

HONYWOOD SCHOOL

Charging and Remissions Policy

2026 / 2027

Made under sections 449–462 of the Education Act 1996

Approved by the Local Governing Body	September 2026
Policy reviewed	Annually (next: September 2027)
Operational lead	Headteacher (James Saunders)
Annual charge levels set by	Headteacher, on recommendation of the Enrichment Leader
Read in conjunction with	Equality Information and Objectives Policy; SEND Policy; Accessibility Plan; Pupil Premium Strategy; Privacy Notice

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1. Introduction and purpose

The Local Governing Body of Honywood School recognises the value and contribution that the wide range of additional activities the school offers - including trips and visits, clubs, and residential experiences - makes to learning and personal development. The Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities, both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and as additional optional activities. Honywood's long-term aim is to move away from a patchwork of optional opportunities and towards a guaranteed entitlement to enrichment for every learner, regardless of a family's ability to pay - consistent with the equitable-access aim of the school's Sense of Adventure priority.

This policy sets out what charges the school may make for activities, what remissions may apply, and the circumstances in which voluntary contributions will be requested from parents and carers. Where an issue arises that is not specifically addressed in this policy, decisions will be made in keeping with its spirit - that, where possible, cost should never be the reason a learner misses out.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is written to comply with the following legislation, and has regard to the guidance below:

- **Sections 449–462 of the Education Act 1996** — set out the law on charging for school activities, including what may and may not be charged for.
- **Equality Act 2010** — the school must not discriminate against, or fail to make reasonable adjustments for, disabled learners in how it charges for activities (see Section 11).
- **Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR** — govern how the school handles financial and benefit-related information provided in support of a remission request (see Section 14).

The policy also has regard to the following guidance:

- DfE statutory guidance, 'Charging for school activities' (2018, and unrevised as at this review — the school will note any future update);
- DfE guidance on free school meals eligibility, including the September 2026 extension of free school meals to all children in households receiving Universal Credit;
- DfE, 'Free breakfast clubs: guidance for schools and trusts', covering the phase 1 national rollout of free breakfast clubs in primary-phase settings from April 2026;
- EHRC technical guidance on reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.

Two national changes for 2026/27

From September 2026, free school meals extend to every child in a household receiving Universal Credit, regardless of household income. The previous income threshold continues to be used only to determine Pupil Premium funding eligibility, not access to a free meal or to charge remission - see Section 9.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body, on behalf of Saffron Academy Trust and in line with the Trust's scheme of delegation, is responsible for determining the content of this policy and for its annual review. It delegates implementation to the Headteacher.

The Headteacher

- ensures staff are familiar with, and correctly apply, this policy;
- sets the level of charge for optional extras annually, on the recommendation of the Enrichment Leader;
- decides applications for remission of charges, alongside the Chair of Governors (see Section 9); and
- considers, on a case-by-case basis, any individual family circumstance not directly addressed by this policy.

The Enrichment Leader supports the Headteacher in setting charge levels, identifies families who may need financial support, and is the first point of contact for parents and carers wishing to discuss a charge, a remission, or the affordability of an activity.

4. Education we do not charge for

Charges are not made for admission to Honywood School, or for the following, in line with sections 449–462 of the Education Act 1996:

- aspects of the National Curriculum, delivered during school hours;
- anything required as part of the specification for a prescribed public examination, for example required field studies;
- examination entry fees for public examinations for which a registered learner has been prepared at the school. Where a learner does not attend an examination for which they were entered, the school may seek reimbursement of the entry fee from the parent or carer. Where a parent or carer requests a re-mark, a re-sit, or a copy of an examination script, a charge will be made corresponding to any fee levied by the examining body, plus a £5 administrative fee;
- the provision of books, equipment and materials for any activity that cannot be charged for under the Act. Where the finished product will be owned by the learner (for example in food technology or design), parents and carers may be asked to contribute voluntarily towards the cost of materials or ingredients, or to provide them; the Governing Body reserves the right to require this where the family has indicated they wish to keep the finished product;
- non-residential trips and visits where 50% or more of the time takes place during school hours. A voluntary contribution towards costs will be requested, but no parent or carer is obliged to contribute, and no learner will be excluded from the trip because their family has not done so - though where a trip depends on sufficient voluntary contributions being received, parents and carers will be told plainly that the trip may not go ahead without them;
- the use, inside or outside school, of any device issued by the school for learning (for example a tablet or laptop). Parents and carers are required to read and sign the school's acceptable-use agreement for the device; where a device is lost, stolen or damaged through misuse, the family may be asked to fund its repair or replacement, and all issued devices and accessories must be returned at the end of a learner's time at Honywood.

5. Charges we may make

Residential trips

The board-and-lodging element of a residential trip will always be charged for, whether or not the trip fulfils a National Curriculum or examination requirement. Where more than half of a residential trip takes place outside school hours, the remaining costs (for example transport) will also be charged in full.

Families may be eligible for financial support towards a residential trip, assessed case by case - see Section 9. Families wishing to discuss this should contact the Enrichment Leader in confidence.

Damage to property or equipment

Where damage is caused to the school environment or to equipment for learning - for example a broken window, or the loss, defacement or breakage of equipment - and this results from unacceptable behaviour on the part of a learner, the parent or carer may be asked to meet the cost of repair or replacement.

