

MAST

Charging and Remissions Policy

11/08/2026



MAST

Moving Ahead, Serving Together

Belong • Be Safe • Flourish

This policy reflects the core aims and purpose of MAST. At MAST, we are committed to ensuring that every child is known and every child is enabled. Guided by our values of Belong, Be Safe, Flourish, we create inclusive and nurturing school communities where every individual is recognised, valued and supported. Inspired by the belief that each person is known and called by name, we work together to provide the relationships, opportunities and support that enable all children to grow, achieve and flourish.

1. Introduction

Medway Anglican Schools Trust ("the Trust") and its schools recognise that enriching the curriculum through educational visits, visitors to school and other educational experiences are an important part of pupils' education.

The Trust and its schools are committed to ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to educational experiences which support their learning and personal development. No pupil should be disadvantaged because their parent/carer is unwilling or unable to contribute financially.

This Charging and Remissions Policy set out the circumstances in which the Trust and its schools may charge parents/carers for activities, materials and services, and the circumstances in which charges may be remitted.

The policy is intended to comply with the charging provisions of the Education Act 1996, relevant regulations and Department for Education (DfE) guidance on charging for school activities. Academies are required to comply with the relevant charging provisions through their funding agreements.

The Trust will ensure that its schools do not charge for education or activities where charging is prohibited by law.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all schools within Medway Anglican Schools Trust.

Individual schools may publish supplementary information setting out specific charges, arrangements or local procedures, if these are consistent with this Trust policy and the relevant legislation.

3. Principles

The Trust and its schools will:

- ensure that charges are only made where permitted by law and this policy;
- ensure that charges do not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity or service where the law requires this;
- ensure that voluntary contributions are genuinely voluntary;
- ensure that no pupil is treated differently because their parent/carer has not made a voluntary contribution;
- provide clear information to parents/carers about the basis on which a charge or voluntary contribution is being requested;
- make reasonable arrangements to support families who may experience financial difficulty;
- ensure that the application of this policy does not unlawfully discriminate against pupils or families;
- review the policy regularly to ensure that it remains compliant with current legislation and government guidance.

4. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

School hours mean the hours during which the school is in session for the purposes of teaching and other activities forming part of the school's curriculum. Breaks in the middle of the school day are not included when determining whether an activity takes place during school hours.

Optional extra means an activity which is not part of the National Curriculum, a prescribed public examination syllabus for which the pupil is being prepared at the school, or religious education, and which takes place outside school hours. Certain other activities, including transport, board and lodging and extended day services, may also be treated as optional extras for charging purposes.

Voluntary contribution means a payment requested from parents/carers towards the cost of an activity where there is no obligation to pay. A pupil must not be excluded from an activity simply because their parent/carer has not made a voluntary contribution.

5. Activities and services for which charges cannot be made

Subject to the specific exceptions set out in legislation, the Trust and its schools will not charge for:

- education provided during school hours, including the provision of materials, books, instruments or equipment;
- education provided outside school hours where it forms part of the National Curriculum;
- education provided outside school hours where it forms part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the pupil is being prepared at the school;
- education provided as part of religious education;
- entry for a prescribed public examination where the pupil has been prepared for that examination at the school;
- examination resits where the pupil is being prepared for the resit at the school, subject to the statutory provisions;
- supply teachers required to cover teachers who are absent while accompanying pupils on residential visits;
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit;
- transport to or from school where the relevant statutory transport arrangements apply;
- transport to other premises where the school or local authority has arranged for the pupil to receive education.

The Trust will comply with any other statutory prohibition on charging that may apply.

6. Activities and services for which charges may be made

Charges may be made where permitted by law, including for:

- materials, books, instruments or equipment where the parent/carer has requested that the pupil own them;

- optional extras;
- certain early years or nursery provision where charging is permitted by the relevant legislation and funding arrangements;
- board and lodging on residential visits, subject to the remission provisions set out in this policy;
- extended day services, including breakfast clubs and after-school clubs;
- musical or vocal tuition where charging is permitted under the relevant regulations;
- additional sporting activities provided outside the normal curriculum;
- use of school premises by community groups and other external organisations;
- other activities or services where charging is permitted by law.

