

# Sharrow School

## Charging and Remissions Policy

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## Statement of Intent

We recognise the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including trips, clubs and residential experiences can make towards pupils' education. We aim to promote and provide such activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

We believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents'/carers' financial means. This policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

In addition, we are committed to adhering to legal requirements regarding charging for school activities, and meeting all statutory guidance provided by the DfE.

We promise:

- Not to charge for education provided during school hours.
- To inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of relevant benefits of the support available to them when asking for contributions towards the costs of school visits.

## 1. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 1989
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2020) 'Governance handbook'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme
- The school's Scheme of Delegation
- Finance Policy

## 2. Charging for Education

The school will not charge for:

- Admission applications.
- Any education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the school, or part of religious education (RE).
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless provided at the request of the pupil's parent.

- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school.

The school may charge for:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes their child to own them.
- Optional extras.
- Music tuition (in certain circumstances).
- Certain early years provision.
- Use of community facilities and other commercial activities.
- Provision of information within the scope of freedom of information.

### **3. Optional Extras**

The school is allowed to charge for the following optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school or part of RE
- Examination entry fees where the pupil has not been prepared for the examinations at the school
- Transport, other than that required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the LA has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit

The school also charges for additional childcare requested by parents:

- Additional paid hours for Nursery pupils beyond the 15 hours free entitlement / 15/30 hour working parent entitlement (top-ups during core hours or wrap-around care)
- Paid childcare for babies and young children in the Children's Centre who are not eligible for 15 hours free childcare or additional hours beyond this entitlement
- Extended day services offered to pupils, e.g. breakfast activity clubs, specialist lunchtime coaching sessions, after-school clubs, supervised homework sessions, holiday clubs

When calculating the cost of optional extras, an amount may be included in relation to the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in relation to the optional extra
- Buildings and accommodation
- Non-teaching staff (including TAs)
- Teaching staff under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra
- The cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide vocal tuition or tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra

The school will not charge in excess of the actual cost of providing the optional extra divided by the number of participating pupils. A subsidy will not be charged for any pupils wishing to participate but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge. In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the school will not charge for the cost of alternative provision for those not participating.

The school will not charge for supply teachers to cover for teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges; therefore, parental agreement is a pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

See section 14 for schedule of charges for Optional Extras.

## **4. Voluntary Contributions**

In order to enhance and extend the learning experience the children have at Sharrow School, the school will often seek “voluntary contributions” to cover the cost of an activity.

If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the school will make this clear to parents at the outset. There is no obligation for parents to make a contribution if they feel unable to and parents will be notified regarding whether assistance is available.

No pupil will be excluded from an activity simply because their parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal opportunity to take part in the activity. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity, and the school cannot fund it via another source, the activity will be cancelled and this will be made clear to parents.

The school will strive to ensure that parents do not feel pressurised into making voluntary contributions if their financial circumstances are difficult.

If a parent wishes their child to take part in a residential trip but is unable to meet the full cost, they can request a payment schedule or assistance from the school.

## **5. Music Tuition**

Instrumental and vocal music tuition is an exception to the rule that all education provided during school hours must be free. The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 allow for charges to be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of **any size** – provided that the tuition is at the request of the pupil’s parents. The charges will not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff providing the tuition.

Charging will not be made if the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum. Charging will also not be made if the teaching is provided under the first access to the KS2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme.

No charge will be made in respect of pupils who are Looked After Children.

## **6. Transport**

The school will not charge for:

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the LA has a statutory obligation to provide the transport.
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the Governing Body or LA has arranged for pupils to be educated.
- Transporting pupils to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for the examination at the school.
- Transport provided for an educational visit where it is an essential part of the national curriculum, although voluntary contributions may be requested for enrichment trips that go beyond the requirements of the national curriculum.

## **7. Education Partly During School Hours**

If 50 percent or more of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours (including time spent travelling if the travel occurs during school hours), it is deemed to take place during school hours and no charge will be made.

