



CHARGING & REMISSIONS POLICY

Author:	Lynn Maritza
Updated:	October 2024
Approved by:	Finance Committee on 10/10/24
Next review:	October 2026

Document Purpose

This policy reflects the values of Elmwood School in relation to charging pupils for additional activities. It sets out a framework within which teaching and non-teaching staff can operate. The aim of this policy is to support the basic objective of Elmwood School, which is to provide the best education it can for the pupils, using all staff most effectively and resources most efficiently.

Introduction

It is the right of every pupil to receive free school education and that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching time must be made available to all pupils regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.

The Education Reform Act gives schools the discretion to charge for optional extras provided wholly or mainly out of school hours and to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or in support of any activity organised by the school, whether during or outside school hours. However, will not abuse this power and that will always take particular account of pupils whose families are suffering financial hardship.

We base our decisions on educational grounds and ensure that any activities which are deemed to take place mainly or wholly in school hours do not disrupt pupils' education and will only insist on payment where this is considered to be absolutely necessary.

Practical Subjects

Where parents have indicated in writing that they wish to own a finished product, the school may make a charge. The charge will not exceed the cost of the materials used by the pupil.

Transport

Where a pupil travels direct from home to a place of work experience and vice versa, parents may be asked to meet the cost of such travel. However, no charge will be made in respect of pupils whose families are in receipt of relevant benefits.

Optional Extras

A charge may be made for optional extras provided wholly or mainly outside school hours except where such activities are provided:-

- (i) To fulfil any requirements necessary for examination purposes.
- (ii) To fulfil statutory duties relating to the national curriculum.
- (iii) To fulfil statutory duties relating to Religious Education.

Participation in optional extras will be on the basis of parental choice and prior confirmation is requested from the parents that they are willing to pay charges. The charge per head cannot exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra, divided equally by the number of participating pupils, and may include elements for:-

- (a) A pupil's travel costs.
- (b) A pupil's board and lodging costs.
- (c) Entrance fees to museums, castle, theatres etc.
- (d) Insurance costs.
- (e) Meals not included in the board and lodging costs (eg at a restaurant or a takeaway)

Board and Lodging

A charge may be made for board and lodging in connection with residential activities. The charge cannot exceed the actual cost of providing board and lodging and prior written confirmation from the parent is required that he/she is willing to pay the charge.

Where a residential activity is deemed to take place in school hours or take place outside school hours but is covered by the criteria (i), (ii) and (iii) shown in Section 3 of this policy statement, a voluntary payment is requested from parents/carers towards the cost of board and lodgings. No child will be refused a place if no payment is forthcoming.

Tuition in a Musical Instrument

(except where the Criteria (i) (ii) and (iii) shown in Section 3 of this Policy Apply)

Occasionally the school has facilitated guitar tuition to individual pupils with a private tutor. This is always in agreement with the parents and the parents fund that tuition.

Public Examinations

Where a pupil has not been prepared for a public examination by the school (including GCSE re-sits) but has been allowed by the school to sit the examination at the school as an examination centre, schools may make a charge for the examination entry fee. Prior written confirmation from the parent is required that he/she is willing to pay the charge.

Where we prepare a pupil for a public examination not prescribed in regulations, even outside school hours, a charge will not be made for teaching costs or for the examination entry fee.

Where a pupil fails without good reason to complete the examination requirements for any public examination for which he/she has been entered and a fee paid, the school may recover the fee from the parents regardless of whether the examination is prescribed.

Breakages

Parents can be asked to pay for the cost of replacing broken windows, doors or any other damage caused to the fabric of the building or for damaged books or any other school equipment, where this is a result of pupils' behaviour.

Vocational Provision

Where school arranges vocational provision for pupils, which is above our local offer, it is expected that the pupil will attend. Where a pupil refuses to attend the provision, we reserve the right to charge the parent for the cost of the lost provision.

Debtors Write Off Policy

The scheme allows for governing bodies to recommend the write off of debts up to a maximum limit of £2,500. In these cases, details must be forwarded in the first instance to Chief Finance Officer.

The list will subsequently be forwarded to the authority's Head of Finance who is the Council's delegated officer for writing off such debts. A formal list for write off will then be prepared and actioned.

Debts of over £2,500 proposed for write off will be the subject of a report to Head of Finance. Therefore, governing bodies will be required to write to the Chief Finance Officer detailing the debt and requesting that a report can be prepared.

The governing body is responsible for minimizing the risk that income owing to the school must be written off. In particular, the governing body must collect payments in advance of the service or goods being provided, where this is practical, and issue invoices and reminders promptly.

Lettings

All lettings have to be approved by the Headteacher in consultation with the School Business, Finance & Operations Manager.

Requests under The Freedom of Information Act 2000

Requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act will be charged at an hourly rate of £10, with minimum charge of 1 hour, plus the cost per copy of 20p for black and white or 40p for colour.

Completion of Government forms (or similar) on behalf of parents

The school charges a fee of £20 per form, for administrative time in completing forms on behalf of parents (for example, application forms for Disability Living Allowance).

Other Payments

If the school is asked to write a supporting letter to support an application being made by a parent / carer, we charge £10 per letter.

If a parent/carer is unable to pay the invoice in full for any charges due, as a way to support them, we will be happy to discuss the possibility of a payment plan. We would also like to support parents/carers to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their actions where costs have been incurred due to their behaviour.