Charging and Remissions Policy

Date:	20 October 2026	**Author/Owner:**	Trust executive team
Date of next review:	Autumn 2027	**Approval:**	Trust Board
Type of policy:	Trust-wide Individual school Adapted by school	**Key Contact Email:**	finance@prestoleetrust.org
School:	N/A		

Current version	Previous version	Summary of changes made
September 2024		New policy
October 2025	September 2024	Additional paragraph at the start of the policy regarding exemptions nd discretions. Strengthened links to the Equality Act 2010 and ensuring equal access for disadvantaged pupils in its widest context. Strengthened monitoring arrangements. Parent friendly statement. Addition of section on school meal
October 2026	October 2025	Minor amendments following annual review to reflect updated DfE guidance on free school meals and early years charging, clarify examination fees and residential visit remissions, and update legislative references. Minor wording changes to voluntary contributions. No substantive changes to the Trust's existing approach.

Remissions will apply consistently across all schools within the Trust. In addition to statutory exemptions, the Trust will extend remissions to include disadvantaged pupils and, at the discretion of the headteacher, families experiencing exceptional financial hardship to ensure equitable access to all educational opportunities.

1. Aims

Prestolee Multi Academy Trust is committed to fulfilling its duties under the Equality Act 2010 by ensuring equal access to all educational opportunities. No pupil will be excluded from any activity or visit because their parent or carer is unwilling or unable to pay. This policy aims to:

- Have robust, clear processes in place for charging and remissions and discretionary hardship cases can be considered.
- Clearly set out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will and will not be made
- Offer a range of activities and visits whilst minimising the financial barriers that may prevent some pupils from taking full advantage of these opportunities

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on Charging for School Activities (May 2018) and on the relevant legislation, including sections 449 to 462 of the Education Act 1996, which set out the law on charging for school activities in England. It also takes account of the Equality Act 2010, which ensures that all pupils have equal access to educational opportunities, and section 27 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which allows schools to provide community facilities. Academies are required through their funding agreements to comply with the relevant legislation on charging for school activities. This policy also takes account of current Department for Education guidance, including guidance on free school meals, early education and childcare where applicable, and the Academy Trust Handbook, together with the Trust's Funding Agreements and Articles of Association.

3. Definitions

- **Charge**: a fee payable for specifically defined activities
- **Remission**: the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Trust board

The trust board has overall responsibility for charging and remissions policy but can delegate approval of the policy to a committee. Responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy has been delegated to the finance committee.

The trust board has delegated the responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy to the finance committee.

4.2 The Trust Executive Team

The executive team is responsible for the review and application of this policy in all its schools.

4.3 Headteachers

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementing and applying the charging and remissions policy consistently across their school including considering discretionary hardship cases
- Ensuring staff are familiar with the charging and remissions policy and providing training and support where necessary

4.4 Staff

Staff are responsible for notifying the headteacher of any specific circumstances that they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies.

4.4 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to notify staff or the headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding the charging and remissions policy.

5. Charges that cannot be made

5.1 Education

Education provided on school premises during normal school hours will always be free of charge, and no charge will be made for transport between maintained schools or academies when such transport is arranged by the Trust or the local authority.

Below we set out what we **cannot** charge for:

- Admission applications
- 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
    - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
    - 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/carer
    - Entry for a prescribed public examination if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school
    - Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school

5.2 Transport

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local authority (LA) has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the school or LA has arranged for pupils to be educated
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for that examination at the school
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit

5.3 Residential visits

- 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
    - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
    - Religious education
- Supply teachers, covering for teachers who are absent from school, accompanying pupils on a residential visit

5.4 School Meals

No charge will be made for school meals provided to pupils who are eligible for free school meals in accordance with the current Department for Education eligibility criteria.

This includes pupils in households receiving Universal Credit, subject to the applicable eligibility verification requirements, and all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 who are entitled to universal infant free school meals.

The Trust will apply the current DfE eligibility criteria and guidance, including any future changes to statutory entitlements.

6. Charges that can be made

Any charge made must not exceed the actual cost per pupil of providing the activity, and where early years provision is involved, all charging arrangements must comply with the statutory Early Education and Childcare funding guidance.

Where the Trust provides funded early years education and childcare, the funded entitlement hours will be provided free of charge. Charges for additional hours, meals, consumables or optional activities will comply with the current statutory Early Education and Childcare

guidance. Optional charges will not be a condition of accessing a funded place, and reasonable alternatives will be available.

