



# ST JAMES' C of E INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

## CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

### 2025

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## Review Sheet

Version Number	Version Description	Date of Revision
1	Original	July 2013
2	Updated to reflect DfE publication ' <i>Charging for school activities: Departmental advice for governing bodies, school leaders, school staff and local authorities</i> ', October 2014. New section for boarding schools, clarification on communication with parents and addition on Children Looked After and music tuition. Clarifications: S4 - enrichment activities that do not fulfil the definition of 'education'. S5 – what majority means and that travel time counts. S6 – determining if a residential is an Optional Extra with examples & additional sources of funding e.g. trusts. S7 – participation is determined by payment.	July 2016
3	Introduction updated to reflect that many more schools have community facilities and this policy does not apply to charges for them and to reflect that "first pay, first served" access to trips is discrimination against low income families. Introduction updated to define remission and give examples; S9 – clarification that secondary schools must include a school milk scheme section if any pupils are up to and including the age of 18 <i>and</i> are entitled to free school meals. Updated to reflect DfE updated guidance (May 2018)	December 2019
4	Reviewed: No Legal or policy changes. What schools do or must do has not changed. Updated with a new section on school meals: a major policy clarification following acceptance by the DfE that school meals should be part of every school's charging and remissions policy because the government provides remission though UIFSM and FSM, governors have discretionary powers, and debt recovery must be managed. One minor clarification about school milk.	February 2022
5	Reviewed September 2023 – no changes other than to links to national or KAHub websites	September 2023
6	Reorganised – no highlights	September 2024

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## 1. Policy scope

Sections 449 to 462 of the [Education Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) and [The Education \(School Sessions and Charges and Remissions Policies\) \(Information\) \(England\) Regulations 1999 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) set out the law on charging and remissions for school activities in England and require schools to have a Policy on charging.

[The Education \(Charges for Early Years Provision\) Regulations 2012 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) sets out when charges can be made for some early years provision.

This Policy is based on the law and Department for Education (DfE) guidance [Charging for school activities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

Section 21 of the [Education Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) gives schools the power to provide community facilities or services for the (charitable) benefit of pupils or their families, or people who live or work locally. This Policy does not apply to charges we make for community facilities which are handled separately under hire agreements.

This Policy does not apply to charges made and determined by other organisations offering activities and services on the school premises e.g., a community club that hires our hall to meet in and charges its members to attend.

### 1.1 Aims

This Policy aims to ensure that:

- All pupils have full and free access to a broad and balanced curriculum regardless of their family's financial means.
- This school is transparent about the activities or items that can be charged for and when charges will be made, or remissions offered.
- We recognise our responsibility not to place undue pressure on family finances for example, by giving good notice about charges and by not offering activities on a 'first to pay, first served' basis.

### 1.2 Definitions

**Charge:** a fee payable for clearly defined items or activities.

**Half-day school session:** any period of 12 hours ending at noon or midnight (p9, DfE, 'Charging for school activities', 2018).

**Remission:** the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable.

**School hours:** The school day is defined as 8.40am to 3.15pm excluding the lunchtime period 12.15pm to 1.15pm (Nursery lunchtime is 11.45-1.00pm)

### 1.3 Associated policies and procedures

The following policies and procedures may impact the implementation of this Policy:

- Educational Visits Procedures
- Equality Policy
- Hire Procedures

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

### 2.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for approving the Charging and Remissions Policy and delegates this to the Head teacher.

The Governing Body also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this Policy.

## 2.2 The Head teacher

The Head teacher is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the Charging and Remissions Policy and that it is being applied consistently.

## 2.3 Staff

The Charging and Remissions Policy and how to implement it is included in the induction of new staff and the senior leadership team will provide updates or refresh training as necessary.

Our staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the Policy consistently.
- Notifying the Head teacher of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the Policy applies.

## 2.4 Parents and carers

Parents and carers are expected to notify staff or the Head teacher of any concerns or queries regarding the Charging and Remissions Policy.

## 2.5 Music tuition

A charge will be made for vocal and musical instrument tuition for either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size when it is provided at the request of the pupil's parent.

National charging guidance will be followed, and no charge will be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(l) of the Children Act 1989).

