

Please seek advice from the School Office or Headteacher if you wish to apply for support towards the cost of a service/activity.

9.1 Remissions for residential visits

In some exceptional circumstances the school may cancel the charge for an educational visit and offer a refund. This will be at the discretion of the governing board.

The school will refund if:

- The accommodation or activity providers cancel the school's booking and any monies paid by the school have been refunded.
- The residential visit has been cancelled by the school due to unforeseen exceptional circumstances and any monies paid by the school have been refunded by the accommodation or activity providers. *Please note, if the school does not receive refunds from the accommodation or activity providers, then the school will not be able to refund parents/carers.*
- A parent/carer wishes to cancel their child attending the residential visit due to exceptional circumstances after part or full payment has been made.

9.2 Remission for after school clubs

In some circumstances the school may cancel the charge for an after school club and offer a refund or a credit towards a future club session. This will be at the discretion of the governing board and will depend on the activity in question.

The school will refund if:

- The instructor or leading member of staff is forced to cancel the club due to illness. A remission for the cancelled session/s would be made.
- The instructor or leading member of staff is not in attendance to run the club. A remission for the cancelled session/s would be made.
- A club is cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances e.g. power cut. A remission for the cancelled session/s would be made.
- A club has to be cancelled after payment has been made when it is not financially viable to proceed due to a low number of pupils registering to take part.
- A parent/carer wishes to cancel their child attending the club after payment has been made but before the first session of the club has commenced.
- A pupil has been selected to take part in a school event, e.g. a cluster football match, which results in them not being able to attend a booked club session.

9.3 Remissions for school meals

In some circumstances the school may cancel the charge for a school meal and offer a refund. This will be at the discretion of the governing board.

The school will refund if:

- A child was absent from school and the meal was not provided by the contracted kitchen.
- A child's meal did not arrive at school.
- There was insufficient food provided by the contracted kitchen to serve a full meal for a child.

10. Monitoring arrangements

The school's Finance Officer monitors charges and remissions, and ensures these comply with this policy.

This policy will be reviewed by the Finance Officer and the Headteacher regularly. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governor Finance Committee.

11. Recovering debts from parents

The school will endeavour to communicate clearly and openly with parents/carers who have unpaid fees or other debts.

The Finance Officer will:

- Contact parents/carers explaining the late or missing payments and how the parents/carers can pay.
- Establish whether there are any extenuating circumstances, or temporary hardship.
- Discuss with the parents/carers alternative payment plans.

If these efforts **do not** prompt payment in the given timescale, the school will then refer the issue to the Governor Finance Committee.

The Governor Finance Committee will:

- Write a letter to parents/carers explaining the withdrawal of the service or activity from the pupil until the overdue balance has been paid.

If these efforts **do not** prompt payment in the given timescale, the school will then refer the case back to the Governor Finance Committee.

The Governor Finance Committee will:

- Write a letter to parents/carers explaining failure to pay may result in legal action.
- Refer the case to the Local Authority Legal Team for advice on possible legal actions to recover the debt.

Thurton Primary School's Governing Board and Governor Finance Committee exercises extreme caution when considering writing off parents'/carers' debts for two main reasons:

- School funds are public money.
- Writing off debts may set a precedent for other parents/carers.

A signed hard copy of this policy is available for inspection in the school office.

Appendix 1 – Table of changes from February 2018

Date of change	Paragraphs affected	Summary of update
Nov 2018	6.2	Charging for extended day activities
Nov 2018	8	Payment information
Dec 2019	6.5	Change from 'payment required at the time of ordering' to 'within 14 days of the lunches being taken'.
Dec 2019	11	Clarification of the role of the Governor Finance Committee