




Heron Hill Primary School

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY 2025-2026

Approved by ¹	
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Position:	Chair of Governors
Signed:	
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¹ The Governing Body is free to delegate the approval of this Policy to a Committee of the Governing Body, an individual Governor or the Headteacher

² The Governing Body are free to determine the review frequency of this Policy

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1. Policy scope

Sections 449 to 462 of the [Education Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) and [The Education \(School Sessions and Charges and Remissions Policies\) \(Information\) \(England\) Regulations 1999 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) set out the law on charging and remissions for school activities in England and require schools to have a Policy on charging.

[The Education \(Charges for Early Years Provision\) Regulations 2012 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) sets out when charges can be made for some early years provision.

This Policy is based on the law and Department for Education (DfE) guidance [Charging for school activities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

1.1 Aims

This Policy aims to ensure that:

- All pupils have full and free access to a broad and balanced curriculum regardless of their family's financial means.
- This school is transparent about the activities or items that can be charged for and when charges will be made, or remissions offered.
- We recognise our responsibility not to place undue pressure on family finances for example, by giving good notice about charges and by not offering activities on a 'first to pay, first served' basis.

1.2 Definitions

Charge: a fee payable for clearly defined items or activities.

Half-day school session: any period of 12 hours ending at noon or midnight (p9, DfE, 'Charging for school activities', 2018).

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

School hours: the hours when school is in session and which do not include the lunch break. These are currently each weekday 8.45 am-3.15 pm, with an hour for lunch (10 minute longer lunch break for Early Years).

1.3 Associated policies and procedures

The following policies and procedures may impact the implementation of this policy:

- Educational Visits Procedures
- Equality Policy
- Hire Procedures

2. Introduction

Heron Hill Primary School recognises the valuable contribution that a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including trips, clubs and residential experiences can make towards the education of our children and young people and aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils and as additional optional enrichment activities.

The school strives to ensure that all young people have an equal opportunity to benefit from such activities, both on and off site and within and outside of the curriculum, regardless of their family's financial means. To ensure transparency in setting charges and to ensure all young people are able to access all of the

provision we offer, this Policy sets out our approach to charging and remissions. It has been informed by adherence to the law and by following statutory Department for Education guidance.

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that, during the school day, all young people have full and free access to a broad and balanced curriculum. The school day is defined as 8.50 am-3.15 pm excluding the lunchtime period 12.00 noon-1.00 pm. A school session is equivalent to half a day i.e. either one morning session before lunch or one afternoon session afterwards.

We recognise our responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances and where we can we aim to:

- publish a list of visits and their approximate cost across all year groups at the beginning of the academic year so that parents can plan ahead for the next 1-7 years;
- ensure our payments systems allow parents to pay in instalments;
- make it possible for parents to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip when short notice opportunity arises; and
- ensure fair access to popular trips by acknowledging that offering them on a 'first pay, first served' basis discriminates against low income families and we will avoid that method of selection.

Where this Policy refers to a "voluntary contribution", this is an amount of money that school would like families to contribute towards the cost of an opportunity in order to make it financially viable. There is no obligation to pay a voluntary contribution but without enough contributions, an activity might be cancelled entirely.

Where this Policy refers to "remission", this is an amount of money that school will or might agree to provide to fund an opportunity for a child. Governors *will* make provision for all statutory remission requirements e.g. using the relevant Pupil Premium funding to pay for a residential experience for a child with a legal entitlement. Governors *might*, if funding allows, agree to provide financial support to pupils who are not legally entitled to remission, but does so entirely at their discretion.

This Policy does not apply to charges made and determined by other organisations offering activities and services on the school premises e.g. our Breakfast Club, or a community club that hires our hall to meet in etc.

Putting the school at the heart of community where we feel it belongs, we are proud to offer recreation and leisure opportunities to the wider community e.g. hire of facilities, use of fitness centre and sports facilities etc. This policy does not apply to any charges we make for these facilities or activities either.