## 2.6 School meals

School meals are available to pupils in years Reception to Year 2 free of charge. For children in Nursery they are charged at a cost of £2.00 per day.

Families can find out how to [Apply for free school meals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) or they can apply directly to their home Local Authority at [Citizen Portal - Sign in \(cumberland.gov.uk\)](http://cumberland.gov.uk), Families needing help to do this can ask at the school office.

To enable our school meals service to be efficiently planned, we require advance notice of a child's requirements and ask for half a term's notice to start or stop receiving a school meal.

**Payment for Nursery school meals is required in advance** and can be paid weekly, monthly, or half-termly either online via SchoolMoney when the meal options are selected or via cash or cheque (made payable to St James' CofE Infant and Nursery School) in a clearly marked envelope handed to the school office.

Please click on [this link](#) for instructions on how to access online payment.

### Please note:

- Our staff will not look through any child's personal belongings for meal payments: the child or parent needs to hand them in, and our staff will give reminders to do so.
- If a cheque is returned to us unpaid, parents will be charged the relevant banking fee and may also be charged an administration fee representing 5% of the value of the returned cheque.

Should a child arrive at school without payment or a packed lunch, we will telephone home in the first instance to establish if alternative arrangements have been made.

While we do understand that everyone forgets occasionally, the school is not obliged to provide a school meal where payment is not forthcoming or where authorisation for a free school meal has not been received. We will therefore act promptly to address financial issues at an early stage if we can, to prevent arrears accumulating.

If no alternative arrangement is in place, we will suggest that, before lunchtime, the parent should bring to school a suitable packed lunch or the cost of a school meal. In special circumstances we might grant the

parent a debt allowance of one meal (special permission to pay on the next school day), on the understanding that all future meals will be paid for in full, in advance.

Where our efforts to resolve payment problems within the same school week fail, or where a persistent debt has arisen the following procedure applies.

If a parent accumulates a school meals debt of 1 week or less (up to £10.00), we will send home with the child a reminder letter detailing the amount owed and asking for immediate payment.

If payment is not received and the debt amount increases to between 1 and 2 weeks' (up to £15), a second reminder letter will be sent home detailing the consequences of non-payment and a final date by which payment must be made.

If the matter remains unresolved, the parent will be sent a 3rd and final letter requesting payment and detailing the school's next steps, which could include debt recovery action.

The school budget cannot tolerate a school meals debt amounting to more than one week's payment. If debts are incurred by parents, the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents instead. If a parent repeatedly fails to provide a packed lunch, or sufficient monies to cover the cost of school meals, we may need to make a referral to our Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership in case this is a sign that a pupil is experiencing a significant underlying wellbeing or safeguarding issue.

Parents in specific financial difficulties should speak to the Head teacher in the strictest confidence. School will, in exceptional circumstances and where we believe the money will be forthcoming, continue to provide a school meal conditional on full payment being received in a reasonable timeframe. We are committed to working together to find a suitable payment plan for any parent who asks for one. We might also be able to signpost a family to government support they may be entitled to, or to community support available in the immediate or short term.

Where no attempt is made to clear a debt, we will take appropriate debt recovery action in accordance with our normal financial procedures (see section 7 for more information).

## **2.7 School milk scheme**

Under [The Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk) all schools must make lower fat milk or lactose reduced milk available to drink at least **once** a day during school hours or the lunch break at a fair cost or free of charge to all pupils who are entitled.

Up to one third of a pint of milk is available to all children free of charge, regardless of their family circumstances up to the age of 5.

When a child has their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, a small charge will be made towards the cost of continuing to provide this single portion of milk to those parents and carers who want their children to continue receiving it.

Children who have reached the age of 5 and have not yet reached the age of 19 can continue to receive up to one third of a pint of milk free of charge if their family has been able to successfully [apply for free school meals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).

In the case of infant pupils who are entitled to a universal infant free school meal, milk must be offered free to those pupils **if** it forms part of the school lunch. If milk is offered at any other time during the school day instead, it will only be free for those infants who have an underlying income-related entitlement to free school meals.

A parent or carer who wishes their child to receive more than one portion of milk per day must pay the full cost of each additional portion, even when their first portion is free due to an entitlement.

For more information about our milk scheme and the current charges, please ask at the school office.

