Wittersham Church of England Charging and Remissions Policy 2026

We strive to cooperate and work alongside all members of our community to feel valued, nurtured, and empowered as they embark upon their journey to become the very best that God intended. Throughout their voyage of discovery with us, we ensure all children are provided with a rich curriculum and experiences that promote courage and a strong moral purpose underpinned by our Christian values, preparing them to become compassionate citizens within our rural community and the wider world.

Version	Date	By	Description
V01	September 2024	Stella Coulson	Review
V02	September 2025	Stella Coulson	Review
V03	September 2026	Stella Coulson	Review

1. Aims

At Wittersham Church of England Primary School, we are committed to providing a rich and varied curriculum and ensuring that all pupils are able to benefit from the opportunities and experiences offered by the school.

This policy sets out a clear, fair and transparent approach to:

- activities for which the school may make a charge;
- activities for which the school cannot make a charge;
- voluntary contributions;
- optional extras;
- residential visits;
- music tuition;
- wraparound care and clubs;
- school meals;
- remission or reduction of charges; and
- support for families experiencing financial difficulty.

We will seek to minimise financial barriers wherever reasonably possible so that pupils are not disadvantaged because of their family's financial circumstances.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based upon:

- sections 449–462 of the Education Act 1996;
- Department for Education guidance, Charging for School Activities;
- current Department for Education guidance for maintained-school governing bodies; and
- other relevant legislation and statutory guidance.

The Governing Body will ensure that all charging arrangements comply with statutory requirements.

Where the school intends to make charges for optional extras or board and lodging, these will be made in accordance with this policy and relevant legislation and guidance.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

A charge is a fee payable for a specifically defined activity or service which the school is legally permitted to charge for.

A voluntary contribution is a payment requested to support an activity for which the school cannot require payment as a condition of participation.

A remission is the full or partial cancellation of a charge that would otherwise be payable.

An optional extra is an activity or service for which a charge may lawfully be made because it falls outside the education that the school is required to provide free of charge.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- approving this policy;
- ensuring that charging arrangements comply with legislation;
- agreeing the circumstances in which charges may be reduced or remitted;
- maintaining appropriate oversight of charges; and
- reviewing the policy regularly.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- implementing this policy;
- ensuring staff understand and apply it consistently;
- ensuring families receive clear information about charges;
- considering individual requests for financial assistance or remission; and
- referring significant matters to the Governing Body where appropriate.

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- following this policy;
- ensuring parents and carers receive accurate information;
- making clear whether a payment is compulsory or voluntary; and

- referring questions or exceptional circumstances to the Headteacher.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- read information about charges carefully;
- make payments by the requested date where a charge applies;
- contact the school promptly where they are experiencing difficulty; and
- raise any questions about charges with the school.

5. Education During School Hours

The school will not charge for:

- admission applications;
- education provided during school hours;
- materials, books, instruments or equipment required as part of education provided during school hours;
- teaching required as part of the National Curriculum;
- religious education;
- preparation for a prescribed public examination where the school has prepared the pupil for that examination; or
- examination entry in circumstances where charging is prohibited.

6. Education Outside School Hours

The school will not charge for education provided outside normal school hours where it forms part of:

- the National Curriculum;
- a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the pupil is being prepared by the school; or
- religious education.

Where an activity outside school hours does not fall within these categories, it may constitute an optional extra for which a charge may be made where permitted by law.

7. Optional Extras

The school may charge for certain optional extras where permitted by law.

These may include:

- education provided outside school hours that is not part of the National Curriculum, religious education or a prescribed examination syllabus;
- certain music tuition;
- board and lodging on residential visits;
- extended-day provision;
- breakfast and after-school clubs;
- some extracurricular clubs;
- materials or equipment where parents and carers wish their child to own the finished product; and
- other activities for which charging is legally permitted.

Where an optional extra is provided, parental agreement will be obtained before a charge is made.

Charges for optional extras will be calculated in accordance with current legislation and Department for Education guidance and will not normally exceed the actual cost of providing the activity to participating pupils.

The school will not use charges for optional extras to subsidise pupils whose parents have not agreed to the optional extra.

8. Voluntary Contributions

The school may ask parents and carers to make voluntary contributions towards activities or experiences which enhance pupils' education.

Examples may include:

- educational visits;
- theatre visits;
- workshops;
- visitors to school;
- sporting opportunities;
- enrichment experiences; and
- transport associated with an activity where a compulsory charge cannot be made.

