

## Charging and Remission Policy

**Date:** Spring 2025

### Aims

We want Sphere Federation schools to be *happy and healthy places to learn* (St James' CE Primary: *...to achieve and believe*). To support this, we may need to apply additional charges or request voluntary contributions. 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.

Sphere Federation 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

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. It's also based on guidance from the DfE on [statutory policies for schools and academy trusts](#).

### Roles and responsibilities

The Sphere Federation Governing Board are responsible for determining the content of this policy and the Head of Federation for its implementation.

The Head of Federation is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the Charging and Remissions Policy, and that it is being applied consistently. Any reasonable adjustments with respect to individual parents/carers will be considered jointly by the Head of School and Head of Federation.

Staff are responsible for:

- implementing the policy consistently
- notifying the Head of Federation / Head of School of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies

The school provides staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

Parents/carers are expected to notify staff or the Head of School of any concerns or queries regarding the policy.

### Definitions

Charge: a fee payable for specifically defined activities

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

### Items for which a charge cannot be made

The Sphere Federation Governing Board recognise that legislation prohibits charges for the following:

- admission applications
- 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 religious education.
- tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments or vocal tuition if this 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
- 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 Religious Education

- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip
- transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- transporting registered pupils to other premises where the Governing Board or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated
- transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he or she has been prepared for that examination at the school.
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit

### **Items for which a charge can be made**

The Governing Board has agreed that Sphere Federation may charge for the following:

- any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent/carer wishes him/her to own them
- board and lodging on residential visits
- the proportionate costs for an individual child of activities wholly or mainly outside school hours ('optional extras') to meet the costs for travel; entrance fees; materials and equipment; non-teaching staff costs; and supply teachers engaged purely for optional extras
- vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of pupils, as long as the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent/carer
- other education and transport costs unless charges are specifically prohibited
- replacements or repairs due to breakages, vandalism and/or loss to or of school property caused wilfully or negligently by pupils and/or parents/carers
- some extra-curricular activities and school clubs (such as breakfast clubs and after-school clubs)
- community use and lettings (arrangements for the letting of school premises and charges are contained in the Letting Charges Policy)
- certain Early Years provision, including late payment charges for unpaid fees (arrangements for charges associated with Early Years provision are contained in the Early Years Admission and Fees Policy)
- certain administration costs related to non-payment of charges for any of the above items listed (as detailed in our Debt Recovery Procedures document)
- a late collection charge may be applied if a child is collected late from school, an after-school club or wraparound care because of the additional administrative and supervision costs; the charge matches wraparound care costs and will not be applied without at least one formal warning letter; parents/carers should consult the terms and conditions of wraparound care for late collection charges after wraparound care
- in some circumstances, we may charge for administration costs associated with completing a Subject Access Requests.

Where an activity / event is not considered an integral part of the National Curriculum, the school is entitled to make a charge.

Agreement with the parent/carers is necessary for the provision of an optional extra which is to be charged for.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not be greater than the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity. Where more than one pupil is participating or benefiting from the activity/service, the charge is divided equally by the number of pupils.

### **Remission**

Children whose parents/carers are in receipt of the following support payments may, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, also be considered for the remission of charges. The relevant support payments are:

- 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 guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit – provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit – if you apply on or after 1 April 2018, your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

### **Voluntary contributions**

As an exception to the requirements set out above, Sphere Federation is able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents/carers to fund activities which would not otherwise be possible.

Parents/carers may be invited to make a voluntary contribution for activities and events such as trips and events such as visitors to school. The following will be made clear to parents/carers:

- the contribution is genuinely voluntary and a parent/carer is under no obligation to pay

- registered pupils at the school will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents/carers have made any contribution in response to the request

The responsibility for determining the level of voluntary contribution is delegated to the Head of Federation or Head of School.

Regretfully, the school may withdraw the activity/event if there are insufficient voluntary contributions.

In the event that voluntary contributions exceed costs, parents/carers will be refunded.

#### **School meals and milk**

The Governing Board determines and publishes annually the price to be charged for school meals.

The Governing Board has agreed that school will charge as close to cost price as is reasonable and practical. This is to ensure a fair and balanced system for the school's finances overall.