If less than 50 percent of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours and the school may charge for the activity; however, the school will not charge if the activity is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of RE.

***See Appendix 1 for flowchart***

## **8. Residential Visits**

The school will not charge for:

- Statutory education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours.
- Education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of RE.
- Supply teachers to cover for teachers accompanying pupils on visits.

A charge for transport and other costs may be made, except where the activity is either: deemed to be in school hours or is provided to meet the statutory education requirements above. Where the school does not make a charge, voluntary contributions may be requested.

The school will charge for board and lodging, but the charge will not exceed the actual cost. Parents will be exempt from board and lodging costs if they can prove that they are in receipt of certain benefits.

If the number of school sessions covered by the visit is equal to or greater than 50 percent of the number of half days (any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day) spent on the visit, the school will not charge for the activity, although a voluntary contribution may still be requested.

## **9. Damaged or Lost Items**

The school may charge for the cost of replacing items that are damaged or lost due to the negligence or poor behaviour of pupils or their parents.

## **10. Remissions (Exemptions)**

The school has set aside a fund to enable parents in financial difficulty to send their children on visits and activities. The funding is limited and there is no guarantee that all requests can be met. Assistance will be allocated on a needs basis, and if the full cost of the trip or activity cannot be met through assistance funding and voluntary contributions, the trip or activity will be cancelled.

Parents in receipt of certain benefits, parents who do not have access to public funds or parents who are experiencing financial difficulties should request a remission by contacting the Headteacher via the school office.

## **11. School Trip Refunds**

All initial deposits for school trips will be non-refundable if parents cancel within 1 month of the trip. Parents will be informed of this when they are provided with initial information about the trip.

In the event that the school has to cancel a trip due to foreseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded. In the event that a school trip is cancelled by a party other than the school due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents.

In the event that a pupil or their parents cancel the pupil's place on a trip, it is at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school will take into account the reason for cancellation, the amount of notice given, whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip, and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

Where a pupil or their parents have previously cancelled a place on a trip and received a full refund, the school has the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future trips and visits.

In the event that a pupil cannot attend a trip at the last minute, e.g. due to illness, it is at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school will take into account whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

In the event that a school trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the school's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.

In the event that the decision is made to postpone a trip due to foreseen circumstances, it is at the school's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.

Once trip arrangements have been booked and confirmed, if contributions exceed the total cost of the trip, a refund will be given where the excess is greater than £1 per pupil.

The school will deal with cancellations and refunds on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all pupils and their families are treated equally.

If a parent wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they can do so via the Complaints Policy.

## **12. Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme**

The school's Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme sets out where fees may be charged for the provision of information.

## **13. School Meals**

Dinner money is payable in advance for meals and are charged at £2.60 per day for pupils in Y3 to Y6. Nursery meals are charged at £2.30. Daily charges are added to ParentPay and parents are responsible for ensuring their ParentPay dinner money account is kept in credit. Payments can be made via ParentPay or can be made in cash at the school office.

Parents will be informed of any LA increases in the cost of school meals.

## **14. Charges for Optional Extras**

### **Nursery Top-Up Charges**

3 and 4 year old children in the Nursery are entitled to 15 hours of funded childcare and this entitlement must always be completely free at the point of delivery. A parental agreement will be required in relation to the funded 15 hours provision. This also applies to some 2 year olds who are also eligible for 15 hours of funded childcare as parents/carers are on low incomes, are on a NRPF (no recourse to public funds) visa or are claiming asylum, or where parents are eligible for working parent childcare. Working parents may also be eligible for the extended 30 hours of free childcare and, where parents have a 30 hour code, this entitlement must also be completely free at the point of delivery.

Additional sessions over the 15 / 30 hours per week entitlement may be available, but availability is dependent upon the number of children who are attending for the funded sessions and to whom priority will be given.

