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of our community

## Charging and Remissions Policy

Updated 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025

|   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Policy reference:</b>                | A58                        |
| <b>This policy is to be reviewed:</b>   | Annually                   |
| <b>The next review date is:</b>         | 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2026 |
| <b>Review is the responsibility of:</b> | F,I and HR Committee       |

### Review History

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Review ratified:</b> | 29 <sup>th</sup> June 2020, 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2023 |
| <b>Review ratified:</b> | 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2024                              |
| <b>Review ratified:</b> | 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2025                             |

**Authorised by:** Full Trust Board



## Policy Aims

1. To inform all stakeholders of the Trust's policy on charging.
2. To set out the arrangements for any remissions available.
3. To support equality of opportunity for all students to benefit from, and participate in, activities that enrich the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, which may include, but are not limited to:
  - Trips
  - Visits
  - Visitors
  - Activities, such as peripatetic music lessons
  - Special curriculum enrichment days
  - Clubs
4. To ensure a consistent approach is taken to remissions relating to school activities.
5. To ensure the Trust carries out its legal obligations with regard to charging and remissions.
6. To recognise and support the individual needs of families, particularly those on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits listed in Appendix 1.

## Legal frameworks and guidance

- Education Act 1996, sections 449 to 462
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- Charging for school activities, Department for Education, May 2018
- Charging Policy, Council for Learning Outside the Classroom,

## 1. Education during school hours

- 1.1 Any activity related to a statutory aspect of the national curriculum, religious education or required specifically by the syllabus for a public examination cannot be charged for, except for the board and lodging element of residential trips. Remission from board and lodging charges is available to families on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits listed in [Appendix 1](#). All parents will be informed of the right to claim free board and lodging if they are in receipt of these benefits. Voluntary contributions towards the cost of any activity may be invited and the school reserves the right to cancel the activity if insufficient funds are available.
- 1.2 Any activity wholly or mainly in school hours<sup>1</sup>, other than the above, is similarly available without charge. Voluntary contributions towards the cost of the activity may be invited and the school reserves the right to cancel the activity if insufficient funds are available.
- 1.3 There is no charge for large group or class music tuition, but parents may be invited, voluntarily, to make a contribution to the cost of hiring instruments or providing music.
- 1.4 Parents cannot be required to supply any books, materials or other equipment for use during school hours, but parents are invited to assist with the provision of the basic items listed in the schools' prospectuses.
- 1.5 On a voluntary basis, parents may contribute to the cost of ingredients and materials for use in Food Technology, Design Technology and Art. This assumes that the parents will own the finished product.

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### <sup>1</sup> Definition of during/outside school hours:

If the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, 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.

#### **Example 1:** Visit during school hours

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:** Visit outside school hours

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.

## 2. Education outside school hours

- 2.1. Any activity related to a statutory aspect of the national curriculum, religious education or required specifically by the syllabus for a public examination cannot be charged for, except for the board and lodging element of residential trips. Remission from board and lodging charges is available to families on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits listed in [Appendix 1](#). Voluntary contributions towards the cost of the activity may be invited and the school reserves the right to cancel the activity if insufficient funds are available.
- 2.2. For any activity wholly or mainly out of school hours<sup>2</sup>, other than the above, a charge will be levied. Charges may be levied for out-of-school trips on the basis of parental willingness to pay for these 'optional extras'. No remission is available for these trips.

## 3. Voluntary contributions

- 3.1. At Aspire Learning Trust schools, we strongly believe that learning should not be confined to the classroom. Regular and purposeful educational visits and other activities are organised throughout the year to enhance pupils' learning experiences and bring reality to what is being taught.
- 3.2. We are only able to provide such opportunities for learning by obtaining contributions from parents/carers and although regrettable, the decision to cancel events may be necessary should insufficient donations be received.
- 3.3. There is no obligation for parents/carers to make any contribution; contributions are voluntary, not compulsory. No child will be excluded from an activity because his or her parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent/carer is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal chance to go on the visit/take part in the activity.

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### <sup>2</sup> Definition of during/outside school hours:

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## OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Where an 'optional extra' is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment. Optional extras are:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
  - a) part of the national curriculum;
  - b) part of religious education;
  - c) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school.
- 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/ trust board have 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 (for example breakfast club, after-school and holiday clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions).

### 4. Charges

- 4.1. Any charge made in respect of individual pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It must not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.
- 4.2. Furthermore 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. Therefore no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.
- 4.3. Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

- 4.4. Aspire Learning Trust will not make a surplus from charging for optional extras (with the exception of School Facilities and Extended Day Services, see 11 and 12 below).

## 5. Music Tuition

- 5.1. Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music lessons are an exception to this rule. Tuition in playing any musical instrument or in singing provided at the request of pupil's parents will be subject to charges. No charge may be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by a local authority.

## 6. Public Examination

- 6.1. No charges can be made for entering a pupil for a prescribed examination, nor for materials required for the examination.
- 6.2. The cost of re-scrutinising the result of the examination may be passed on to parents.
- 6.3. Where there are educational reasons for a pupil not to be entered, or where parents request he/she should not be entered, the Trustees, as advised by the Headteacher, will inform the parents in writing so that parents have the opportunity to comment on the decision. An appeal may be made to the Secretary of State where there are grounds for believing the Trustees have acted unreasonably.
- 6.4. A parent may request that a pupil should be entered for a public examination at the parent's expense.
- 6.5. Where the Trustees agree to enter a pupil for an examination for which he or she has not been prepared by the school (for example a re-sit with no additional preparation), the cost may be passed on to the parents. Where a pupil re-sits an examination for which the school has earlier prepared him/her but where no additional preparation has been given since the original examination, the cost may be passed on to the parents.
- 6.6. If a pupil already entered fails without good reason to complete the examination requirements (either by failing to complete coursework or by failing to attend the final examination), parents are obliged to refund the fees incurred by the school.

## 7. Breakages and Damages

- 7.1. The Trustees are entitled to require parents to pay for the cost of damage caused by the pupil's behaviour (e.g. breakage of a window, damage to furniture). This also applies to lost, damaged or defaced text books and school equipment.

## 8. School Publications

- 8.1. School publications of more than four pages will be charged at the cost of photocopying and postage (if applicable).

## 9. School Meals

- 9.1. School meals are chargeable. Families in receipt of the benefits listed in Appendix 1 may apply to Cambridgeshire County Council Education Welfare (EWO) Team to receive Free School Meals. Pupils will become eligible for Free School Meals upon receipt of notification from the EWO Team and claims will not be backdated.

## 10. School Uniform

- 10.1. School uniform is chargeable. Families in receipt of the benefits listed in Appendix 1 may apply to the trust board for assistance with the cost of purchasing school uniform.

## 11. School Facilities

- 11.1. The trust board will make charges for the provision of school facilities as set out in the Aspire Learning Trust Lettings Policy, and a surplus may be generated.

## 12. Extended Day Services

- 12.1. Parents/carers of pupils attending the Extended Day Services are required to pay a set charge for each session at the time of booking. Refunds will not be issued for non-attendance. A surplus may be generated.

Parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging for educational trips:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit - but no element of Working Tax Credit - and have an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)) that does not exceed £16,190
- If you are supported under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit during the four week period immediately after your employment finishes or after you start to work less hours per week
- Universal Credit with an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400 (as from 1 April 2018)

The school Head must inform all parents of the right to claim free board and lodging if they are receiving these benefits.