3. Admissions

No charge will be made for any aspect of the admissions process to this school.

4. Activities wholly during the school day

No charge will be made for 'education' provided during normal school hours. 'Education' is defined as including all activities related to the National Curriculum and religious education as well as the materials, equipment and transport required to provide it. Music Tuition which is not part of the school curriculum is covered under [Section 8](#), below.

We recognise that the definition of 'education' as 'part of the National Curriculum' is not limited to learning outside the classroom experiences required as part of a specific subject e.g. geography or science fieldwork, but also includes activities designed to fulfil requirements under the National Curriculum 'inclusion statement' and others as applicable.

A charge will be made to cover the cost of ingredients or materials where parents have confirmed in advance that they wish their child to own the finished product.

This school offers pupils the opportunity to have their own copies of books, specialist art materials etc. as desired. A charge will be made for any educational materials that parents have confirmed in advance that they wish their child to own. No young person will be disadvantaged if they do not or cannot take up the opportunity.

We will ask parents for voluntary contributions to help school fund the range of these opportunities we offer, but no young person will be excluded from an activity on the basis of a parent's inability or unwillingness to pay this contribution. The Governing Body reserves the right however, to cancel an activity in its entirety if insufficient voluntary contributions are received.

From time to time we may invite a non-school based organisation such as a travelling theatre company, to deliver an activity during the school day. Such organisations may wish to charge parents, who are entitled not to pay any fee and instead to ask the Headteacher to agree to their child being absent/taught elsewhere in the school for that period. In many cases, however, parents will be asked for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the activity.

5. Activities wholly outside the school day

No charge will be made for education provided outside of normal school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of religious education.

We will ask parents for voluntary contributions to help school fund the range of these opportunities we offer, but no young person will be excluded from an activity on the basis of a parent's inability or unwillingness to pay this contribution. The Governing Body reserves the right, however, to cancel an activity in its entirety if insufficient voluntary contributions are received.

Other enrichment activities not required as part of the national curriculum or religious education *and* which are wholly outside school hours are Optional Extras and chargeable. Please see [Section 7](#) for more information about charging for Optional Extras.

Lunchtime activities, after school and other extra-curricular clubs are wholly outside of school hours and do not fall under the definition of 'education' above. Please see [Section 7](#) for more information about charging for Optional Extras.

6. Non-residential activities that take place partly during and partly outside the school day

Where the majority of time spent on a non-residential activity is *within* normal school hours, the charging regime will be as if it happens *fully within* school hours. The majority of time is defined as 50% or more.

Where the majority of the time spent on a non-residential activity is *outside* of normal school hours, the charging regime will be as if it happens *fully outside* school hours i.e. the activity becomes an 'Optional Extra' unless it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of religious education. The majority of time is defined, in this case, as more than 50%.

Travel time is included when considering the time spent on an activity only when it occurs during school time as defined in the Introduction.

7. Residential activities

A residential visit may be wholly chargeable if it is an Optional Extra. Please see [Section 7](#) for more information about charging for Optional Extras.

If a residential visit is **not** an Optional Extra, charges will be made to the parents of pupils who wish to participate in residential activities for the cost of board and lodging with the exception of those in receipt of certain benefits. Details of those benefits can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>.

We understand that parents should be informed of this when they are asked for money. Parents are encouraged to discuss their circumstances in confidence with the Headteacher or senior leaders, class teacher or a member of the admin staff.

In order to cover any other costs associated with a residential visit e.g. activity tuition, for which charges cannot be made, parents will be asked to make a voluntary contribution. No child will be denied the opportunity of attending a residential (only where it is not an Optional Extra) if the parents do not wish to or cannot contribute voluntarily. It is possible however, that unless sufficient voluntary contributions are received to cover the cost, the experience will not go ahead. The Governing Body reserves the right, to cancel an activity in its entirety if insufficient voluntary contributions are received.

