

Hitchin Girls' School



Charges, Refunds and Remissions Policy

This is a statutory policy required of all academies

Date of issue:	March 2026
Trust Board approval:	March 2026
Review date:	March 2027

1. Aims

Hitchin Girls' School aims to:

- Have robust, clear processes in place for charging and remissions
- Clearly set out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will and will not be made
- Offer a range of activities and visits whilst minimising the financial barriers that may prevent some pupils from taking full advantage of these opportunities

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on [charging for school activities](#) and [the Education Act 1996](#), sections 449 to 462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England. Academies are required to comply with this Act through their funding agreements. This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

- Charge: a fee payable for specifically defined activities
- Remission: the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

4. Roles & Responsibilities

4.1 The Trust Board

The Trust Board has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor or the headteacher.

The Trust Board also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

Responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy has been delegated to the Finance & Resources Committee.

Monitoring the implementation of this policy has been delegated to the Finance & Resources Committee.

4.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the charging and remissions policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

4.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently
- Notifying the headteacher of any specific circumstances that they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies

The school will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

4.4 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to notify staff or the headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding the charging and remissions policy.

5. Where charges cannot be made

Below we set out what we cannot charge for:

5.1 Education

- Admission applications
- 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
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
 - Religious education
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent/carer
- Entry for a prescribed public examination if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school

5.2 Transport

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local authority (LA) has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing board or LA has arranged for pupils to be educated
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for that examination at the school
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit

5.3 Residential visits

- 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
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
 - Religious education
- Supply teachers, covering for teachers who are absent from school, accompanying pupils on a residential visit

6. Where charges can be made

The school will charge for the following activities:

1	Public examinations	<p>No charge will be made for entry for a prescribed public exam, if the student has been prepared for it by the school.</p> <p>We may charge for non-prescribed public exams and for public exams where students are not prepared by the school.</p> <p>We may charge parents the examination fee if a student fails without good reason to complete the requirements of a public examination where the school originally paid the entry fee.</p>
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		<p>We may charge parents the examination fee if a student /parent wishes the student to re-sit the examination where the school originally paid the entry fee.</p>
2	<p>Trips/activities for students that take place during school hours ('School hours' are those when school is actually in session and do not include the break in the middle of the school day)</p>	<p>No charge will be made for activities provided during school hours (with the exception of music tuition – see Section 5).</p> <p>However, parents may be asked to make voluntary contributions towards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Travel costs and tuition costs for any activity or visit ● Material costs for any activity – a general contribution may be requested to support funding the cost of art or technology projects, for example, and the actual cost charged if parents wish to retain the finished product.
3	<p>Trips/activities for students that take place outside or mainly outside school hours (non-residential)</p>	<p>Trips/activities which take place mainly out of school hours are chargeable.</p> <p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Where the majority of time spent on a non-residential activity is within school hours, we must treat the activity as if it is fully within school hours, and will apply the same criteria to charging as set out in section 2. ● If the majority of the time spent on a non-residential activity is outside school hours, we must treat the activity as if it happens fully outside school hours. <p>No charge will be made for an activity that takes place outside school hours when it is a necessary part of the curriculum or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education.</p> <p>Parents may however be asked to make voluntary contributions towards costs as outlined in 2 above.</p>
4	<p>Residential trips</p>	<p>Residential trips are classified as being within school hours if the number of school sessions missed by the students is at least 50% of the number of half days spent on the trip.</p> <p><i>Board and lodging</i></p> <p>For trips classified as taking place within or outside school hours, an amount up to the full cost of board and lodging will be charged unless students are legally entitled to remission. In such cases no charge will be made for board and lodging.</p> <p><i>Travel</i></p> <p>Where the residential trip is deemed to take place during school hours, no charge will be made for travel costs although a voluntary contribution may be sought.</p>

		<p>Where the residential trip is deemed to take place outside school hours, a charge will be made for travel to cover the unit cost per student unless the student is entitled to remission. Note: no paying student will be required to subsidise the cost of non-paying students.</p> <p><i>Activities on residential</i></p> <p>Where the residential trip is deemed to take place during school hours, no charge will be made for activity costs although a voluntary contribution may be sought.</p> <p>Where the residential trip is deemed to take place outside school hours, a charge will be made for the educational activities provided (see section 3).</p>
5	Music tuition	<p>Individual or group vocal or instrumental lessons provided during the school day are chargeable provided the tuition is provided at the parent/carer's request.</p> <p>Students studying GCSE and A Level music may be eligible for partial remission of vocal or instrumental music tuition fees. Where lessons are arranged through the Hertfordshire Music Service and take place at the North Herts Music School, fifty per cent remission of music tuition fees is given on half-hour lessons at GCSE and one-hour at A Level.</p> <p>Remission of music fees may be available for students whose parents are in receipt of benefits. Parents should contact Hertfordshire Music Service for further information.</p>
6	Damage to property and breakages	<p>The school may charge parents for the cost of replacing items/property broken, damaged or lost due to their child's behaviour.</p>

7. Voluntary contributions

As an exception to the requirements set out in section 5 of this policy, the school is able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents/carers to fund activities that would not otherwise be possible.

Some activities for which the school may ask parents/carers for voluntary contributions include:

- Trips and activities which take place mainly within school hours

There is no obligation for parents/carers to make any contribution, and no child will be excluded from an activity if their parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay.

If the school is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit then it will be cancelled.

8. Remissions & Concessions

In some circumstances, the school may not charge for items or activities set out in sections 6 and 8 of this policy. This will be at the discretion of the Trust Board and will depend on the activity in question.

8.1 Remissions for residential visits

Parents/carers who can prove they are in receipt of any of the following benefits may be entitled to a remission of charges for board and lodging for residential visits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit – provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit – if you apply on or after 1 April 2018, your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Hitchin Girls' School may choose to subsidise, in full or in part, charges for certain activities where these charges can legally be made. Such subsidies are largely funded by the generous support of Hitchin Educational Foundation.

9. Refunds

If after completion of a trip or activity a surplus exists, the money will be applied as follows:

- If the surplus is greater than 5% of the contribution per head, subject to a minimum of £10, then a refund of the full amount of the surplus will be offered to parents.
- If the surplus is less than 5% of the contribution per head or less than £10, the surplus will be placed in the school fund.

10. Debts

When a parent/carer's debts are high and unresolved the school reserves the right to apply any income received from the family to its outstanding debts before providing chargeable goods/services.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The School Business Leader monitors charges and remissions, and ensures these comply with this policy.

This policy will be reviewed by the School Business Leader on an annual basis in accordance with the DfE recommendation.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the Finance & Resources Trust Board Committee.