## **2.8 Before and/or after school care**

Charges will be made for childcare services offered to pupils before school, after school and during school holidays when they are run by this school.

The fees and any remissions are set and reviewed by the Governing Body no less than annually. For information about current childcare charges please see [www.st-james-inf.cumbria.sch.uk](http://www.st-james-inf.cumbria.sch.uk) or ask to speak to Mrs C Brown.

## 2.9 Damage to property and breakages

The school will attempt to recover some, or all the costs incurred repairing wilful or culpably negligent damage or breakage of school property or property belonging to a third party where the school has been charged. The actual amount will be determined by the Head teacher.

## 3. Calculating charges and remission

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to school and/or charges to parents and carers.

When charges are made for activities, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who can't. Support for cases of hardship will come through applicable funding such as pupil premium money, specified voluntary contributions and fundraising.

In some circumstances, school may not charge for items or activities set out in section 5 of this Policy. This waiving of charges is called remission. It will be at the discretion of the Governing Body and will depend on the reasons for the charges and the circumstances of the recipients.

Pupils who are looked after by a local authority or whose parents or carers are receiving specified benefits are entitled to full remission of some charges outlined in Section 5. This entitlement is subject to change but usually equates to pupils being eligible for free school meals (except when they are an infant only eligible under the universal infant free school meal scheme). To find out which benefits are specified and eligible for full remission, see information on how to [Apply for free school meals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

Charges for other 'chargeable activities' may also be fully or partly remitted. Where appropriate governors can approve the use of the delegated budget and other funding streams such as Pupil Premium to allow 'chargeable activities' to be fully or partly remitted

Details of any remission arrangements will be made clear when parents and carers are informed of charges for individual activities.

### 3.1 Non-residential activities

Where the majority of time spent on a non-residential activity is *within* normal school hours, the charging regime will be as if it happens *fully within* school hours and no charge will be made. The majority of time is defined as 50% or more. Parents or carers may still be asked for a voluntary contribution.

Where the majority of the time spent on a non-residential activity is *outside* of normal school hours, the charging regime will be as if it happens *fully outside* school hours i.e., the activity becomes an 'Optional Extra' and charges will be made unless it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at this school, or part of religious education. The majority of time is defined, in this case, as more than 50%.

Travel time is included when considering the time spent on an activity only when it occurs during school time (see definitions).

### 3.2 Residential activities

Parents and carers will be charged board and lodging for a pupil to attend a residential visit unless remission is granted.

To cover any other costs associated with a residential visit e.g., transport, activity tuition, for which charges cannot be made, they will be asked to make a voluntary contribution. No child will be denied the opportunity of attending a residential (if it is not an Optional Extra) if their parents or carers do not contribute voluntarily.

If not enough voluntary contributions are received to cover the costs of a residential, governors reserve the right to cancel it.

Charges will be made to cover all residential visit costs only where the visit is deemed to be an 'optional extra' because the number of half-day school sessions missed by the pupils taking part totals less than half of the number of half-days taken up by the activity (see definitions). In such cases, parents and carers will be told how the charges were calculated.

**Example 1**

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**

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.

#### **4. Debt recovery**

Our financial management Policy requires all services provided by us to be paid for in advance so it is expected no significant debts will accrue. In the event that debts are accrued, the Governing Body has authorised all reasonable measures to be taken to collect debts as part of its management of public funds. In doing so they will observe the relevant financial regulations and any other legal requirements.

Staff whose role it is, will follow school procedures to secure the collection of all debts.

A debt will be written off only after all reasonable measures (commensurate with the size and nature of the debt) have been taken to recover it. Only debts below that allowed for in the annual funding letter issued by the Secretary of State may be written off. The recovery of any sums above this amount will be referred first to the Governors and then to the Secretary of State for approval. If any debtor has a number of debts that together exceed the write-off limit, then these will be treated as a total amount.

Unless a decision to write-off a debt is demonstrably a reasonable course of action authorisation is in place to initiate legal or other action to recover debts.

A formal record of any debts written off will be maintained and retained for 7 years.

#### **5. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation**

The Finance Committee of the Governing Body will monitor the impact of this Policy by receiving on a termly basis, a financial report on those activities that resulted in charges being levied, the subsidies awarded (without giving names) and the source of those subsidies.