Great Gaddesden C of E (VA) Primary School

Small School - Big Heart - Great Start

Mission Statement: 'Treat others exactly as you would like to be treated yourself' (Luke 6:31)

Charging, Remissions & Debts Policy

Review date: November 2026

Review cycle: Annually (or sooner if required)

Signature: Date: 10th November 2026

Headteacher

Date approved by governing body (Finance and Resources Committee):10th November 2026

Date operational: 1st January 2027

Charging, Remissions and Debts Policy

In line with our Christian ethos, we believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to a broad and balanced curriculum independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

The law states that education provided during school hours must be free of any compulsory charges to parents. However, schools are permitted to ask parents to make voluntary contributions. Many educationally valuable activities that contribute to a broad and balanced curriculum are dependent on financial contributions in whole or in part from parents.

Definitions:

Charge	A payment for specifically defined activities (set out below) that the School is entitled to levy in certain circumstances
Voluntary contribution	A payment which parents may be asked to make to cover the cost of certain optional activities

Voluntary contributions

Voluntary contributions will be sought for activities such as day trips, workshops and transport for swimming. The school acknowledges that in some cases, where payments are made on a voluntary basis, there will be some that do not pay. However, payment will be genuinely voluntary and children shall not be excluded because their parents do not pay.

Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, then it will be cancelled.

Where the activity or trip is deemed financially unviable, reminder letters may still be sent to those parents who have not contributed.

Where an activity is proposed, it shall be offered to a distinct group such as a class or year group not only those showing a willingness to pay.

We carefully consider the amount of times we ask for voluntary contributions to support families' financial circumstances and to plan accordingly.

Charges
The headteacher, staff and governors will ensure that no charges will be made for:

- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books or other equipment).
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education

- Tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum.

Educational Visits

The basis of funding for educational visits will be as follows:

Type	**Description**	**Basis of funding**
A	Those taking place largely or entirely during the school day and which may be part of the national curriculum	Voluntary contribution
B	Those which take place largely or entirely outside of school time	Charge
C	Residential visits taking place largely or entirely during school time	Charge for board and lodgings and voluntary contribution for the remainder

Charges will be made as indicated below. Parental agreement will be obtained before a charge is made.

Charges will not exceed the actual predicted cost (per pupil) of provision as the school does not aim to profit from any activity. In the event of a profit being accidentally made, a refund will be offered if the profit is greater than 5% of the overall cost. (See refunds section)

Other charges

Examples of charges and remissions are given in the table below

Activity or thing which will or may be charged for	**Notes**	**Remitted or help available**
Charges may be made for any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where a parent wishes their child to own them	For example, a clay model– a charge to cover the cost of the clay.	None
Charges for lost books- Nominal £5 per book	Library, readers	None
Charges for deliberate damage to school property	Replacement cost of the item	None
Charges for optional extras such as individual musical instrument lessons (outside of the curriculum) and extra-curricular clubs	Where the optional extra is at the request of the parent (not for whole class activities etc)	Help towards the cost of this optional extra may be provided for children in receipt of PPG or deemed appropriate for additional support at the discretion of the School, however this must be agreed with the Head Teacher on a case by case basis for each optional extra, each term. See below for further guidance*
Wrap around provision	Breakfast and after school club	Reduced rate for breakfast club only

Financial support*
Support with funding for extracurricular activities for pupils in receipt of PPG would be a maximum of one club per term. However, this depends on the amount of PPG funds available and is reviewed on a case by case basis.

Families qualifying for remission or help with charges
In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the governing body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances.

Parents in receipt of

- Income Support;
- Income based Jobseekers 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 you're 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 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit (with annual earned income of no more than £7,400 after tax and not including any benefits)

Some categories of parents may claim help with some costs in some circumstances.

Additional considerations

The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- we have established a system for parents to pay in instalments
- when an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip
- we acknowledge that offering opportunities on a "first pay, first served" basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection. However, this may be necessary where places are limited.

Dinner Money

Parents are expected to keep balances in credit and meals should be paid for in advance. The reason we do not allow any debt is to ensure parents/carers do not accrue an unmanageable amount of debt and also ensures the school is not running at a financial loss due to unpaid debts.
Parents/carers may only order ad hoc meals if their account is in credit.

Parents who have failed to provide their child with either a packed lunch, or have not paid school dinner money, will be contacted by the office team and be asked to provide packed lunch that day and going forwards until the account is in credit.

The number of children who are entitled to Free School Meals is an important factor that influences school funding and parents are encouraged to take up this entitlement. If parents are entitled to Free School Meals, the school needs confirmation from HCC beforehand.

