Saffron Walden County High School

Charging and Remissions Policy

Date of last review: 5th November 2026

This policy is regularly reviewed following recommended guidelines

The law states that where education is provided wholly or mainly during school hours, it should be free. It is therefore not possible to levy a compulsory charge for transport or admission costs for things like swimming or museum visits etc. during school hours.

Schools may lawfully charge for other study support (for example, additional sport, drama and music clubs, holiday activities, visits and additional courses, such as first aid) following consultation.

The Headteacher or Governing Body may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

- Any activity which takes place during school hours
- School equipment
- School funds generally.

The contribution must be genuinely voluntary though, and the pupils of parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute may not be discriminated against. Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make up the shortfall, then the activity must be cancelled.

1. Admissions

There is no charge for admissions.

2. Public examinations

There is no charge for examinations that are part of the curriculum and on the school's set examinations list, where children have been prepared for the examinations by the school.

The following charges or costs will be passed on to parents:

a) Where a parent asks for an examination result to be re-scrutinised, the charges will be made by the examining board for this service and an administration cost will be passed on to parents.

b) Where we agree to enter a pupil for a prescribed public examination for which he or she has NOT been prepared by SWCHS, the cost of entering the pupil for that examination will be passed on to parents.

c) Where a pupil, with parental agreement, is entered for a public examination which is not prescribed by the Secretary of State and which is not on the approved list for payment of fees, the cost will be passed on to parents.

d) Where a pupil fails without good reason to complete the examination requirements for any public examination for which the Governing Body has paid, or is liable to pay a fee, then the fee will be recovered from the parents. This will include situations where the pupil fails to complete the necessary coursework or fails to sit the final examination, but excludes justifiable or unavoidable absence, e.g. illness supported by a medical certificate.

e) Where students voluntarily choose to resit an examination to improve their grade the school may charge for that entry.

3. Transport

In general, the cost of any transport provided by the school in school hours for activities not deemed as essential parts of the curriculum will have to be met from voluntary contributions otherwise the activity will not go ahead. However, where a pupil makes use of transport not provided by the LA or the school to travel direct from home to an activity sanctioned, though not provided, by the school, then parents will be expected to meet the cost of such travel. An example of this is travel direct from home to work experience.

4. Residential Activities

When any visit has been organised by the school where there may be a cost for board and lodging, parents will be informed of this before the visit takes place. The charge will not exceed the actual cost. **Parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits may be exempt from paying some/all of this cost** (please see the parental handbook).

5. Charging for Finished Products

Where parents indicate in advance a wish to own the finished product, a charge may be levied to cover the costs of ingredients or materials.

6. Optional extras

The school will charge for optional extras. Optional extras are:

- education provided outside of school time that is **not:**
  - a) part of the National Curriculum
  - b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
  - c) part of religious education
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school
- transport that is not taking the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority or governing body has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education.
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.

Prior written agreement will be obtained from the parents of pupils involved in the optional extra for which the charge is to be made.

The cost of optional extras

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. In no circumstances will there be an element of subsidy required for any pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge. Any accidental profits will either be refunded to the child's parents or, if beneath our threshold level for refunds, they will be placed in an earmarked 'enrichment fund'.

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
- 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 a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to pay the charges. The school will need to have the agreement of parents before organising the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

7. Music tuition within school hours

SWCHS follows government legislation that states that all education provided during school hours must be free; however, musical instrumental/voice lessons are an exception to this rule.

A charge will be made to parents of pupils receiving tuition in the playing of any musical instrument and voice, except where it is provided to fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum. The charge may include the cost of the teacher providing the tuition, the cost of sheet music and the hire and insurance of a musical instrument. When charges are to be levied, the parents will be asked to indicate their written agreement in advance of the provision of the tuition. There will be an additional charge to cover the costs of staffing instrumental music ensembles led by visiting instrumental music teachers. SWCHS is dedicated to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils including access to specialised music tuition, therefore charges made for music tuition within school hours will be remitted for pupils on free school meals. **Parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits may be exempt from paying this cost** (please see the parental handbook).

8. Damage to property and breakages

Where school property has been wilfully damaged by a student or parent the school may charge those responsible for some or all of the cost of repair or replacement.

Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a pupil, and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible.

Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the headmaster and dependent on the situation.

9. Voluntary contributions

The school may ask for voluntary contributions to the school for general funds and/or to fund activities that will enrich our pupils' education.

In any case where an activity cannot be afforded without voluntary funding, this will be made clear to the parents by the school. If the activity is cancelled all monies paid will be returned to parents.

There is no obligation for a parent or carer to make any contribution and the school will in no way pressure parents to make a contribution.

SWCHS is committed to ensuring fair access and treatment of all pupils, and this means ensuring that no child is excluded from an activity because the parents or carers of that child are unwilling or unable to pay. If there is insufficient funding for an activity, then it will be cancelled.

The identity of the child or parents of the child who did not want to make the payment, or could not make the payment, will not be disclosed under any circumstances.