Where a contribution is voluntary:

- there is no legal obligation to contribute;
- a pupil will not be excluded because their parent or carer is unwilling or unable to contribute;
- pupils whose parents or carers do not contribute will not be treated differently; and
- the school will make clear that the contribution is voluntary.

The school may explain that an activity can only proceed if sufficient voluntary contributions are received.

If insufficient funding is available, the activity may need to be amended or cancelled.

9. Educational Visits

Educational visits taking place mainly during school hours will normally be funded through school resources together with voluntary parental contributions where necessary.

Where a voluntary contribution is requested, no pupil will be excluded because their parent or carer does not contribute.

The school may cancel or amend a visit if insufficient contributions are received to make it financially viable.

The school will aim to give parents and carers as much notice as reasonably possible of anticipated costs.

Families experiencing financial difficulty are encouraged to contact the school confidentially.

10. Residential Visits

The school will not charge for education provided during a residential visit where charging is prohibited by law.

The school may make a charge for board and lodging, provided that the charge does not exceed the actual cost.

No charge will be made for supply teachers required to accompany pupils on a residential visit where this is prohibited under charging legislation.

Where a family qualifies for statutory remission of board and lodging costs, the school

will apply the relevant entitlement in accordance with current legislation and Department for Education guidance.

Parents and carers experiencing financial difficulty should speak confidentially to the school as early as possible.

11. Transport

The school will not charge for transport where charging is prohibited by law, including:

- transport to or from school where the local authority has a statutory duty to provide it;
- transport to premises where the pupil is receiving education arranged by the Governing Body or local authority;
- transport necessary to enable a pupil to meet an examination requirement where the pupil has been prepared for the examination by the school; and
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit where a compulsory charge is prohibited.

Where appropriate, the school may seek voluntary contributions towards the cost of transport associated with an educational activity.

12. Materials, Books and Equipment

The school will normally provide materials, books and equipment necessary for education during school hours without charge.

A charge may be made where parents or carers wish their child to own a finished product and the school has made this clear in advance.

This could include materials used to create an item that the pupil will take home and keep.

Where a parent or carer does not wish to pay for ownership of the finished item, this will not prevent their child from participating in the curriculum activity.

13. Music Tuition

The school may charge for instrumental or vocal tuition where this is permitted under the relevant regulations and the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent or carer.

No charge will be made where tuition must legally be provided free of charge, including where it forms part of the National Curriculum or other provision which must be provided without charge.

Any exemptions or remissions required by law will be applied.

14. Breakfast Club and After-School Provision

The school may charge for extended-day services, including Breakfast Club and After-School Club.

Current charges, session times, booking arrangements and any applicable late-booking or late-collection charges will be communicated separately to parents and carers through the school's published wraparound-care information and terms and conditions.

Charges will be reviewed periodically and parents and carers will be notified of any changes.

Payment and booking arrangements will be set out clearly within the school's wraparound-care information.

15. Extracurricular and Sports Clubs

The school may charge for extracurricular clubs where charging is legally permitted.

This may include clubs provided by:

- school staff;
- external coaches;
- specialist providers; or
- other organisations.

The amount charged will reflect the reasonable costs of providing the activity.

Parents and carers will be informed of any charge before booking.

Where a club forms part of education that must legally be provided without charge, no compulsory charge will be made.

16. Swimming

Wittersham Church of England Primary School is fortunate to have its own swimming

pool on site, enabling pupils across the school to benefit from regular swimming opportunities.

Swimming and water-safety lessons that form part of the school's curriculum, including the statutory swimming and water-safety requirements within the National Curriculum, will be provided without a compulsory charge to parents and carers.

The school may ask parents and carers for a voluntary contribution towards the additional costs associated with maintaining and operating the school swimming pool and providing the school's wider swimming programme.

Where a voluntary contribution is requested:

- there is no obligation for parents and carers to contribute;
- no child will be excluded from curriculum swimming because their parent or carer has not contributed; and
- the school will make clear that the payment is a voluntary contribution rather than a compulsory charge.

The school may make a charge for additional or optional swimming activities outside the curriculum where charging is permitted by law. Any such charge will be clearly identified to parents and carers in advance.

17. School Meals

School meals are charged separately from curriculum provision.

Current school meal charges will be communicated to parents and carers through the school's published information.

Children entitled to Universal Infant Free School Meals, Free School Meals or any other applicable government-funded entitlement will receive meals without charge in accordance with the arrangements in force at the relevant time.