Below we set out what we **can** charge for:

6.1 Education

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent/carer wishes the child to own them
- Optional extras (see section 6.2)
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see section 6.3)
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities
- Examination fees may be recovered from parents or carers where a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet an examination requirement for a syllabus. No charge will be made for an examination re-sit where the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit at the school, except where recovery of an examination fee is permitted under the relevant legislation.

6.2 Optional extras

We are able to charge for activities known as 'optional extras'. In these cases, schools can charge for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. The following are optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not part of:
    - The National Curriculum
    - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
    - 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 LA or the school has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education)
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
- Extended day services offered to pupils (such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions)

When 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 (including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra)
- The cost, 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 will not be greater than the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating.

Any charge will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils who wish to take part in the activity but whose parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

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.

Parental agreement is necessary for the provision of an optional extra that is to be charged for.

6.3 Music tuition

Schools can charge for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of pupils, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent/carer.

Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff giving the tuition.

Charges cannot be made:

- If the teaching is an essential part of the National Curriculum
- If the teaching is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 instrumental and vocal tuition programme
- For a pupil who is looked after by a local authority

6.4 Residential visits

We can charge for board and lodging on residential visits, but the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

7. Voluntary Contributions

As an exception to the requirements set out in this policy, the school is able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents/carers to fund activities that would not otherwise be possible.

Some activities for which the school may ask parents/carers for voluntary contributions include but not limited to activities such as school trips and sports activities.

There is no obligation for parents or carers to make any contribution, and no child will be excluded from an activity if their parent or carer is unwilling or unable to pay. No pupil will be treated differently as a result of this, and the school will communicate transparently with parents about the costs of activities and any funding shortfalls that may affect whether they can go ahead.

We will strive to ensure that parents do not feel pressured into making voluntary contributions

If insufficient voluntary contributions are received and the school is unable to fund the activity from another source, the activity will be cancelled.

8. Lettings

Schools may make their facilities available to outside users at a charge of at least the cost of providing the facilities, in line with the Trust's Lettings Policy and ensuring full cost recovery. Further details can be found in our Lettings Policy.

9. Remissions

In some circumstances, the school may not charge for items or activities set out in this policy. This will be at the discretion of the Headteacher and will depend on the activity in question.

9.1 Remissions for residential visits

Where a charge is permitted for board and lodging on a residential visit, the Trust will remit the charge in full for pupils whose parents or carers meet the statutory eligibility criteria for remission.

The Trust will apply the relevant legislation and current Department for Education guidance when determining eligibility and will ensure parents and carers are informed of the support available.

In addition to statutory remissions, headteachers may consider full or partial remission for disadvantaged pupils and families experiencing exceptional financial hardship, in accordance with this policy.

10. School Meal Debt, Payment and Equality

Pupils who are not eligible for free school meals are expected to pay for their meals in advance or on the day of purchase. The cost of school meals is determined by the school and communicated clearly to parents and carers.

Where payment has not been received, the school will make every reasonable effort to contact parents promptly to arrange payment or agree a suitable repayment plan. No child will ever be refused a meal, denied food, or placed at risk of embarrassment because of non-payment. Schools will handle all discussions about meal debt sensitively, ensuring that pupils are not identified or stigmatised in any way.

The Trust is committed to fulfilling its duties under the *Equality Act 2010* by ensuring that all pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, have equal access to a nutritious daily meal. In cases of financial hardship, schools will work proactively with families to identify support options, including temporary remissions or access to available local welfare schemes. Decisions will be made with compassion and fairness, recognising the importance of every pupil's health, dignity, and wellbeing.

If debts remain outstanding after reasonable attempts to recover them, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the Debt Recovery Procedure. The Trust will monitor meal debt levels across its schools to ensure consistent practice and equitable support for disadvantaged families.

11. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the finance committee annually.

The annual review of this policy will ensure that all practices remain fully compliant with Department for Education (DfE) guidance and the Trust's funding agreement.

Each school within the Trust must maintain clear and accurate records of all charges made, voluntary contributions received, and remissions granted.

These records will be reviewed by the Trust Finance Team to ensure transparency, consistency, and accountability across all schools.

Parent-Friendly Statement for Websites and Prospectuses

Prestolee Multi Academy Trust is committed to ensuring that every child can participate fully in all aspects of school life, regardless of their family's financial circumstances. We do not charge for any education provided during school hours or for activities that form part of the National Curriculum. Voluntary contributions may be requested to support optional extras such as school trips, but no pupil will ever be excluded from an activity because of an inability or unwillingness to contribute. Where families face financial hardship, the Trust will consider remissions or support on a case-by-case basis to ensure equity of access for all pupils.