Where parents have requested additional top-up hours, the parental agreement will include the details of the additional chargeable sessions. These will be charged at £6 per hour. These additional hours will be chargeable should the child be absent due to sickness or holiday, as the staffing ratios will be maintained throughout the term.

Charges are added to the child's ParentPay account. Parents can pay using ParentPay or by cash in the school office. Parents wishing to use tax-free childcare vouchers can do so. These will be credited to their ParentPay account as a manual adjustment when the payment arrives on the school bank statement.

### **Children's Centre**

Childcare will be charged at £6 per hour for babies and young children in the Children's Centre. Where 2 year olds are entitled to 15 hours of funded childcare, this entitlement will be completely free at the point of delivery and parents will only be charged if they have requested additional hours beyond this entitlement. A parental agreement will be prepared termly detailing the paid hours and funded hours. Paid hours will be chargeable should the child be absent due to sickness or holiday, as the staffing ratios will be maintained throughout the term.

Charges are added to the child's ParentPay account. Parents can pay using ParentPay or by cash in the school office. Parents wishing to use tax-free childcare vouchers can do so. These will be credited to their ParentPay account as a manual adjustment when the payment arrives on the school bank statement.

### **After School Club (Reception to Year 6)**

The After School Club sessions run from 3.15 to 5pm and are charged at £7 per session. Parents wishing to book the after school club have to complete a booking form detailing the sessions they require. Fees will be charged for the days you have booked and you will be charged even if your child does not attend due to sickness or holiday. You will not be charged for Bank Holidays or school closure days (e.g. inset days or snow days).

Charges are added to the child's ParentPay account. Parents can pay using ParentPay or by cash in the school office. Parents wishing to use tax-free childcare vouchers can do so. These will be credited to their ParentPay account as a manual adjustment when the payment arrives on the school bank statement.



**Late collection:** Parents must collect their child/children at their agreed session times and no later than 5.00pm. Late collections will be charged at up to £10.00 per child, depending on the number of minutes and the frequency of late collections. Recurring late collections may result in loss of place and result in us following our 'Non-Collection Procedure'.

**Changes to contracted days:** To request a reduction or increase in days, parents need to give one month's notice in writing and we will allocate any new days when a space is available. Parents wishing to cancel their child's place need to give one month's notice in writing.

### **Holiday Club (8.30am to 4.30pm during most school holidays, excluding Christmas)**

Parents needing childcare during the holidays can book sessions by returning the booking form to the school office or using the online booking form issued before each holiday.

Fees will be charged for the days booked and will be charged even if a child does not attend due to sickness or holiday. Parents will not be charged for any school closure days (e.g. snow days).

Charges are added to the child's ParentPay account. Parents can pay using ParentPay or by cash in the school office. Parents wishing to use tax-free childcare vouchers can do so. These will be credited to their ParentPay account as a manual adjustment when the payment arrives on the school bank statement.

### **Additional Clubs / Music Tuition**

Parents will be advised about any additional homework, specialist activity clubs, language classes or music tuition that they may wish to book. Charges for these sessions will be calculated in accordance with this policy. Parents wishing to book these sessions will be asked to return a booking form to the school office or sign up on line.

Charges are added to the child's ParentPay account. Parents can pay using ParentPay or by cash in the school office. Parents wishing to use tax-free childcare vouchers can do so. These will be credited to their ParentPay account as a manual adjustment when the payment arrives on the school bank statement.

## **15. Charging & Debt Collection**

Charges for **Optional Extras** which parents have signed up to will be added to ParentPay. Parents are responsible for ensuring their ParentPay account remains in credit. Reminder emails / texts regarding any debts will be sent out weekly.

Where debts have not been settled within 2 weeks, consideration will be given to cancelling sessions to avoid the debts rising further.

School dinner debts of over £20 could result in meals being stopped and the debt passed over to the Sheffield credit control team.

## **16. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed at regular intervals by the Governing Body and charges will be reviewed annually. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2027.

## Appendix 1: Flowchart re Charging for Trips & Residential Visits