Wrap around care

Fees and administration

In order for the school's wraparound care provision to be sustainable the cost per child should cover staffing and food costs.

Weekly provision and pricing structure (effective from January 2027)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast club 8:00am-8:40am (open to Reception- Year 6 children only) £5.00 PPG £4.00				
After school club 3:15-4:30pm £7.50 (Reception -Year 6 children) & £8.50 (Nursery children) 3:15-5:00pm £9.00 (open to Reception- Year 6 children only) 4:15-4:30pm £3.50 (provision following another club eg. Yoga, singing etc) 4:15-5:00pm £5.00 (provision following another club eg. Yoga, singing etc)				No after school club

• Regular bookings should ideally be made at least one week in advance to ensure you get your place.

• Bookings can be made online as late as the day before.

• Last minute bookings must be made by contacting the school office on the day (if availability permits).

• Payments are due at the time of booking/made in advance so that services are prepaid for.

• All payments are made online using Arbor

• Parents using the new tax-free childcare accounts must make the transfer of funds in good time. When the funds arrive in the school account, a credit will be added to your school Arbor account which will allow you to make bookings without further payment. Please check your Arbor account 7 days after the transfer. Payments are reviewed weekly on a Wednesday so crediting Arbor accounts will only take place on this day. In exceptional circumstances where there has been a delay between payment being received and crediting Arbor accounts, access to wrap around may continue and this will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

• Fees for the service will be reviewed regularly and may increase or otherwise vary throughout the academic year.

• Booking changes can be made by speaking to the school office or by emailing admin@greatgaddesden.herts.sch.uk. You may swap to an alternative day if there is space available.

• If bookings are not made in advance or children are not collected by the end of the school day (by 3:20pm), parents will be charged until 4:30pm/5:00pm plus an additional £5 due to the need to deploy additional staff to be within ratios.

•Children who are booked on until 4:30pm and are collected late (after 4:30pm) will be charged until 5:00pm

•After school club closes at 5:00pm. A late charge of £1 per minute is applied if children are collected after this time.

Non-Payment of Fees

Except in exceptional circumstances failure to make payment to ensure an account is in credit, will result in the school cancelling future bookings. A notification will be issued to the parent/guardian before this action is taken.

Cancellation by parents/carers
To ensure appropriate staffing levels, all bookings must be made and paid for in advance. Refunds will not be issued for non-attendance unless the parent/carer cancels the booking at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance.

Cancellation of any pre-booked places must be received in writing by the school. This can be done by emailing the school via admin@greatgaddesden.herts.sch.uk

Refunds and remissions

- Where a planned trip does not take place, parents will be refunded in full (based on the school having received the full balance back from the provider. This may include a deduction of a non-refundable deposit). Information regarding this will be shared in the first instance.
- A refund will not normally be given if a child is absent for a trip through illness. However, if a child missed a residential trip due to accident or illness, the parent/carer may claim under the insurance policy.
- Where a parent has reserved a place for their child on a trip and the school has secured this place with the company concerned, full payment for the cost of the trip will still be due and no monies will be refunded to the parent unless the school is able to cover its related costs.
- Refunds for wrap around provision are only provided where 24 hours notice of cancellation has been provided or where the school cancels the planned session. Your Arbor account will be credited in such circumstances.
- If, for any unforeseen reason, parents have been overcharged, refunds may be required where overall profits exceed 5%. Likewise, if undercharged, it may be necessary to ask parents for either additional payments or voluntary contributions.

Debts
The school does not permit parents or carers to accrue any debt for dinners or wrap around care.

By introducing a zero tolerance debt policy, we aim to reduce the risk to parents incurring large debts that they will struggle to pay and minimise the amount of staff

time taken in chasing up outstanding payments. As the school is responsible for managing payments and arrears for school meals and other services, these would be processed through the main school budget. Where debts are incurred, the school budget has to pay for them; this means that money that should be spent on children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents which is deemed by the school and governing body as unacceptable.

However, as previously mentioned, in exceptional circumstances where there has been a delay between payment being received and crediting Arbor accounts, access to wrap around may continue and this will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

In the unlikely event debt is accrued for services provided by the school, the Headteacher and governing board reserve the right to take appropriate action to recover the debt.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The governing body will monitor the impact of this policy by receiving on an annual basis a financial report on those activities that resulted in charges being levied, the subsidies awarded (without giving names) and the source of those subsidies. It will seek to evaluate the impact of the school's extended services on those children most in need of additional support. Due to time constraints, it may be necessary to review these financial reports the term after the activity has taken place.