



The Villages' Multi-Academy Trust

Charging and Remissions Policy

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Contents:

1. Statement of intent
2. Legal framework
3. Charging for education
4. Optional extras
5. Examination fees
6. Examination re-sits
7. Voluntary contributions
8. Free School Meal awards / Pupil Premium Grant allocations
9. Free School Meals
10. Milk and fruit
11. Educational trips, visits and visitors
12. Residential visits
13. School swimming lessons
14. Cycling proficiency training
15. Instrumental Music tuition
16. Materials and equipment
17. School clubs and enrichment activities
18. Damaged / lost items and / or property
19. Other charges and remissions
20. Refunds
21. Appeals
22. Exceptional Circumstances

1. Statement of intent

The Villages' Multi-Academy Trust is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of financial circumstances, and has established the following policy and procedures to ensure that no child is discriminated against by our offering of educational visits, activities, and extra-curricular activity.

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.

2. Legal framework

At the time of writing, this policy will have consideration for, and be compliant with, the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Education Act 1996.
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007.
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010.
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities.'
- DfE (2019) 'Governance handbook'.
- Our Funding Agreement.

3. Charging for education

We will not charge parents for:

- admission applications.
- education provided during school hours.
- 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.
- instrumental or vocal tuition, unless provided at the request of the pupils' parents (this does not include charges for supplies and repairs to instruments);
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school.

We may charge parents for the following:

- materials, books, instruments or equipment, where they desire their child to own them.
- optional extras.
- music and vocational tuition (in certain circumstances).
- use of community facilities.

4. Optional extras

We may charge parents 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.
 - religious education.
- examination entry fees where the pupil has not been prepared for the examinations at the school.
- transport, other than that arranged by the LA for the pupil to be provided with education.
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.
- extended day services offered to pupils.

When calculating the cost of optional extras, the school will only take into account the following:

- materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in relation to the optional extra.
- the cost of buildings and accommodation.
- the employment of non-teaching staff.
- the cost of teaching staff (including teaching assistants) 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.

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

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.

5. Examination fees

We may charge for examination fees if:

- the examination is on the prescribed list (which includes SATs, GCSEs and A levels), but the pupil was not prepared for it at the school.
- the examination is not on the prescribed list, but the school arranged for the pupil to take it;
- a pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the requirements of any public examination where the governing body or LA originally paid or agreed to pay the fee.

6. Examination re-sits

Where a pupil is entered for a second or subsequent attempt at an examination, we will pay the fee. Once pupils have left the school, re-sits must be taken at the school.

If a pupil or their parents consider it to be in the best interests of the pupil to request that an examination is re-marked, any fees involved must be covered by the pupil or their parents. If the awarding body changes the overall grade of the result, the school will not be charged by the awarding body and the parent/pupil will have their fees refunded.

7. Voluntary contributions

We may, from time-to-time, ask for voluntary contributions towards the benefit of the school or school activities. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, we will make this clear to parents at the outset. We will also make it clear that there is no obligation for parents to make a contribution, and notify parents whether assistance is available.

No child 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.

We will strive to ensure that parents do not feel pressurised into making voluntary contributions.

8. Free School Meals awards / Pupil Premium Grant allocations

In cases where children are in receipt of Free School Meals (apart from those who are currently universally entitled to a funded meal in Years R, 1 and 2), remissions against charges and / or the amount of voluntary contributions sought are specified in this policy. For many, but not all, of these children the school will receive an allocation of Pupil Premium Grant funding.

In cases where the school has received an allocation of Pupil Premium Grant funding, remissions against charges and / or the amount of voluntary contributions sought are also specified in this policy. Many, but not all, of these children may be in receipt of Free School Meals.

9. Free School Meals

Every child whose parent has applied for and been awarded Free School Meals will be provided with a free hot or sandwich lunch, daily from the date on which the award is made until the end date.

Children in Key Stage 2 for whom the school is in receipt of Pupil Premium Funding, but who have not been awarded Free School Meals, will be charged for school lunches.

Free School Meal awards are available to parents and carers who are in receipt of specific benefits. Details and application forms are reviewed regularly, and are available from the Local Authority's website, <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schools-education-and-learning/free-school-meals>

10. Milk and fruit

The school operates a scheme where milk is provided at a subsidised rate and provides free milk for all children under five. Upon request from parents and carers, a daily carton of milk will continue to be provided after the age of five without charge in cases where children are in receipt of Free School Meals.

As our school participates in the National School Fruit Scheme, all children in Years R, 1 and 2 are provided with a piece of fruit daily without charge. This scheme is not available for children in Years 3 to 6.

11. Educational trips, visits and visitors

Charges are not levied for trips, visits or visitors related to the National Curriculum taking place during the school day, although if more than half of a visit takes place outside school hours the whole visit is chargeable as an optional extra.