Where a charge is made, the school will explain what the charge covers and, where applicable, how it has been calculated.

7. Optional extras

The Trust and its schools may charge for optional extras where permitted by law.

Examples may include:

- educational visits that are not part of the National Curriculum and take place outside school hours;
- theatre, cinema or museum visits which are not part of the National Curriculum or another activity for which charging is prohibited;
- residential visits which are not compulsory and are not part of the National Curriculum;
- additional sporting activities;
- musical tuition where charging is permitted;
- additional educational activities or clubs taking place outside the required curriculum;
- transport associated with an optional extra where charging is permitted;
- board and lodging associated with a residential optional extra;
- extended day services such as breakfast clubs and after-school clubs.

A charge for an optional extra will not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity, calculated in accordance with the relevant legislation.

The Trust will not use charges for optional extras to subsidise pupils whose parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay.

Participation in an optional extra for which a charge is made will be subject to parental/carer agreement to the charge.

8. Voluntary contributions

The Trust and its schools may invite parents/carers to make voluntary contributions towards the cost of educational activities, visits and other activities which enrich the curriculum.

All such contributions must be genuinely voluntary.

Information provided to parents/carers will clearly state:

- that the contribution is voluntary;
- what the contribution is intended to fund;
- the amount requested, where an amount is suggested;
- whether the activity can proceed if insufficient contributions are received; and
- that a pupil will not be treated differently because their parent/carer has not contributed.

If sufficient voluntary contributions are not received and the school cannot meet the shortfall from another source, the school may cancel the activity.

Where a trip or activity goes ahead, pupils whose parents/carers have not contributed will be allowed to participate on the same basis as other pupils, unless the activity is an optional extra for which a charge has lawfully been made and the parent/carer has chosen not to pay that charge.

When calculating a requested voluntary contribution, the school will not seek to make a profit or include an element of subsidy beyond the actual cost of the activity.

9. Educational visits

Educational visits form an important part of the curriculum and educational experience.

Where an educational visit takes place during school hours, the school will not charge for the educational activity.

Where permitted, the school may request a voluntary contribution towards the cost of an educational visit. This may include costs such as admission fees and other expenses associated with the visit.

Transport provided in connection with an educational visit will not be charged as a compulsory charge. Where appropriate, the cost of transport may form part of a request for a voluntary contribution.

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, the school will determine whether it is deemed to take place during or outside school hours in accordance with the statutory rules.

Where 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, the activity is deemed to take place during school hours. Where less than 50% takes place during school hours, it is deemed to take place outside school hours. Travel time is included in this calculation where the travel takes place during school hours.

However, where an activity is part of the National Curriculum, a prescribed public examination syllabus or religious education, the school will not charge for the education element even where the activity takes place outside school hours.

10. Residential visits

Where a residential visit is part of the National Curriculum, a prescribed public examination syllabus or religious education, the school will not charge for the education provided.

The school may charge for board and lodging on a residential visit, provided that the charge does not exceed the actual cost.

The school will not charge for the cost of supply teachers required to cover teachers who are accompanying pupils on residential visits.

Where a residential visit is compulsory and falls within the statutory provisions for remission, eligible parents/carers will not be required to pay the board and lodging element.

Where a residential visit is not compulsory, is not part of the National Curriculum and is an optional extra, the school may charge parents/carers for the costs permitted by law.

Parents/carers will be informed in advance of any charge and of any remission or financial assistance available to them.

11. Remissions for residential visits

The school will remit the cost of board and lodging for eligible pupils on compulsory residential visits where the relevant statutory criteria apply.

Eligibility is determined by the benefits and criteria prescribed by the Government from time to time. These currently include specified income-related benefits and Universal Credit subject to the applicable government eligibility criteria.

The Trust will not include an income threshold in this policy where that threshold is subject to change. Schools will use the current government criteria when determining eligibility.

Parents/carers will be informed of their right to apply for remission when information about a relevant residential visit is issued.

Schools may, where appropriate and subject to available resources, provide additional financial assistance to families experiencing financial hardship. Details of any such discretionary assistance will be available from the individual school.

12. Music tuition

All pupils receive music education as part of the school's curriculum and no charge will be made for curriculum music provision.

