



Charging & Remissions Policy

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1. Policy Statement

Introduction

This statement sets out the legal framework, the definitions and our policy expectations.

The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly when Allenton Community Primary may or may not make a charge, and that the school must inform parents/carers on low incomes and in receipt of certain benefits of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

2. Legal Framework

- **Academies and the law on charging**
Sections 449–462 of the *Education Act 1996* set the law on charging. While these sections apply directly to maintained schools, academy trusts are required by their funding agreements to comply with the same law on charging for school activities.
- **No charge for education during school hours (and essential materials/equipment)**
Sections 451 and 454 of the *Education Act 1996* prohibit charging for education provided during school hours, and prohibit incidental charges for the supply of materials, books, instruments or other equipment needed for education during school hours (e.g. tablets or laptops). Schools may request voluntary contributions but must make clear that contributions are genuinely voluntary and pupils will not be treated differently if parents do not contribute.
- **Charging for materials where a pupil keeps the finished product**
It is lawful to charge for, or require parents to supply, ingredients or materials if the parent wishes the pupil to own the finished product (e.g. a DT project).
- **Department for Education guidance**
Schools must follow the DfE's *Charging for school activities* guidance (May 2018, still current), which replaces earlier versions such as the 2014 guidance.
- **Admissions**
Paragraph 1.9 of the *School Admissions Code 2021* prohibits admission authorities from seeking financial contributions as part of the admissions process.
- **Music tuition charges (and looked-after children)**
The *Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007* set out when charges for instrumental/vocal tuition may be made (e.g. individual or small-group tuition not required by the National Curriculum or an exam syllabus). No charge may be made in respect of looked-after children (as defined in Section 22(1) of the *Children Act 1989*).
- **Residential visits: board and lodging and remissions**
Schools may charge for board and lodging on residential visits, but must remit in full these charges for pupils whose parents meet the prescribed benefits criteria. The criteria are aligned with *Free School Meals (FSM)* eligibility.
- **Future change to FSM eligibility**
From September 2026, all households receiving Universal Credit will be eligible for FSM (removing the current £7,400 earned-income threshold). Schools should note this change when setting out remissions criteria that reference FSM eligibility.

3. Charging and Remissions Policy

3a. No charge is made for:

- Education within school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment). School hours do not include midday breaks.
- An admission application.
- Education provided outside school hours if it 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 religious education.
- Instrumental or vocal tuition during school hours, for pupils learning individually or in groups of two or more, which is part of the national curriculum or at KS2 to help pupils decide whether they wish to receive further tuition in singing or playing an instrument.

3b. A charge can be made for:

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment where the parent/carer wishes the pupil to own them.
- 'Optional extras': transport (other than to and from school); board and lodging on a residential visit; extended day services e.g. breakfast club, after-school club, tea and supervised homework sessions. Parents' agreement to the child's participation and to paying the charges is therefore a pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.
- Music and vocal tuition in limited circumstances i.e. when the tuition is at the request of the pupil's parent/carer or is in addition to that offered as part of the school's core curriculum.
- Certain Early Years provision.
- Community facilities.
- Cost of repairing damage to property caused by children or parents, or replacing items stolen by children or parents.

3c. Voluntary Contributions

- On occasion, the school may request voluntary contributions from parents to support delivery of enhanced provision beyond the core legal entitlement.
- Nothing in legislation prevents a school from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if an activity cannot take place without voluntary contributions, the Head of School must make this clear. It must also be made clear that there is no obligation to make this contribution.
- If a child's place on a school trip is withdrawn through parental choice, no refund will be given.
- If a child's place on a school trip is withdrawn by the school, a full refund will be given.

3d. School Meal Debts

- Allenton Community Primary is committed to ensuring that no child is refused a school meal or made to feel stigmatised because of debt. Pupils entitled to **Free School Meals** and those in **Reception, Year 1 and Year 2** who receive a **universal infant free school meal** will always be provided with a meal.
- Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that meal accounts are kept in credit. The school encourages families to check balances regularly and will provide reminders in advance of accounts reaching arrears.

- Where debts do occur, the following staged approach will be taken:
 - **First reminder** – A message, email or letter will be sent to parents/carers when arrears are noted.
 - **Second reminder** – If payment is not received within two weeks, a further written reminder will be issued.
 - **Meeting/repayment plan** – If debt exceeds the cost of two weeks of meals, parents/carers will be invited to meet with the Head of School to agree a repayment plan. Flexible arrangements will be considered to avoid financial hardship.
 - **Governing body involvement** – Significant or persistent debts may be referred to the governing body for further action in line with the school's financial procedures.
- The school will ensure that communication around meal debts is directed to parents/carers only and not to pupils.
- Families experiencing financial difficulty will be supported to check their eligibility for **Free School Meals** and guided towards relevant local authority or community support.

Updates made to Policy	
Date	Alterations
01/09/2025	Legal Framework – Updated to current law and guidance: ○ Replaced references to 2012 Admissions Code with the 2021 Admissions Code (para 1.9). ○ Updated reference from 2014 DfE guidance to the 2018 “Charging for school activities” guidance (still current). ○ Made explicit that sections 449–462 of the Education Act 1996 set the framework, applying to academies via funding agreements. ○ Expanded clarity on no charging for education during school hours and voluntary contributions being genuinely voluntary. ○ Added reference to future FSM eligibility change (Sept 2026) when all families on Universal Credit will qualify. Charging and Remissions Policy (no charge/charges can be made) – Content largely unchanged, but wording tightened for clarity (e.g. “own them” to “parent/carer wishes the pupil to own them”; “School hours do not include midday breaks” retained). Voluntary Contributions – Clarified wording: ○ Strengthened statement that contributions must be genuinely voluntary. ○ Consistency in referring to “Head of School” School Meal Debts – Significant revision to align with DfE expectations: ○ Old policy: Included measures such as refusing access to meals and school trips if debts continued. ○ New policy: ▪ Explicitly states no child will be refused a meal or stigmatised because of debt. ▪ Protects statutory entitlements: universal infant free school meals (R–Y2) and FSM pupils will always receive a meal. ▪ Introduces a staged, supportive debt management process. ▪ Emphasises communication is always directed to parents/carers only, not pupils. ▪ Adds commitment to support families to check FSM eligibility and access wider support.