Charging and remission policy

Reviewed: July 2025

Next review date: July 2026

The staff and governors of Walkington Primary School believe that all pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school visits and activities (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their financial circumstances. This policy describes how we will do our best to ensure that we provide a good range of visits and activities and ensure that financial barriers do not prevent pupils from participating in the experiences.

This policy identifies activities for which

1. Charges will be made
2. Charges will not be made
3. Charges may be waived

Where payments are made by families, this will be done via 'School Money' online payment.

Parents will be offered the facility to pay for school meals and school activities via credit or debit card using an online payment system. Costs will be kept to a minimum, but the school reserves the right to pass on to parents the direct costs for processing a transaction.

In the event that a family falls into arrears, the following will occur; small sums, up to the equivalent of one weeks' dinners will be pursued initially by a generic text message and then subsequently by a telephone call. If these are unsuccessful, and/or the amount goes on to exceed the equivalent of one week's dinner money an e-mail will be sent from the school office advising the parents of the situation and asking for payment within 5 working days. If the amount owed goes on to exceed two weeks' dinner money owed, then a letter will be sent from the Headteacher explaining that the matter is being referred to the local authority for further action, and respectfully asking that packed lunches are provided until the amount outstanding has been cleared.

THE LAW SAYS:
Parents must be informed if:

- The activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions
- The visit may have to be cancelled if insufficient funds are raised
- A parent's inability to pay cannot exclude a child from an activity
- If a parent is unable or unwilling to pay, their child will be given an equal chance to go on a visit.

*Separately from the matter of charging, schools may always seek voluntary contributions in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to pupils, e.g. visiting professionals. All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature.

NO CHARGES WILL BE MADE FOR:

- Education provided during school hours including that provided on any trip that takes place in school hours (this includes the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National or Religious Education Curriculum
- Tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum
- Part/time or Supply teachers used to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip

ACTIVITIES FOR WHICH CHARGES MAY BE MADE

Activities outside school hours:

Charges may be made for non-residential activities which take place out of school hours but only if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside of school hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours)

Residential activities:

For residential trips (one or more nights away from home) deemed to take place during school time, no charges may be made for any part of the trip other than for board and lodging costs. However, pupils whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (see below) may not be charged for board and lodgings

- Universal Credit
- Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Other Government Grants and support e.g. Tax Credits
- For children who have free school lunch entitlement, there is also a statutory remission for the cost of board and lodgings on residential visits

Families with severe difficulties in meeting the cost of a residential visit will be offered the opportunity to discuss their circumstances with the Headteacher at the earliest opportunity. We will encourage the family to make a nominal regular weekly payment which will go some way to meeting some costs and support the family in searching out available funding. Any residual funds from the visit will be shared equally between participating families once all invoices are settled.

CHARGING FOR OPTIONAL EXTRAS

We can charge for 'optional extras' for educational visits that are not part of the National or Religious Curriculum, or where the activity is outside of school hours. In such cases the charge may include an element for:

- Travel
- Board and Lodging
- Materials, books and other equipment

- Non-teaching staff costs or instructional/teaching staff hired especially for the purposes of the activity
- Insurance costs

Costs must not exceed the costs of the elements above and must not include the cost of any teacher employed by the Local Authority

Charging parents for an optional extra may not include an element of subsidy in respect of other pupils whose parents do not meet the full charge. The agreement of parents to meet the costs of an optional extra should not be assumed, consent should be obtained prior to the school making financial commitments.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS FOR VISITS

School may ask parents for voluntary contributions towards the cost of any visit. However we must make it clear that these costs are genuinely voluntary and the pupils of those parents who do not make such a contribution will not be discriminated against.

When there is a shortfall of funding from voluntary contributions, then alternative funding will be sought from the core budget or school fund. If this is not available then the visit must be cancelled.

We will not pressurise parents into making a voluntary contribution but we will continue to emphasize the importance and value of educational visits and encourage voluntary financial support, if appropriate.

COLLECTION OF MONEY FOR VISITS

We shall publish notification of school visits and their cost as far in advance as possible so that parents can plan ahead. If for some reason a visit is planned at very short notice we will give parents the opportunity to pay in instalments beyond the date of the visit

Money is banked in line with ERYC procedures.
For residential visits, parents will be given the option to pay by instalments (via SchoolMoney) over a fixed period of time with a completion date identified from the onset.
Payments are non-refundable once visit costs are determined, unless other children can take up the place

Staff should not receive inducements, excessive hospitality or other favours

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Clubs run by teachers do not incur costs for tuition, we do however ask for a contribution for materials

Payment for music tuition provided by the East Riding Music Service is passed on to the parents termly, again the amount is shared equally between the number of pupils receiving tuition. If a child withdraws from the group mid-term they still incur costs for the whole term and not the number of weeks attended.

If a pupil leaves school with outstanding unpaid payments it is followed up by the ERYC Corporate Billing Section who recovers the payment on our behalf.