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Central:	Trust-wide, applicable at trust and school levels. Schools may not make any changes or adaptations

Charging & Remissions Policy

Approved by:	**Finance Committee**
Date:	**September 2025**
Next review date:	**September 2026**

Adopted by school:	**St John's CE Primary School**
Date:	**November 2025**

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Introduction

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

The 1996 Education Act requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities, which will be kept under regular review. The review date for this policy is recorded at the end of the document.

The policy identifies activities for which:

- voluntary contributions may be requested
- charges will be made
- charges will not be made
- charges may be waived

Voluntary Contributions

Separately from the matter of charging, schools may seek voluntary contributions in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to pupils. All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that pupils of parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have.

The law states:

- If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the Local Governing Body or Headteacher will make this clear to parents from the outset.
- No child will be excluded from an activity because his or her parents are unable or unwilling to pay.
- If insufficient contributions are received, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled.
- If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

No charges will be made for the following:

- An admission application to any ODST school
- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- Education provided outside school hours, if 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 the school, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;
- Tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments (or singing), if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school, although if a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus a charge may / will be made;
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school;
- Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours;
- Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours:
    - if 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 the school,
    - or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip;
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

Charges may be made for the following:

- Residential and non-residential activities (other than those listed above as not incurring charges) which take place outside school hours, but only if the majority of the time spent on the activity takes place outside school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours.
- The board and lodging costs only of residential trips deemed to take place during school time. However, those pupils whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging – please refer to the remissions policy below.
- Music tuition for individuals or appropriately sized groups of pupils to play a musical instrument or to sing, and which is not an essential part of the either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus for all pupils.
- Extended day services offered to pupils (such as breakfast clubs and after-school clubs).

Other matters

When any trip is arranged parents will be notified of the policy for allocating places. This should recognise that parents may not be able to pay quickly and may have to budget for the trip over a reasonable period of time.

If the number of school sessions on a residential trip is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the trip 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.

An academy’s Local Governing Body may choose to impose charges for optional activities (known as ‘Optional Extras’) and must document what these are. Any charges made will not exceed the actual cost (per pupil) of provision, and parental agreement will be obtained before any such charges are made.

Remissions

In order to remove financial barriers from pupils, the headteacher and Local Governing Body may agree that some activities and visits, where charges can legally be made, will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances.

Additional considerations

The Trust recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits should not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. With this in mind, it is recommended that Local Governing Bodies should do the following:

- Publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the school year, so that parents can plan ahead.
- Establish a system for parents to pay in instalments.
- When an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice, make it possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip.
- Acknowledge that offering opportunities on a ‘first pay, first served’ basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes, and that this method of selection is to be avoided.