

Charging and Remissions Policy 2025



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Signed	- Executive Headteacher
Signed	- Chair of governors
Next review	- September 2026

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Statement of intent

The Horizon School, Hartlepool is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all students, regardless of financial circumstances, and has established the following policy and procedures to ensure that no child is discriminated against by our offering of school trips, activities and educational extras.

In addition, we are committed to adhering to legal requirements regarding charging for school activities, and meeting all statutory guidance provided by the DfE.

The school will:

- Never charge for education provided during school hours.
- Inform parents/carers on low incomes and in receipt of relevant benefits of the support available to them when asking for contributions towards the costs of school visits.

Please note that while this policy may be more or less generous than the LA's, we have ensured it meets the requirements of the law.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2020) 'Governance handbook'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

2. Charging for education

The school will not charge for:

- Admission applications.
- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment).
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for by the school, or part of RE.

The school may charge for:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent/carer wishes their child to own them.
- Optional extras.
- The use of community facilities and other commercial activities.
- Provision of information within the scope of freedom of information.
- Intentional Damage caused by students.

3. Optional extras

The school may charge for the following optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - Part of the national curriculum
 - Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school
 - Part of RE
- Examination entry fees where the student has not been prepared for the examinations at the school
- Transport, other than that required to take the student to school or to other premises where the LA has arranged for the student to be provided with education

- Board and lodging for a student on a residential visit
- Extended day services offered to pupils, e.g. breakfast or out-of-school provision

When calculating the cost of optional extras, an amount may be included in relation to the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in relation to the optional extra
- Buildings and accommodation
- Non-teaching staff (including TAs)
- Teaching staff under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra

The school will not charge in excess of the actual cost of providing the optional extra divided by the number of participating students. A subsidy will not be charged for any students wishing to participate but whose parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge. In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the school will not charge for the cost of alternative provision for those not participating.

The school will not charge for supply teachers to cover for teachers who are absent from school accompanying students on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges; therefore, parental agreement is a prerequisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

If a charge is to be made for a particular activity, such as optional extras, parents/carers will be informed of how the charge will be calculated.

4. Examination fees and resits

The school may charge for examination fees if:

- The examination is on the set list (which includes SATs, GCSEs and A-levels), but the student was not prepared for it at the school.
- The examination is not on the set list, but the school arranged for the student to take it.
- A student fails, without good reason, to complete the requirements of any public examination where the governing board or LA originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

Where a student is entered for a second or subsequent attempt at an examination, the school will pay the fee. Once students have left the school, resits must be taken at the school.

If a student or their parent/carer consider it to be in the best interests of the student to request that an examination is re-marked, any fees involved will be covered by the student or their parent/carer. If the awarding body changes the overall grade of the result, the school will not be charged by the awarding body and the parent/carer or student will have their fees refunded.

5. Voluntary contributions

The school may, from time-to-time, ask for voluntary contributions towards the benefit of the school or school activities. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the

school will make this clear to parents/carers at the outset. There will be no obligation for parents/carers to make a contribution and they will be notified regarding whether assistance is available.

No student will be excluded from an activity simply because their parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent/carer is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal opportunity to take part in the activity. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity, and the school cannot fund it via another source, the activity will be cancelled.

The school will strive to ensure that parents/carers do not feel pressurised into making voluntary contributions.

6. Transport

The school will not charge for:

- Transporting registered students to or from the school premises, where the LA has a statutory obligation to provide the transport.
- Transporting registered students to other premises where the governing board or LA has arranged for students to be educated.
- Transporting students to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for the examination at the school.
- Transport provided for an educational visit.

7. Education partly during school hours

If 50 percent or more of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours (including time spent travelling if the travel occurs during school hours), it will be deemed to take place during school hours and no charge will be made.

Whatever the start and finish times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into two sessions. School hours will not include the break in the middle of the day.

If less than 50 percent of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours, it will be deemed to have taken place outside school hours and the school may charge for the activity; however, the school will not charge if the activity is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of RE.

The remission of charges for board and lodging payments is the responsibility of the school. These costs will be borne by the school.

Any charges for extended day services will be optional.

8. Residential visits

The school will not charge for:

- Education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours.

- Education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of RE.
- Supply teachers to cover for teachers accompanying students on visits.

The school may charge for board and lodging, but the charge will not exceed the actual cost. Parents/Carers will be exempt from board and lodging costs if they can prove that they are in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:

- 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 that they are 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 four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit – if they apply on or after 1 April 2018, their household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive)

If the number of school sessions covered by the visit is equal to or greater than 50 percent of the number of half days (any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day) spent on the visit, the school will not charge for the activity.

9. Damaged or lost items

The school will charge for the cost of replacing items that are intentionally damaged or lost due to the negligence or poor behaviour of students or their parents/carers. Parents/Carers will only be charged the replacement cost to purchase the same or equivalent item.

10. Remissions

The school will set aside a fund to enable parents/carers in financial difficulty to send their children on visits and activities. The funding will be limited and there is no guarantee that all requests can be met. Assistance will be allocated on a needs basis, and if the full cost of the trip or activity cannot be met through assistance funding and voluntary contributions, the trip or activity will be cancelled.

Parents/carers in receipt of any of the following benefits may request assistance with the costs of activities:

- 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 State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided that they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and they have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190

- Working Tax Credit run on – paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit – if they apply on or after 1 April 2018, their household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive)

To request assistance, parents/carers should contact the school office via 01429 264950.

11. School trip refunds

All initial deposits for school trips will be non-refundable. Parents/Carers will be informed of this when they are provided with initial information about the trip.

In the event that the school has to cancel a trip due to foreseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded. In the event that a school trip is cancelled by a party other than the school due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents.

In the event that a student or their parents/carers cancel their child's place on a trip, it will be at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school will take into account the reason for cancellation, whether the school will be reimbursed for the student's place on the trip, and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another student.

Where a student or their parents/carers have previously cancelled a place on a trip and received a full refund, the school will have the right to refuse to allow the student to attend future trips and visits.

In the event that a student cannot attend a trip at the last minute, e.g. due to illness, it will be at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school will take into account whether the school will be reimbursed for the student's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another student.

In the event that a school trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it will be at the school's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents/carers.

In the event that the decision is made to postpone a trip due to foreseen circumstances, it will be at the school's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents/carers.

Once trip arrangements have been booked and confirmed, if contributions exceed the total cost of the trip, a refund will be given where the excess is greater than £1 per pupil.

The school will deal with cancellations and refunds on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all students and their families are treated equally.

If a parent/carer wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they will be able to do so via the Complaints Procedures Policy.

12. Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

The school's Freedom of Information Policy and Freedom of Information Publication Scheme will set out where fees may be charged for the provision of information.

13. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Management Committee. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2026.