Where the school participates in a government-funded instrumental or vocal tuition programme, tuition will be provided in accordance with the terms of that programme and will not be charged where charging is prohibited.

The school may charge for individual or group instrumental or vocal tuition where:

- the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent/carer; and
- charging is permitted under the relevant legislation.

Any charge will not exceed the actual cost of providing the tuition.

The school will provide parents/carers with information about available musical tuition, including any applicable charges.

No charge will be made where the relevant legislation prohibits charging, including where the tuition is an essential part of the National Curriculum or is provided under a government-funded programme for which charging is prohibited.

13. Swimming

Swimming is part of the National Curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 2.

Where swimming lessons form part of the school's National Curriculum provision, they will be provided without charge.

The school may invite parents/carers to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of swimming provision where appropriate. Such a contribution is entirely voluntary and pupils will receive the provision regardless of whether a contribution is made.

Parents/carers will be given information about swimming arrangements and, where appropriate, asked for any necessary consent.

14. Sporting activities

Schools may provide additional sporting activities outside the normal curriculum, including coaching provided by external qualified coaches.

Where such activities are optional extras, a charge may be made where permitted by law.

The charge will be communicated to parents/carers in advance and participation will be subject to parental/carer agreement to the charge.

15. Breakfast clubs and extended day services

Breakfast clubs and other extended day services are additional services rather than part of the statutory school day.

The school may therefore make a charge for these services.

Charges will be set regarding the cost of providing the service, including staffing, food, resources and other appropriate costs.

Schools will publish their current charges and payment arrangements separately.

Where a school provides financial assistance or reduced charges, the relevant arrangements will be communicated to parents/carers.

16. Nursery and early years provision

Where a school provides nursery or other early years provision, charges may be made where permitted by legislation and where the child is not eligible for, or the provision exceeds, applicable government-funded entitlement.

The arrangements for funded and chargeable nursery provision will be communicated clearly to parents/carers.

The school will ensure that any charges comply with the relevant government funding requirements.

17. Damage or loss of school property

The school may seek payment where school property or equipment has been damaged or lost because of a pupil's deliberate, reckless or otherwise inappropriate behaviour.

Any request for payment will be reasonable and proportionate and will take account of the circumstances of the incident.

The school will not automatically impose a charge for accidental damage or normal wear and tear.

18. Use of school facilities by the community

The Trust and its schools support the local community by making school premises and facilities available for appropriate activities outside the school day.

Charges may be made for the use of school premises by community groups, organisations or other external users.

The level of charges and arrangements for lettings will be determined by the individual school or Trust in accordance with its lettings arrangements.

Income generated from lettings may be used to support the maintenance of facilities and/or activities which benefit pupils and the school community.

19. Financial hardship

The Trust recognises that families may experience financial difficulty.

Parents/carers who are unable or concerned about meeting the cost of an activity should contact the school as early as possible.

Schools may, subject to available resources and any statutory requirements, provide discretionary financial assistance, reduced charges or other support.

Requests for financial assistance will be handled sensitively and, wherever possible, confidentially.

The Trust will ensure that a parent's/carer's financial circumstances do not result in a pupil being unfairly treated or excluded from curriculum provision.

20. Information to parents/carers

When a charge or voluntary contribution is requested, the school will provide sufficient information for parents/carers to understand:

- what the payment is for;
- whether the payment is compulsory or voluntary;
- the amount requested;
- how the charge has been calculated, where applicable;
- whether any remission or financial assistance is available;
- the arrangements for payment; and
- what will happen if insufficient voluntary contributions are received.

21. Equality and inclusion

The Trust is committed to promoting equality and preventing unlawful discrimination.

The application of this policy will have regard to the Equality Act 2010 and the Trust's equality duties and policies.

The Trust will not unlawfully discriminate against pupils or families on the basis of a protected characteristic. Relevant protected characteristics in the context of school provision include disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, and pregnancy and maternity, as applicable.

The Trust will consider the needs of pupils with disabilities and make reasonable adjustments where required.

The Trust will ensure that its approach to charging and remissions does not create unnecessary barriers to pupils' participation in education or school activities.