Payments for chargeable school meals should be made through the school's designated payment system.

Arrangements for the management of outstanding school meal balances are set out in the School Meals Debt Policy.

Where a family is experiencing difficulty paying for school meals, they are encouraged to contact the school promptly so that appropriate support and eligibility for relevant

entitlements can be considered.

18. Free School Meals

The school will provide Free School Meals to eligible pupils in accordance with the statutory and government-funded arrangements in force at the relevant time.

The school will support families who believe they may qualify to check their eligibility.

The school will apply the eligibility criteria and arrangements for Free School Meals in accordance with current government and local authority guidance.

Where eligibility is unclear or awaiting confirmation, the school will follow current Department for Education and local authority guidance.

19. Remissions and Financial Support

Wittersham Church of England Primary School is committed to ensuring that financial circumstances do not unnecessarily prevent pupils from participating in school life.

Where the school is legally permitted to make a charge, the Governing Body or Headteacher acting under delegated authority may consider full or partial remission in appropriate circumstances.

Factors considered may include:

- entitlement to relevant benefits;
- Free School Meal eligibility;
- exceptional family circumstances;
- significant financial hardship;
- the educational or pastoral importance of the activity; and
- availability of school or other funding.

Decisions will be made sensitively and confidentially.

Any family experiencing difficulty is encouraged to contact the school rather than allow financial concerns to prevent their child from participating.

20. Confidentiality and Dignity

Requests for financial assistance will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

Children will not be made unnecessarily aware of:

- unpaid balances;
- requests for remission;
- financial difficulties within their family; or
- whether their parent or carer has made a voluntary contribution.

Children will not be publicly identified, singled out or embarrassed because of their family's financial circumstances.

21. Refunds and Cancellation

Where the school cancels a chargeable activity, parents and carers will normally receive a refund of payments made where those funds have not already been committed to non-refundable costs.

Where a parent or carer cancels, or a pupil does not attend, the ability to provide a refund will depend upon:

- whether the school has already incurred the cost;
- whether the provider offers a refund;
- whether another pupil can take the place; and
- the terms communicated when the activity was booked.

The school will make any relevant cancellation and refund conditions clear when requesting payment.

22. Unpaid Charges

Where a lawful charge has been made and remains unpaid, the school may contact the parent or carer and seek payment.

The school will seek to resolve unpaid charges sensitively and proportionately.

Where appropriate, the school may:

- issue reminders;
- discuss the circumstances with the parent or carer;
- agree a reasonable payment arrangement;
- consider remission where permitted; or
- take proportionate steps to recover outstanding monies.

Different arrangements apply to voluntary contributions because these are not compulsory payments and will not be treated as a debt.

School meal debt will be managed in accordance with the School Meals Debt Policy.

23. Equality and Inclusion

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently.

The school will consider its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 when making decisions about charging, remission and access to activities.

No child will be treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic or because their family is experiencing financial hardship.

Where reasonable adjustments are required to enable a disabled pupil to access education or an activity, the school will consider its statutory responsibilities before seeking any payment from parents and carers.

24. Communication with Parents and Carers

Where payment is requested, information provided to parents and carers should clearly identify whether the payment is:

- a compulsory charge;
- an optional-extra charge; or
- a voluntary contribution.

Where appropriate, communications will also explain:

- the amount;
- what the payment covers;
- the payment deadline;
- whether financial assistance is available;
- any cancellation or refund arrangements; and
- who parents and carers should contact if they have concerns.

Parents and carers should always be able to clearly understand whether a contribution is compulsory or voluntary.

25. Monitoring

The Headteacher will monitor charges and remissions to ensure that:

- the policy is being applied consistently;
- charges are lawful;
- voluntary contributions are clearly identified;
- appropriate remission arrangements are available;
- pupils are not unfairly disadvantaged; and
- the school's financial interests are appropriately protected.

The Governing Body will maintain appropriate oversight of the school's charging and remission arrangements.

26. Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- School Meals Debt Policy;
- Educational Visits Policy;
- Finance Policy and financial procedures;
- Wraparound Care terms and conditions;
- Equality Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Pupil Premium Strategy;
- Complaints Policy; and
- relevant club or activity terms and conditions.

27. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there is:

- a change in legislation;
- updated Department for Education guidance;
- a significant change to the school's charging arrangements;
- a change to Free School Meal arrangements;
- a change to wraparound provision;
- a significant change in the school's financial procedures; or
- another reason identified by the Headteacher or Governing Body.