Other charges will be made to cover associated costs only where the visit is an Optional Extra because the number of normal school sessions (defined in the [Introduction](#)) missed by the pupils taking part totals less than half of the number of half-days taken up by the activity. The DfE defines a half-day session as a period of 12 hours ending in noon or midnight. In such cases, parents will be told how the charges were calculated.

Example 1

Pupils are away from noon on Wednesday to 9.00 pm 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

Pupils are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9.00 pm on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.

8. Optional extras

The Governing Body reserves the right to charge parents for activities deemed to be Optional Extras. Such activities will include, for example, an evening visit to a theatre which does not fit the definition of 'education' in [Section 3](#). Parents must make payment in order for their child to participate.

Lunchtime and after school activity clubs do not operate during normal school hours and to cover the costs of offering such opportunities a charge may be made to the parents of pupils who wish to participate in them. Families on a low income who are unable to pay such charges should speak to the Headteacher or a member of Senior Leadership Team, class teacher or admin staff in complete confidence.

In 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, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
- 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.

9. Music tuition

No charge will be made for tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum or part of the Heron Hill School curriculum, or forms part of religious education.

A charge will be made for vocal and musical instrument tuition for either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size, where it does not fall into the category of teaching described above.

National charging guidance is followed and no charge will 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).

10. School Meals

School meals are available to pupils at a cost of £3.15 per day or free of charge to those pupils whose family is in receipt of one of the prescribed benefits listed in [Section 6](#). Information on how to apply for free school meals is available from the school office and can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>.

Payment for school meals is required in advance via the school's on-line payment system 'Scopay'.

Please click [here](#) for further information about this system.

Please note:

If a child's entitlement to free school meals has expired, a parent must provide a packed lunch or make *advanced payment* for any school meals to be taken.

Should a child arrive at school without payment or a packed lunch, we will telephone home in the first instance to establish if alternative arrangements have been made.

While we do understand that everyone forgets occasionally, the school is not obliged to provide a school meal where payment is not forthcoming or where authorisation for a free school meal has not been received. We will therefore act promptly to address financial issues at an early stage if we can, to prevent arrears accumulating.

If no alternative arrangement is in place, we will suggest that, before lunchtime, the parent should bring to school a suitable packed lunch or the cost of a school meal. In special circumstances we might grant the parent a debt allowance of one meal (special permission to pay on the next school day), on the understanding that all future meals will be paid for in full, in advance.

To prevent arrears accumulating, protect the school budget and to support families with planning and budgeting, we use Scopay cashless catering service which can take school meal bookings and payments online directly from families. Parents can only order meals online if payments on Scopay are up to date week by week in advance. .

If a pupil's entitlement to free school meals has expired, a parent or carer must provide a packed lunch or register with Scopay and make advanced payment for any school meals to be taken.

If a pupil arrives at school without a prepaid school meal booked for them or a packed lunch, we will use their emergency contact information to find out if suitable meal arrangements have been made. School is not obliged to provide a meal without payment or when there is no entitlement to a free school meal.

If there are no suitable lunch arrangements or the emergency contacts are unreachable, school can allow a child to take a school meal, and their parent or carer must pay the school the money owed on the next school day. If this happens 3 times, the account with Scopay will be frozen until full payment is made to them and/or us.

When a school meals debt has arisen, school will contact the parents by phone to request immediate payment. If payment is not received by the end of that or the next school day, we will send a letter home quoting the outstanding amount and asking for the balance to be cleared in full within 7 days. During this time, the child will not be allowed a school meal, and parents must provide a packed lunch.

We are committed to working together to find suitable payment plans for parents in financial difficulties, and anyone experiencing this should speak to the Head teacher in the strictest confidence. We may be able to signpost families to extra government or community support in the immediate or short term.

