

**WHEATCROFT SCHOOL**  
**CHARGING & REMISSIONS POLICY FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

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This policy takes guidance from the DFE Policy – ‘Charging for School Activities’ which has been revised and Local Authority guidance on school lettings. Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 set out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England. This guidance complements the information given in “A Guide to the Law for School Governors” (Chapter 23) and reflects the terms of the Education Act 1996.

This Policy will be reviewed on an 3 yearly basis by the School’s Finance Committee and will be adjusted in line with new Government or Local Authority recommendations. It sets out the School’s position on charges and remissions

### **Voluntary Contributions and Responsibilities of Staff**

Nothing in legislation prevents a Governing Body or Local Authority from asking for voluntary contributions that would benefit the School or any School activities and the School will invite parents and others from time to time to make voluntary contributions to enable the provision of activities and visits which may not otherwise be possible. If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, this will be made clear to parents at the outset. The Governing Body or Headteacher will make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution. No student will be excluded from an activity because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. However, if insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, it may not go ahead. Staff organising visits should make this clear to parents. Staff organising a trip will make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on the visit will be.

Activities outside of normal lesson times and not within the National Curriculum (ranging from visits abroad to school matches) are classed as ‘optional extras’. Parents may be asked to meet the full cost of these activities. In the case of residential experiences, every effort will be made to offer value for money but the cost might be quite high. It is intended that School-based extra curricular activities should be free or very low cost. The School will do its best to offer assistance or remission of charges in any case where there is hardship.

For activities during normal School hours and/or within the National Curriculum, parents may be asked to make a voluntary contribution to cover the cost of the activity to enable it to go ahead.

Each year such visits are likely to include those to support classroom topic work covering a wide range of activities and also cultural activities such as a visit to the theatre.

When making requests for voluntary contributions to School funds, parents will not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is not compulsory.

Charges and contributions should cover the anticipated costs. If contributions from an activity exceed the actual cost, the School will refund surpluses of £5.00 or more per student where the charge for the activity is over £50; £2.00 per student where the activity is over £20. Where the surplus is less than £2 per student and the charge less than £10 the surplus will be retained in the School Fund for use with other activities. A charge may include an allowance for the cost of staff from the School who supervise optional extra activities if those staff have been specifically asked to cover the activity as an 'optional extra'.

Parents may be asked to meet the costs of private music tuition in full, where tuition is given either to an individual student or to students in small groups. General fundraising and sponsorship may be used to permit additional activities.

### **Charging Structure**

For residential courses during the time of normal School hours, parents can be asked to meet the full cost of board and lodging, and to make a voluntary contribution towards any travel expenses and activities during the visit. The School will meet the costs for students whose parents receive qualifying income support benefits, where it is still possible for the visit to go ahead. The School will do its best to offer assistance and remissions in any case where there is hardship. The governing body will consider applying a subsidy for residential visits on an annual basis, this being wholly dependent on budgetary constraints.

Parents may be charged for some or all of the cost of damage to School property where this has been intentional. Parents will be expected to meet some or all of the cost for replacing lost or damaged books or equipment.

### **Activities and Visits**

If the number of School sessions taken up by the visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, it is deemed to have taken place during normal School hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the day, regulations require that a school day be divided into two sessions: a 'half day' means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during School hours. Activities during normal School hours may only involve a request for a voluntary contribution; parents may be charged an amount to cover the costs incurred to the School for activities mainly taking place outside of School hours.

Parents should be informed of the decision to ask for contributions at the planning stage of activities. Planned activities may be cancelled if financial support is not forthcoming. Parents may be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards activities taking place during School time, or towards activities which are a necessary part of the National Curriculum. Parents will be asked to meet the full cost of optional extra activities that occur outside of normal School hours, where these activities are not a necessary part of the National Curriculum. Parents will be asked to meet the full cost of board and lodging, and to make a voluntary contribution towards travel expenses for residential visits which fall, in the main, during normal School sessions. Students whose parents are receiving the following benefits should not be prevented from taking part in any School activity or trip that is open to other students:

- Universal Credit, (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods)
- Child Tax Credit, provided you are also not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual household gross income that does not exceed £16,190 (as assessed by HMRC)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- A run-on of Working Tax Credit – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- any similar income related employment and support allowances introduced by the Government.

Any charge made in respect of individual students will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of students participating. It will not include an element of subsidy for any other students wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge. In calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- non-teaching staff;
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
- the cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during School hours, the charge will include the cost of alternative provision for those students who do not wish to participate. Therefore no charge will be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from School accompanying students on a residential visit. Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

When the School informs parents about a forthcoming visit, the member of staff leading the trip should make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of income support benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging. However, where voluntary contributions would not cover the cost of a visit, it would be likely that the visit would be cancelled where the trip was not an essential element of the curriculum.

### **Music Tuition**

The law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, but music lessons are an exception to this rule. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a regulation-making power which allowed the Department for Children, Schools and Families to specify circumstances where charging can be made for music tuition. The new Regulations, which came into force in September 2007, provide students with greater access to vocal and instrumental tuition. Charges may now be made for teaching either an individual student or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical

instrument or to sing. Charges may only be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the student(s).

### **Extended Schools**

Wheatcroft School provides a term time only wraparound school childcare service for 4-11 year olds at the Wheaties Before & After School Club. Parents will be charged for use of the service and the session times and charges are as follows:

Full morning session - 7.55am until start of school	£3.00
Afternoon session – 3.05pm-4.00pm	£4.00
Afternoon session – 3.05pm - 5.00pm	£6.00

Ad Hoc sessions are charged:

Full morning session - 7.55am until start of school	£4.00
Afternoon session – 3.05pm-4.00pm	£5.00
Afternoon session – 3.05pm - 5.00pm	£7.00

Late pickup charges are made at the rate of £2.50 per session

Fruit, toast and drinks are available for the children.

### **Invoicing and Payment Procedures**

An invoice for the club will be sent to parents half termly in advance. Payment can be made half termly, monthly or on a sessional basis, in advance, for ad hoc bookings.

### **Non Attendance or Cancellation**

There will be no refunds (full or part) for non attendance of pre booked and chargeable sessions.

### **Important Note:**

Any sums payable by parents for optional extras such as extended school provision or for board and lodging shall be recoverable as a civil debt and may also be subject to late payment charges.

### **Late Payment Charges:**

The school reserves the right to levy a charge at the higher of **£5.00 or 5%** of the outstanding debt, to cover associated administration costs.

### **Value Added Tax**

The Governors are constrained by law to apply value added tax to all transactions where appropriate.

### **Private Telephone Calls**

Staff would not be charged for making private telephone calls, all calls are now included in the SIP line rental costs.