

Charging and Remissions Policy

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1. Policy Statement

Vermont School is a specialist provision for primary-aged pupils (typically aged 5–11) who require additional educational support due to a range of social, emotional, or mental health (SEMH) needs. All pupils attending the school have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and are supported through an Individual Education Plan (IEP) developed in close partnership with parents and carers. EHCP's are reviewed annually and include specific strategies to support positive behaviour, emotional regulation, and academic progress, enabling each child to reach their full potential.

Activities that take place wholly or mainly during school hours are provided free of charge, with all essential materials and resources funded by the school. Parents and carers are responsible for providing suitable clothing for activities such as physical education, art, or outdoor learning, as well as for ensuring their child wears the appropriate school uniform and footwear in accordance with the Vermont School dress code.

This policy aims to clarify what is liable for charging and what is left for voluntary contribution. It follows the legislation set out in the Education Act 1996: Sections 402, 450 – 458 and 460 which sets out the law on charging for school activities in maintained schools in England.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The Governing Body recognises the valuable contributions that the wide range of additional activities, including clubs and educational visits offered can make towards pupils' personal and social education. The governing body has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy. This responsibility may be delegated to a committee, an individual governor, or the Headteacher.

The Governing body is also responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that staff are familiar with the charging and remissions policy and that it is applied consistently across the school.

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently
- Notifying the Headteacher of any circumstances they are unsure about, or where they are uncertain if the policy applies

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to notify staff or the Headteacher of any concerns or queries relating to the charging and remissions policy.

3. Where charges cannot be made

The school is committed to providing access to education without unnecessary financial burden. In accordance with Department for Education guidance and legislation, Vermont School **does not charge** for the following:

- **Education** provided during school hours, including the supply of any materials, books, instruments, or other equipment.
- **Admission applications** to the school.
- Education provided **outside school hours** if it forms part of:
 - The national curriculum,
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination the pupil is being prepared for at the school,
 - Religious education.
- **Instrumental or vocal tuition**, either individual or in groups, unless it is provided at the specific request of the pupil's parent or carer.
- Entry for a **prescribed public examination**, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school.

Transport

- **Transporting pupils** to or from the school premises when the local authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport.
- Transport to other locations arranged by the school or local authority for the purpose of education.
- Transport required for a pupil to meet the requirements of an examination, where the pupil has been prepared for that examination at the school.
- Transport provided in connection with an **educational visit**.

4. Where charges can be made

Below we set out what the school can charge for:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him or her to own them.
- **Instrumental or vocal tuition**, either individual or in groups, provided at the specific request of the pupil's parent or carer and outside of the school curriculum.
- Optional extras (see below)

Optional extras

We are able to charge for activities known as 'optional extras'. In these cases, the school can charge for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment. The following are optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not part of:
 - The national curriculum

- A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school.
 - Religious education
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school.
- Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority/governing board has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education)
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.
- Extended day services offered to pupils (such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea, and supervised home work sessions)

When calculating the cost of optional extras, an amount may be included in relation to:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra.
- The cost of buildings and accommodation
- Non-teaching staff
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra (including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra)
- The cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra.

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

Any charge will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils who wish to take part in the activity but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate.

Parental agreement is necessary for the provision of an optional extra which is to be charged for.

Music tuition

The school can charge for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of pupils, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent.

Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff providing the tuition.

Charges cannot be made:

- If the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum
- If the teaching is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 instrumental and vocal tuition program
- For a pupil who is looked after by a local authority

Residential visits

We can charge for board and lodging on residential visits, but the charge must not exceed the actual cost of the trip/visit.

Voluntary contributions

Parents will be asked for voluntary contributions for activities related to the curriculum, e.g., school

trips. However, it will be made clear to parents at the outset that there is no obligation to make any contribution. No child will be excluded from an activity because their parents are unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, then it must be reviewed and potentially cancelled and this will be made clear to parents.

If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. At the outset we will make clear what the policy for allocating places on school visits will be. All letters sent regarding educational visits that incur costs will clearly state the invitation for parents or others to make a voluntary contribution. Board and lodging related to a residential educational visit can be charged for so long as the actual cost per person is not exceeded.

Education Partly During School Hours

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. However, a charge can only be made for the activity outside school hours if it is not part of the curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education.

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 pupils to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

5. Damages

A charge will be levied in respect of willful damage, neglect or loss of school property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials), the charge will be to the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide.

The same will apply to property belonging to a third party where the cost has been recharged to the school. The loss of a classroom or school library book will be charged for according to the actual cost of the book or, if the cost is unknown, £5.

The school will always seek to recover costs and charges incurred with regard to reinstatement after damage to school facilities, infrastructure, furniture or assets, where an individual or individuals are identified.

- Charges for damages may include third party contractor costs and school site team working time costs.
- Where more than one individual or several individuals are identified as directly causing or contributing to damage, a percentage will be appointed based on proven culpability.
- Culpability of individuals with regard to damage liability will be established by:
 - Written statements of admission by those identified.
 - Corroborative written statements by witnesses
 - Review of CCTV where applicable

Parents/Carers will be directly invoiced by the school and a staged payment will be considered by the School Business Manager on application and subject to mutual agreement.

Overdue invoices (whether partial or fully outstanding) for payment will be pursued through the school/Local Authority.

6. Remissions

The Headteacher may remit in full or in part, charges in respect of a pupil if they feel it is reasonable in the circumstances. The Headteacher may also decide not to levy charges in respect of a particular activity if that is reasonable in the circumstances.

Parents/Carers who can prove they are in receipt of the following will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging:

- 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
- In receipt of Universal Credit

Children of families who receive these payments are also entitled to free school meals. Parents who are eligible for the remission of charges will be dealt with confidentially. The Headteacher and chair of governors will authorise the remission of charges. The school may choose to subsidise part or all of the payment of some charges for certain activities and pupils, and this will be determined by the governing body and Headteacher. No charge may 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).

7. Pecuniary Interests

Pecuniary interests of all governors and staff with financial responsibilities must be recorded, reviewed annually, and kept up to date.

8. Gifts

There may be occasions where children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to employees, for example as an end of year 'thank-you', and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value or to suggest to pupils that gifts would be appropriate or desired. Employees may accept small 'thank you' gifts of token value amounting to no more than £50. Token gifts provided to employees from parents need not be disclosed if the value of such gifts is under £10.

It is not acceptable for employees to give gifts to pupils and any rewards given to children must be given in agreement with the declared reward practice of the school.

Employees should not solicit or accept any gift, hospitality or other reward from external parties which influences the way in which they carry out their duties or leads the giver to expect preferential treatment.

9. Staff Charging Policy

On some occasions, small gifts/flowers to staff or helpers will be paid for from school funds up to a maximum amount of £35.00.

10. Earned Income

When a member of staff undertakes work for other agencies, for which a payment is to be received, the benefits for this arrangement to the school, needs to be considered and minutes taken by the governing body. All fees generated from this type of work shall be paid in full into school funds unless the work concerned has been done wholly outside the time when school duties would be performed.

11. Monitoring Arrangements

The Headteacher monitors charges and remissions and ensures these comply with this policy. This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher every year. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board.