Lime Trust
Putting Learners First

Charging and Remissions Policy

Lime Trust 2026

Policy: Charging and Remissions Policy

Date of Policy: September 2026

Date of Renewal: September 2027

LIME Trust Vision & Values

Putting Learners First is our Trust vision.

We aim to create a nurturing and supportive learning environment for all, encouraging our learners to achieve academic excellence and reach their full potential. We set high expectations and build capacity-rich schools through facilitating school-to-school collaboration. The high challenge we put forward is met with equally high support from our team of education experts, so we continue to improve our children's lives and futures – especially for disadvantaged pupils.

Our values are based on R.E.S.P.E.C.T. which means we believe that:

Respect is built on unconditional positive regard for all learners, all employees, and our wider communities.
Equity enables everyone to be treated as individuals. It removes barriers, provides opportunity and celebrates difference.
Self-worth creates a culture where all learners, all employees and our wider community have pride in their contributions and feel confident and valued.
Partnership is working together for the common good, ensuring that our learners are at the heart of all that we do.
Enjoyment is feeling happy, safe and motivated to make a positive contribution.
Communication provides a voice for all, creating a shared understanding through dialogue.
Trust is a partnership which requires us to act with integrity. Be brave, honest and kind.

Governance

Where a policy refers to the responsibility of the Trust Board for monitoring, scrutiny or quality assurance, these may be delegated to one of the teams below through their governance processes:

- School Improvement Team Governance , who directly report to the Education Curriculum and Standards Committee
- Operations Team Governance, who directly report to the Finance Risk and Audit Committee
- External and internal audits reported to the Trust Board

Introduction

The Lime Trust recognises the value of providing a wide range of experiences to enrich and extend pupils' learning. We aim to provide these experiences for all pupils at the Trust.

Many of these activities have associated costs and cannot be provided unless voluntary contributions are received, or parents are charged for the cost. In this respect, the Trust is following the DfE Guidance, which is stated in this document and sets out the Trust's policy on charging and remissions for school activities and school visits.

Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 set out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by Local Authorities in England. Academies (including free schools, studio schools and UTCs) are required, through their funding agreement, to comply with the same law on charging for school activities. This policy accurately reflects the terms of the Education Act 1996, but it is not a substitute for those terms.

Ethos & Values

At all Lime Trust schools, we put children first. We work in partnership to make a positive difference to the lives and opportunities for children, young people and adults within our schools and the global community.

We are passionate about embedding four core values into all children and adults that are part of our school community:

- To be included, valued and safe
- To be creative, inspired and challenged;
- To take responsibility for our own learning and development;
- To have effective working partnerships with others.

Pupil Premium

Pupil Premium is a government initiative that targets extra money at pupils who have been entitled to free school meals (FSM) during the past six years, looked after children and service children.

Key points

Schools cannot charge for education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment).
Schools actively encourage parents to check eligibility and apply for FSM.
Schools inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of means tested benefits the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

School charging – Education

Schools cannot charge for:

- an admission application to any state funded school - Paragraph 1.9 (n) of the 'School Admissions Code 2012' rules out requests for financial contributions at any part of the admissions process;

- 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, or 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, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent;
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school; and
- examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school.

Schools can charge for:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, if the child's parent wishes him/her to own them;
- optional extras (please see below);
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances;
- certain early years provision;
- community facilities.

Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as 'optional extras'. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment. Optional extras are:

- education provided outside of school time that is not:
    a) part of the national curriculum;
    b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school; or
    c) part of religious education.
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the Local Authority/Trust have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education);
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.

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

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- the cost of buildings and accommodation;
- non-teaching staff;
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
- the costs, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It must not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

Furthermore, in cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate.
Therefore, no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges.

Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Voluntary contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents a school from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the Academy Council or Headteacher should make this clear to parents at the outset. The Academy Council or Headteacher must also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the school cannot fund it from some other source, then it must be cancelled. Schools must ensure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. Schools should make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

When making requests for voluntary contributions, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. Schools should avoid sending colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments, and direct debit or standing order mandates should not be sent to parents when requesting contributions.

Parents of children in receipt of Pupil Premium will not be expected to make a voluntary contribution.

Music tuition

Although the law states that, in general, all education provided during school hours must be free, instrumental and vocal music tuition is an exception to that rule.

The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 set out the circumstances in which charges can be made for tuition in playing a musical instrument, including vocal tuition. They allow charging for tuition in larger groups than was previously the case.

Charges may now be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually, or to groups of any size, if the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff who provide the tuition.

The Regulations make clear that charging may not be made if the teaching is either an essential part of the national curriculum, or is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal

Tuition Programme. They also make clear that no charge may be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(l) of the Children Act 1989).

Parents of children in receipt of Pupil Premium will not be charged.

Transport

Schools cannot charge for:

- transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the Local Education Authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- transporting registered pupils to other premises where the Trust or Local Authority has arranged for pupils to be educated;
- transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school; and
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

Charging and Remissions

The Trust schools will take account of each type of activity that can be charged for and will explain when charges will be made.

If a charge is to be made for a particular type of activity, for example optional extras, parents need to know how the charge will be worked out and who might qualify for help with the cost or get it free. This information will be made available to parents.

If any family has difficulty in meeting any requests for payment from the school, then it may be possible for the school to subsidise the activity. Applications for financial help will be received sympathetically and will be regarded as confidential. Parents should contact the Headteacher to apply for support.

The school is not responsible for the charging and remissions policy for any external services on our premises.

Residential visits

Schools cannot 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, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education; and
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Education partly during school hours

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. However, a charge can only be made for the activity outside school hours if it is not part of the national curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education.

Schools can charge for:

- board and lodging and the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

When the school informs parents about a forthcoming visit, we will make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging:

- Universal Credit in prescribed circumstances;
- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190 (Financial Year 2013/14);
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
- an income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.

Non-residential activities

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require pupils to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

Residential visits

If the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is equal to, or greater than, 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening).

Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A 'half day' means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

Example 1: Visit during school hours

Pupils are away from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 9 half days including 5 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place during school hours.

Example 2: Visit outside school hours

Pupils are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.

School meals

School meals are made available to all pupils for any parent who wishes to purchase them. The school charges for these meals on the basis of the cost of providing them. The current charge for this service is available from the school and is subject to review every year. Under government legislation (Universal

Free School Meals for Infants), the school provides a free lunch for all reception and Key Stage One pupils.

Please also refer to the School Meal Debt Policy.

Breakfast club

Current Government policy is that all Breakfast Clubs are free. While this policy is in place there will be no charge but should the policy be removed the Trust Board reserve the right to charge a contribution towards the cost of the service. Prices will be reviewed from time to time by our Trust Board to ensure that the service is cost effective. The Trust schools will give a month's notice of any increase.

After school provision

Families are charged in order to meet the cost of the school's after school childcare. Charges are levied in advance and may be reviewed from time to time by the Trust Board. The Trust schools will endeavour to give a month's notice of any increase. Remissions (reductions) may be available for vulnerable children.

Breakages

The Trust schools reserve the right to ask parents to pay for the cost of replacing any item such as (but limited too):

- broken windows
- defaced, damaged or lost text or reading books
- replacement reading or homework diaries
- any item damaged as a result of unsatisfactory pupil behaviour.

Payments

All payments must be made using the Academies online payment system or using childcare vouchers or childcare accounts if relevant. All payments must be made in advance of the activity, or service being delivered, and accounts must be kept in credit failure to do this could result in removal of access to the service.

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