Where no attempt is made to clear a school meals debt, we will take appropriate debt recovery action in accordance with our normal financial procedures (see section 7 for more information).

11. School milk scheme

We understand that under *'The Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014'*, we must make lower fat milk or lactose reduced milk available for drinking at least **once** a day during school hours at a fair cost or free of charge to all pupils who are entitled.

Up to one third of a pint of milk is available to all children free of charge, regardless of their family circumstances up to the age of 5.

When a child has their 5th birthday, a small charge will be made towards the cost of continuing to provide this single portion of milk to those parents who want their children to continue receiving it.

Children who have reached the age of 5 and have not yet reached the age of 19 can continue to receive free school milk if their family is in receipt of one of the prescribed benefits. Details of those benefits can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>.

In the case of infant pupils who are entitled to a Universal free school meal, milk must be offered free to those pupils where it forms part of the school lunch. If milk is offered at any other time during the school day, it will only be free for those pupils with an underlying entitlement to free school meals and in receipt of one of the prescribed benefits.

A parent who wishes their child to receive more than one portion of milk per day must pay the full cost of each additional portion, even when their first portion is free due to an entitlement.

For more information about our milk scheme and the current charges please ask the school office.

12. Before and/or after school care

Charges will be made for any childcare services offered to pupils before school, after school and during school holidays, with the level of fees and any remissions to be set and reviewed regularly by the Governing Body or individual service provider e.g. Breakfast Club and After School Club. For information about current childcare charges please see [the school website](#) or ask to speak to the office staff.

This section about childcare services does not apply to extra-curricular after school activities. Please see [Section 7](#) to understand any charges we might make from time to time, such as for ingredients used in Cooking Club.

Parents can make and pay for bookings on Scopay. All Before and Afterschool Care must be paid for at the time of making the booking. Bookings can be cancelled and refunded on Scopay up to seven days before the day of the booking. Any bookings that are cancelled at shorter notice will not be refunded.

13. Damage to property and breakages

The school will attempt to recover some, or all the costs incurred repairing wilful or culpably negligent damage or breakage of school property or such damage or breakage of property belonging to a third party where the school has been charged. The actual amount will be determined by the Headteacher.

14. Calculating charges and remission

When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who cannot. Support for cases of hardship will come through applicable funding such as pupil premium monies, specified voluntary contributions and fundraising.

Parents who would qualify for support are those in receipt of benefits as described in [Section 6](#).

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to school and/or charges to parents.

Details of any remission arrangements will be made clear when parents and carers are informed of charges for individual activities.

15. Debt recovery

Our financial management policy requires all services provided by the school are paid for in advance so it is expected that no debts will accrue. In the unlikely event that debts are accrued, the Governing Body authorises school to take all reasonable measures to collect debts as part of its management of public funds. In doing so they will observe the relevant financial regulations and any other legal requirements.

Staff will follow set school procedures to secure the collection of all debts. A debt will be written off only after all reasonable measures (commensurate with the size and nature of the debt) have been taken to recover it. Only debts below that allowed for in the annual funding letter issued by the Secretary of State may be written off. The recovery of any sums above this amount will be referred first to the Governors and then to the Secretary of State for approval. If any debtor has a number of debts that together exceed the write-off limit, then these will be treated as a total amount.

Unless a decision to write-off a debt is demonstrably a reasonable course of action authorisation is in place to initiate legal or other action to recover debts.

A formal record of any debts written off will be maintained and this will be retained for 7 years.

16. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The Finance Committee of the Governing Body will monitor the impact of this policy by receiving on a termly basis, a financial report on those activities that resulted in charges being levied, the remission awarded (without giving names) and the source of remissions.

17. References and associated Policies and procedures

- Education Act 1996, Section 457
- Education (School Sessions and Charges and Remissions Policies) (Information) (England) Regulations 1999
- DfE Statutory Guidance document [Charging for school activities](#) which includes Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Educational Visits Procedures
- Single Equality Scheme