



Hebburn Comprehensive School

Charging and Remissions Policy

Hebburn Comprehensive School believes all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits, both curricular and extra-curricular, independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

The 1996 Education Act requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities, which will be kept under annual review.

School Admissions

It is not acceptable for Governors to operate criteria which take account of a parent's willingness or ability to make financial contribution as a condition of entry to an oversubscribed school.

Education During School Hours

Education provided wholly or mainly during school hours should be free*. If the number of places for an activity is limited, the opportunity to participate should not depend on the parents' willingness or ability to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost.

**Exemption – A charge is currently made for individual tuition in playing a musical instrument, where a pupil is in receipt of Free School Meals a reduced rate is applied.*

No parent or pupil may be required to pay for or supply materials, books, instruments, or other equipment for education during school hours. Parents may be invited to provide their children voluntarily with particular items, but no child should be at a disadvantage if the parent refuses to do so.

Any transport provided in connection to educational purposes in school hours will incur no cost.

The school will provide or pay for all materials and equipment for Technology unless the parents have indicated in advance a wish to own the finished product.

If any activity is arranged by a third party, the third party would be able to levy charges directly to parents/carers. Parents/carers must submit a formal application to school for their child to be granted leave of absence. The Head Teacher will consider whether the request was justified.

No pupil will be granted more than two weeks' leave of absence in any year.

For pupils in Year 9, 10 and 11, the school will not agree to holiday leave when there are external examinations. Parents/Carers who take their child on holiday during term time without the schools permission may be fined by South Tyneside Council.

Dates of such examinations are communicated to parents.

Education Outside School Hours

No charge will be applied for any activity outside school hours where the education is provided:

- to fulfil requirements for an authorised external examination
- to fulfil requirements for National Curriculum
- to fulfil requirements relating to religious education

In these circumstances, the only charges which may be made relate to the cost of board and lodgings.

Education Partially During School Hours

Non-residential

If fifty per cent or more of the activity is within normal school hours, no charge will be levied.

Residential

If the number of school sessions used is fifty per cent or more of the number of half days of the activity, no charge will be applied.

Board and Lodgings

If an activity involves nights away from home, a charge may be made for board and lodging. This charge will not exceed the actual individual cost. If parents are in receipt of income support or family credit, no charge should be made.

Public Examinations

- No charge will be made for entries of public examination.
- Parents who request a re-scrutiny of the result may be charged for the service.
- Charges may be made if pupils are entered at parents' request for any examination which is not part of the school's agreed curriculum.
- If a pupil fails to sit a final examination or to complete other required components, the school/Local Authority may wish to recover the fee from parents. This may be recovered as a civil debt.

Day Visits, Trips and Optional Extras

During the course of the academic year the school may run day visit and trips that are not part of The National Curriculum or linked to religious education, i.e. cinema visits, and activities outside school hours are *optional extras*. Participation is based on parental choice and a charge may be made. This charge will not exceed the actual cost of the optional extra, i.e. total cost divided equally by the number of pupils participating. The cost may not include subsidy for any other pupil and can include:

- travel cost
- board and lodging
- materials and equipment
- non-teaching staff costs
- entrance fees
- insurance

The charge may take account of teaching staff specifically engaged for this activity. If staff are already employed by the LA or Governors, their costs will not be passed on to pupils.

To remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the governing body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances. Criteria for qualification for remissions are:

Category A

Parents/Careers are in receipt of:

- 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)

Category B

Families not in receipt of the benefits listed in Category A but who feel unwilling or unable to pay due to financial constraints. Parents in this category should discuss their concerns with the Head Teacher about the charges. Decisions about remission will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Category C

Circumstances that are not included in the categories above for which the Governing Body may deem to be a special case for consideration.

Voluntary Contributions

The school may seek voluntary contributions in support of school or any activity, whether during or outside school hours to offer a wide variety of experiences to our pupils.

The Law says:

“If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the parents will be notified of this from the outset.

No child will be excluded from an activity because parents are unable to pay.

If insufficient contributions are raised, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled.

If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay their child will be given an equal chance to go on the visit.”

A letter of request will make it clear that:

- there is no obligation to contribute
- pupils will not be treated differently if their parents do or do not make any contribution

If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contribution, this will be made clear to parents/carers at the outset. The initial letter will include:

- the nature of the activity
- the educational value
- the voluntary contribution which would be required for the activity to take place
- a statement that the contribution is voluntary, and that no pupil will be omitted if parents are either unable or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution

It will be made clear that the activity will not take place if the parents are reluctant to support it. There is no limit to the level of voluntary contribution, nor restriction upon its method of use.

Overdue Library Book Charges

The school has recently opened a school library where pupils can borrow books for personal reading. Books that are returned late or slightly damaged will not incur a fee. We do not want to discourage pupils (or parents) from using the library as this stands in direct opposition to the reading culture we are trying to create. However, if books are lost or stolen, we will need to take action to ensure that the library can recover losses so that replacements can be purchased, and the library continues to meet the needs of its pupils.

We operate a 3-step process:

When a book is overdue by 7 days, an email will be triggered to the pupil to politely remind them to return their overdue books.

When a book is overdue by 14 days, a second overdue email will be sent out to the pupil and forwarded to their form tutor. This email explains that if the book is not returned or replaced within 7 days, parents /carers will be notified, and a £3 replacement fee will be charged.

When a book is overdue by 21 days, an email will be sent out to parents explaining that their child has borrowed a book from the library that is now 3 weeks overdue. The parent will be given one week's notice to return or replace the book to the library before the £3 replacement fee is collected using Parent Pay on or after day 29 of none return of loaned book.

School holidays are not counted as overdue days so pupils will be able to keep books over holiday periods.

Full information can be found in the Library and Learning Hub Policy.

Signed:

Head Teacher:



Mr D R Thompson

Chair of Governors:



Mr G Thompson

Ratification Date:

22 November 2025

Date of Next Review:

Autumn Term 2026