Townlands C of E Primary Academy

Charging and Remissions Policy

Approved by: Rachael Johnson (Chair of Governors)

Date: November 2026

Next review due by: November 2027

1. Introduction

The charging and remissions policy at Townlands ensures that statutory requirements are met and it is intended to reflect the general principles of the Education Act which identifies activities for which:

1) Charges will not be made
2) Charges will be made
3) Charges may be waived

We want all our pupils to have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities, both on and off site, within and outside the curriculum, regardless of their family's financial means.

This policy sets out our approach to charging and remissions. Our intention is to ensure transparency in setting charges so that all our pupils are able to access all the provisions on offer.

This policy does not apply to charges made and determined by other organisations offering activities and services on the school premises.

2. Admissions

No charge will be made for admissions.

3. Free school meals and milk

No charge will be made for school meals for pupils who qualify for statutory remissions. A charge is made for pupils not entitled to free school meals, where a parent/carer chooses for the pupil to receive a school meal, unless the relevant local authority funds the universal provision of free school meals.

All children in EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to receive a universal free school meal. Parents in receipt of certain benefit allowances may qualify to receive free school meals for their children and we urge you to do so even for pupils in EYFS, year 1 and 2. Applications are to be made direct to Leicestershire County Council by calling 0116 305 5417. As always, matters of this nature are always treated with the utmost discretion, and confidentiality is assured. If you are eligible for Free School Meals and you apply to the Local Authority.

For other families, dinner money is payable in advance for meals and therefore should be paid upon booking. School accepts payment by Arbor and our school office can support parents/carers with this. Parents will be informed of any increases in the cost of school meals.

Free milk is given to all children under the age of 5; with subsidised milk being available for all children aged 5 years and up. It is available to order on line through a company called Cool Milk. Information packs can be obtained from the school office. All children in Foundation Stage and Key stage 1 received free fruit as a mid-morning snack. Free school meal children are entitled to free milk throughout primary school.

4. Educational Activities for Pupils

4.1. Examinations

No charge will be made for the entry fee if the pupil has been prepared for the examination at the school. We reserve the right to charge parents/carers any other examination fees which may be incurred.

4.2. Education provided within Academy hours

Education provided by Townlands for its registered pupils should be free of charge if it takes place wholly or mainly during school hours. School hours being those hours when the school is actually in session and not including the break in the middle of the day. This means that neither the pupil nor his or her parents/carers may be required to pay for, or to supply, any materials, books, instruments or other equipment for use in connection with education provided during school hours, unless they wish to own them.

4.3. Education provided out of Academy hours

Where education is provided out of school hours, charging is permitted, except where the education is provided:
a) to fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus for a prescribed Public examination;
b) specifically, to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum; or
c) to fulfil duties relating to Religious Education.
In these cases, the only charge that may be made is for board and lodging or for residential trips.

4.4. Activities run by a third party

The Act permits an organisation other than Townlands to levy a charge directly on parents/carers for activities organised in school hours by a non-school organisation. Townlands will not be involved in collection of charges on behalf of the third-party organisation.

Where pupils are granted leave of absence to attend these activities it would be for parents/carers and any staff members similarly released to satisfy themselves about the adequacy of the arrangements made by the third party to secure the safety and welfare of the pupils.

4.5. Charging in kind

The cost of ingredients, materials, equipment etc. needed for practical subjects such as craft, must be budgeted for and borne by Townlands. Parents/carers who are willing to contribute in cash or kind can however be encouraged to do so on a voluntary basis.

Pupils must not be treated differently according to whether or not materials are being provided by their parents/carers.

5. Other Townlands Activities

5.1. Voluntary Contributions

Townlands will seek voluntary contributions for any activity in order to support any School activity whether during or outside school hours, residential or non-residential and including inviting parents/carers to pay for materials or ingredients where they wish to own the finished product. However, all requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact

that pupils of parents/carers who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have. Such contributions will be genuinely voluntary.

There is no limit to the level of voluntary contributions which parents/carers or others can make to school activities, nor is there any restriction placed on the use of such contributions, provided they are used for the purpose specified in the request for them. They could, for example, be used to subsidise pupils from low-income families, or the cost of travel for accompanying teachers.

The Law says that:
• If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the parents/carers will be notified of this from the outset;
• No child will be excluded from an activity because the parents/carers are unable to pay;
• If insufficient contributions are raised, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled; and
• If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

5.2. Board and lodging on residential visits
Board and lodging on residential visits may be charged for whether or not the visit takes place within school time and whether or not the activity is provided to fulfil the requirements of:
• the syllabus of a prescribed public examination; or
• of the National Curriculum; or
• to fulfil statutory duties relating to religious education.

Charges for board and lodging must not exceed the actual cost to the pupil. They must not, for example, include any element representing a share of the costs of staff accompanying the visit (this may, however, be covered by voluntary contributions).

Governors will, as a statutory minimum, remit any charges for board and lodging in the case of pupils whose parents/carers are in receipt of Universal Credit etc. where the activity is deemed to take place in school hours. Governors may wish to consider whether to remit charges in other circumstances.

6. Charges
If a charge is made it should not exceed the actual cost. If further funds are needed for additional costs e.g. to help hardship cases this must be by voluntary contributions or general fund raising.

6.1. Materials
Schools and local authorities can charge for any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them.

6.2. 'Optional extra' activities
'Optional extra' activities are those which take place wholly or mainly outside school hours, but which are not provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination and are not required in order to fulfil statutory duties relating to the national curriculum or to religious education.

Participation will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet such charges as they are made. Any charge made in respect of individual pupils may include an appropriate element for the following: a pupil's travel costs; a pupil's board and lodging; materials, books, instruments and other equipment; support staff costs; entrance fees to museums, theatres, insurance costs etc.

It should be noted that any charge for an 'optional extra' activity, as distinct from a request for a voluntary contribution, should not exceed the actual cost of providing that activity. This includes activity costs, bank charges and administration time. The actual cost is divided equally by the number of pupils willing to participate. It may not, therefore, include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

The costs of teaching staff involved in optional extra activities, may only be passed on, through charges if:

- they are engaged specifically by Townlands for the purpose of providing the activity;
- they are employed by Townlands to provide instrumental music tuition; or
- they are teachers already employed by Townlands, who have been engaged on a separate contract for services to provide the optional extra.

6.3. Music Tuition

A charge may be made in respect of individual tuition in playing any musical instrument, even if such tuition takes place during academy hours. Parental agreement must be obtained before a pupil is given that tuition.

6.4. School trip refunds

All initial deposits for school trips will be non-refundable. Parents 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 Headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The Headteacher may consult the governing board on the matter, taking into account the cost to the school, including alternative provision cost.

In the event that a pupil or their parents cancel the pupil's place on a trip, it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The Headteacher may consult the governing board on the matter, taking into account the reason for cancellation, whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip, and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

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

In the event that a school trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The Headteacher may discuss options with the governing board, 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 is at the Headteacher's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The Head teacher will discuss options with the governing board, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.

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

7. Breakages and fines

7.1. Townlands Damages

We may seek to recover some or all of the costs incurred due to wilful damage or breakage of school property. This will be determined by the Headteacher, in conjunction with the Governors.

7.2. Third Party Damages

We may seek to recover some or all of the costs incurred due to wilful damage or breakage of property belonging to a third party where the school has been charged. This will be determined by the Headteacher in conjunction with the Governors.

8. Remissions

Townlands has set aside a small fund to enable parents/carers in financial difficulty to send their children on visits and activities. The funding is 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 may be assisted with the costs of activities if they can prove that they are eligible for Pupil Premium through benefits-related Free School Meals.