6. Optional extras

There is no charge for activities that take place outside school hours where they are part of the National Curriculum (including sports fixtures against other schools), part of the syllabus for a public examination the learner is being prepared for, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education.

The school may charge for optional extras - education or provision that is not part of the National Curriculum, examination syllabus or religious education, including:

- education provided outside school hours that does not fall within the categories above;
- examination entry fees where a learner has not been prepared for the examination at the school;
- transport, other than transport to school or to premises where the local authority or Governing Body has arranged for a learner to receive education;
- board and lodging for a residential visit;
- extended-day provision such as after-school clubs and any wraparound care offered before or after a free core offer.

The Headteacher decides when it is necessary to charge for an optional extra and sets the level of charge annually. Any charge to an individual family will not exceed the actual cost of provision, divided equally among participating learners; there will be no element of subsidy required from families who are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge. Costs may include materials, books, instruments or equipment; non-teaching staff; teaching staff engaged under a contract for services solely to provide the extra, including supply cover; the cost, or a proportion of it, of instrumental tuition staff; and the cost or a proportion of buildings and accommodation. Participation is always based on parental choice and willingness to pay, and the school will confirm charges with parents before organising an optional extra.

7. Musical instrument tuition

Instrument tuition fees are paid to the school's tutors, provided through Essex Music Services, and reimbursed by the parent or carer of the learner receiving tuition. Individual sessions are offered on all instruments taught.

8. Work experience

The cost of a learner's travel to and from a work experience placement is met by the parent or carer.

9. Remissions and financial support

The school will consider remitting charges - including the board-and-lodging element of a residential trip - for families in receipt of the following, on production of evidence:

- 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, where the family is not also receiving Working Tax Credit and has an annual gross income no higher than £16,190 (this figure should be checked against current gov.uk guidance before publication, as free school meals thresholds have been under active revision through 2026);
- Working Tax Credit run-on, paid for four weeks after a family stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit;
- Universal Credit.

From September 2026, free school meals - and, in line with this policy, consideration for remission of charges - extend to every child in a household receiving Universal Credit, regardless of household income; the school will apply this with immediate effect. A family's eligibility for free school meals is treated as evidence of eligibility for remission under this policy.

Families facing financial hardship who do not meet the criteria above may still contact the Enrichment Leader in confidence; support may be available to ensure the school meets its equitable access aims of its Sense of Adventure enrichment priority. Parents and carers should check current eligibility.

Remission of charges is authorised by the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors. The school may also choose to subsidise part or all of the cost of certain activities, on the recommendation of the Enrichment Leader and within the constraints of the school budget. All requests and decisions relating to remission are handled confidentially. We also work with families to create bespoke payment plans to help where families are experiencing short term financial difficulty.

10. Voluntary contributions

The school may ask for voluntary contributions to general school funds, or to support activities that enrich learners' education. There is no obligation on any parent or carer to contribute, and the school will not pressure a family to do so. Where an activity cannot proceed without voluntary funding, this will be made clear to parents and carers in advance; if the activity is subsequently cancelled, all money paid will be returned, except any pre-agreed non-refundable deposit and bank charges.

11. Equality, inclusion and reasonable adjustments

Honywood is committed to ensuring that charging never becomes a barrier to inclusion. In line with the Equality Act 2010 and the school's Equality Information and Objectives Policy, a disabled learner will not be charged more than a non-disabled learner for a reasonable adjustment needed to enable them to take part in an activity. Where an activity genuinely requires additional third-party cost specific to an individual learner's needs - for example specialist transport or additional support staffing on a residential visit - this will be discussed with the family individually, sensitively, and as early as possible, so that a family can plan and so that funding routes, including the Pupil Premium Grant or remission under Section 9, can be considered before a final decision is needed. This policy is read alongside the SEND Policy and the Accessibility Plan.

12. Ensuring no learner is excluded for inability to pay

Honywood School is committed to ensuring fair access and treatment for all learners. No learner will be excluded from an activity because their parents or carers are unwilling or unable to pay. If there is genuinely insufficient funding for all learners wishing to attend an activity to do so, the activity itself will be reconsidered or cancelled, rather than some learners being excluded from it. The identity of any learner or family who is unwilling or unable to make a payment will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

13. Refunds and cancellations

Requests for a refund will be considered on an individual basis and may be declined where the school is unable to recoup costs already committed. Applications to withdraw from an activity, whether voluntary or otherwise, should be made in writing to the Headteacher; where approved, refunds are processed via the original method of payment. The school reserves the right not to refund costs where a learner is withdrawn from an activity as a result of a sanction under the Behaviour Policy.

14. Data protection and confidentiality

Financial and benefit-related information provided to support a request for remission is processed in line with the school's Privacy Notice, the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. It is shared only with the members of staff who need it to administer the request, and is retained only for as long as necessary.

15. Publishing, monitoring and review

This policy is published on the school website and reviewed annually by the Leadership Team and the Local Governing Body, or sooner if legislation or DfE guidance changes materially. It was last approved by the Local Governing Body in September 2026 and is next due for review in September 2027.

16. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and documents: the Equality Information and Objectives Policy; the SEND Policy; the Accessibility Plan; the Behaviour Policy; the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (for off-site visits); the school's Privacy Notice; and the Pupil Premium Strategy.

This policy was reviewed and rewritten in full in September 2026 to reflect current legislation and guidance, and approved by the Local Governing Body. It is reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.