Learning Together for Life

Jesus said, 'Love one another as I have loved you' John 15:12, New Testament

Stepney Greencoat

Church of England

Primary School

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

1. Vision and Purpose

As a Church of England school, Stepney Greencoat C of E Primary School seeks to provide a Christian education in which children are encouraged to grow academically, spiritually and socially, while respecting the beliefs and cultures of others.

The Federation Board recognises the valuable contribution that educational visits, activities and additional experiences make to pupils' learning and personal development. The school is committed to equality of opportunity and to ensuring that no pupil is disadvantaged because a parent or carer is unable or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution.

This policy is based on sections 449–462 of the Education Act 1996 and the Department for Education guidance 'Charging for school activities'. It should be read alongside any relevant school policies and current statutory guidance.

2. Principles

- No charge will be made for education provided during school hours except where legislation specifically permits a charge.
- Any charge made by the school will be reasonable, transparent and permitted by law.
- Requests for voluntary contributions will be clearly identified as voluntary.
- A pupil will not be excluded or treated differently because their parent or carer is unable or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution.
- Where places are limited, allocation will not take account of whether a parent or carer has made, or is willing to make, a voluntary contribution to the school, an activity or any school fund.
- The school will seek to support families experiencing financial hardship through the remissions arrangements in this policy.

3. Education Provided Free of Charge

The school will not charge for:

- admission to the school;
- education provided during school hours, including materials, books, instruments or other equipment necessary for that education;
- education provided outside school hours where it forms part of the National Curriculum, religious education, or a prescribed public examination syllabus for which the pupil is being prepared by the school;
- entry for a prescribed public examination where the pupil has been prepared for it at the school, subject to the limited exceptions permitted by law;
- transport where the school or local authority is legally required to provide it free of charge, including transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

4. Voluntary Contributions

The school may invite parents and carers to make voluntary contributions towards activities, educational visits, school funds or additional opportunities that enhance pupils' education.

Any request for a voluntary contribution will make clear that:

- there is no obligation to contribute;
- pupils will not be excluded because their parents or carers are unable or unwilling to contribute;

- pupils whose parents or carers do not contribute will not be treated differently from other pupils; and
- where insufficient voluntary contributions are received and the school cannot meet the shortfall from other resources, an activity may have to be cancelled.

There is no minimum contribution that a parent or carer must make. The school may use its own funds, fundraising or other sources of income to subsidise activities where appropriate.

5. Educational Visits During School Hours

For educational visits taking place during school hours, or otherwise forming part of education that must be provided free of charge, the school may invite voluntary contributions towards costs such as transport, admission charges or activities.

No pupil will be excluded because their parent or carer has not contributed. Where the school cannot meet the cost from its own resources and insufficient voluntary contributions are received, the school may decide that the visit cannot proceed.

6. Residential Visits

Where a residential visit takes place wholly or mainly during school hours, or is required as part of the National Curriculum, religious education or a prescribed public examination syllabus, the school will not charge for the educational element of the visit.

The school may charge for board and lodging, subject to the statutory remission arrangements set out below. Parents and carers may also be invited to make voluntary contributions towards other permitted costs associated with the visit.

7. Optional Extras

The school may charge for activities that are optional extras where charging is permitted by law. These may include:

- education provided outside school hours that is not part of the National Curriculum, religious education or a prescribed public examination syllabus;
- certain transport that is not required to be provided free of charge;
- residential visits, subject to remission arrangements;
- breakfast clubs, after-school childcare and other extended services; and
- other activities for which charging is permitted by law.

Participation in an optional extra will be a matter of parental choice and parental agreement to the charge will be obtained in advance. Charges will be calculated in accordance with the law and will not be used to make a profit from the activity.

8. Music Tuition

The school may charge for certain individual or small-group instrumental or vocal tuition. No charge will be made where the tuition must be provided free of charge, including where it is an essential part of the National Curriculum or otherwise falls within a statutory exemption. Where tuition is chargeable, parents and carers will be informed of the cost and their agreement obtained before tuition begins.

9. Materials, Ingredients and Finished Products

Materials, ingredients and equipment required for education provided during school hours will normally be provided without charge. Where parents or carers have indicated in advance that they wish their child to own or take home a finished product, the school may charge for, or ask parents and carers to provide, the materials or ingredients used in making that product.

10. Books, Equipment and Other Items

The school will provide books, materials and equipment necessary for education provided during school hours free of charge. Parents and carers may be offered the opportunity to purchase optional or replacement personal items such as book bags or swimming hats. Where such items are sold by the school, the charge will normally reflect the cost to the school. Essential protective equipment required for curriculum activities will be provided by the school.

11. School Uniform

Parents and carers are responsible for providing school uniform in accordance with the school's Uniform Policy. The school will seek to ensure that its uniform requirements are affordable and will provide information about support that may be available to families experiencing financial hardship. Where resources permit, the school may provide additional assistance in exceptional circumstances.

12. Damage to or Loss of School Property

The Governing Body reserves the right to seek payment from parents or carers for the cost of repairing or replacing school property, books, equipment or materials where these have been wilfully or negligently damaged or lost by a pupil. Any decision will take account of the circumstances of the incident and any financial hardship. The Headteacher may waive or reduce a charge where appropriate.

13. Breakfast Club, After-School Childcare and Extended Services

The school may charge for breakfast clubs, after-school childcare and other extended services. Charges will be reviewed periodically and will take account of the cost of providing the service.

The school may, at its discretion and subject to available resources, waive, reduce or subsidise charges in exceptional circumstances. Free educational interventions, booster sessions or other activities provided as part of pupils' education will not become chargeable simply because they take place outside normal school hours.

14. Remissions

14.1 Statutory remission

Where legislation provides an entitlement to remission of a charge, the school will apply that entitlement. In particular, where the statutory criteria are met, eligible parents and carers will not be required to meet board and lodging charges for qualifying residential visits. The school will inform parents and carers about statutory remission where relevant.

14.2 Discretionary remission

The Federation Board recognises that charges may place some families under financial pressure. The school may waive, reduce or subsidise a charge where a family is experiencing financial hardship or where there are other exceptional circumstances.

Parents and carers who believe that a charge would cause financial difficulty are encouraged to contact the Headteacher in confidence. Requests will be considered sensitively and on their individual circumstances. The Headteacher may authorise full or partial remission in accordance with arrangements agreed by the Federation Board. No pupil will be publicly identified as receiving financial assistance.

16. Voluntary Donations and the School Maintenance Fund

The school may invite parents, carers and members of the wider community to make voluntary donations towards the School Maintenance Fund, school funds, projects or activities. Such donations are voluntary.

A pupil's access to education and educational visits will not be determined by whether their parent or carer has made a voluntary donation. Contributions to the School Maintenance Fund, any other school fund or fundraising activity will not be used as a criterion for allocating places on educational activities or opportunities.

17. Equality and Inclusion

The school will apply this policy fairly and consistently and will have regard to its duties under equality legislation and its responsibilities towards pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments will be considered to support pupils' participation in school activities.

18. Responsibility, Publication and Review

The Federation Board is responsible for establishing this Charging and Remissions Policy. The Headteacher is responsible for its day-to-day implementation and for ensuring that staff understand which activities may be charged for and which may only be supported through voluntary contributions.

19. Key References

- Education Act 1996, sections 449–462.
- Department for Education: Charging for school activities.
- Department for Education: Maintained schools governance guide.
- Department for Education: What maintained schools must or should publish online.
- Relevant current early education and childcare funding guidance.