Voluntary contributions are almost always requested to meet the costs of such trips, visits, and visitors, with the school subsidising those whose parents do not pay.

Parents are asked to contribute 50% towards the cost of single day trips, visits, and visitors if:

- an allocation of funding in respect of their child through the Pupil Premium Grant has been made to the school; or
- their child is in receipt of Free School Meals at the time of the single day trip / visit / visitor.

Parents and carers have a right to know how each trip or visit is funded; the school will provide this information on request.

12. Residential visit

As more than half of the visit takes place outside school hours, the whole visit is chargeable as an optional extra. A charge is levied to parents to cover all costs incurred, which does not exceed the actual cost.

There is 50% remission of this charge for parents and carers if:

- an allocation of funding in respect of their child through the Pupil Premium Grant has been made to the school; or
- their child is in receipt of Free School Meals at the time of the residential visit.

In exceptional circumstances, the headteacher has the discretion to part or fully subsidise the costs of such a visit in order to prevent a child being unable to participate.

13. School swimming lessons

No charge is made for the minimum level of instruction, life guarding, or pool hire. However, as we provide a very high level of additional instruction and transport to and from the pool, voluntary contributions are sought from parents.

No voluntary contribution is sought from parents and carers if:

- an allocation of funding in respect of their child through the Pupil Premium Grant has been made to the school; or
- their child is in receipt of Free School Meals at the time of the swimming lessons.

14. Cycling proficiency training

No charge is made for instruction and assessment. However, as we would otherwise be unable to provide this service, voluntary contributions are sought from parents.

There is 50% remission of this charge for parents and carers if:

- an allocation of funding in respect of their child through the Pupil Premium Grant has been made to the school; or
- their child is in receipt of Free School Meals at the time of the cycling proficiency training.

15. Instrumental music tuition

Music tuition is the only 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. At The Villages' Multi-Academy Trust these lessons are provided by external music teachers. All arrangements and payments are made directly between parents and the externally sourced teacher.

50% remission of this charge, paid directly to the music teacher, is made for parents and carers if:

- an allocation of funding in respect of their child through the Pupil Premium Grant has been made to the school; or
- their child is in receipt of Free School Meals at the time of the instrumental music tuition.

No charges are made for instrumental music lessons as part of the school's curriculum.

16. Materials and equipment

Although we make every attempt to cover the costs of all materials and equipment used as part of the curriculum, we can make a charge in the following circumstances: for materials / ingredients used if a child is to take the product home; for equipment that parents or carers wish a child to own.

17. School clubs and enrichment activities

The school organises a range of clubs and enrichment activities after school or during lunchtimes as an optional extra, in order to offer a wider range of experiences to children. Most of these are run by school staff, and for most there is a small £1 per session charge. However, in some instances a charge is made to cover costs incurred, for example in paying an external coach or in providing materials.

18. Damaged / lost items and / or property

The school may charge parents for the cost of replacing items broken, damaged or lost due to their child's behaviour.

19. Other charges and remissions

Other chargeable matters, such as the hire of school premises and use of equipment by staff and others for non-school related purposes, are dealt with in other school policies.

20. Refunds

The DfE advise that, providing a trip/visit is charged according to the school's charging and remissions policy, the school does not have to offer a refund if the pupil cancels and schools may also refuse to admit the pupil to future trips, particularly if the school has been unable to offer the trip to another pupil, or be reimbursed by the supplier.

In respect of residential visits/other visits, all initial deposits are non-refundable and this is stated in initial letters to parents with the details of the forthcoming visit. If a child is unable to attend at the last moment through illness, then a refund of cost can be given upon receipt of a doctor's certificate. The initial deposit still remains non-refundable. If a child/parent changes their mind or moves school, then no refund can be given.

No refunds will be given for other charges detailed in this policy if a child/parent changes their mind or moves school. As charges are made by providers upon receipt of the first deposit or order, so the school will be charged in full for the services provided.

Refunds will only be made where a mistake has occurred and / or at the discretion of the headteacher.

21. Appeals

Any appeals against this policy will take place through the governors' complaints procedure.

22. Exceptional Circumstances

Should any parent/carer find themselves unable to pay for a chargeable activity, they are encouraged to make an appointment to meet with the headteacher to discuss the matter privately and confidentially.

REMISSIONS AGAINST CHARGES FOR VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Percentage subsidised by the school through DFE funding.

	FSM/PPG
Single Day Trips, Visits & Visitors	100%
Clubs/Enrichment Activities	100%
Swimming	100%
Cycling Proficiency (Bikeability) Training	0%
Free School Meals	100%
Milk (until the end of Year 2)	100%
Residential Visit	50% of the balance after receipt of the required deposit
Book Fair	1 book per book fair
Uniform Subsidy	To be discussed with the headteacher
Music Tuition	100% for vocal/first instrument lessons Tuition on any further instrument/vocal lessons is not subsidised