

Charging and Remissions Policy

1. Introduction

The Governing Board of Ravenswood School recognises its responsibilities under the Education Act 1996 and associated legislation regarding charging for school activities. This policy details the circumstances in which charges may be made, when voluntary contributions may be requested, and the procedures for recovering outstanding debts.

The school is committed to ensuring that no pupil is disadvantaged through inability to pay and that access to educational opportunities remains equitable for all pupils.

2. Statutory Charging Policy

The Governing Board acknowledges that:

2.1 Free Provision of Education

1. Education provided during the school day shall be provided free of charge to all registered pupils, including any books, materials, equipment or resources required to complete a programme of study.
2. An activity shall be deemed to take place during school hours where 50% or more of the total time spent on the activity, including associated travel time, occurs within the school's normal session times.

2.2 Activities for Which Charges Cannot Be Made

The school will not levy charges for education provided outside normal school hours where such education:

- Forms part of the National Curriculum;
- Forms part of a prescribed public examination syllabus for which the pupil is being prepared by the school; or
- Relates to the school's statutory duty to provide Religious Education.

2.3 Optional Extras

Charges may be made for activities classified as optional extras, where these fall outside the requirements outlined above and are permitted under current legislation.

2.4 Voluntary Contributions

The school may invite parents and carers to make voluntary contributions towards activities and resources that enhance pupils' educational experiences. Such contributions are entirely voluntary and no pupil will be excluded from participation solely because a contribution has not been made.

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2.5 School Meals

Charges will be made for school meals where pupils are not entitled to Universal Infant Free School Meals or Extended/ Targeted Free School Meals. Meal charges shall be determined by the Business Committee and benchmarked against local schools.

Where meal charges remain unpaid and no entitlement to Free School Meals exists, the school will seek advice from the Local Authority where appropriate.

3. School Meal Debt Recovery

The school expects all meal charges to be settled weekly or termly.

Where payment has not been received within two weeks, the following process will be implemented:

- a. A First Reminder Letter will be issued.
- b. A Second Reminder Letter will be issued one week later. This correspondence may suggest that parents consider providing a packed lunch for their child.
- c. Where appropriate, the school may inform relevant professionals, including the family's Social Worker and/or Education Welfare Officer.
- d. Parents may be invited to meet with representatives of the school and Governors to agree a repayment plan.
- e. Where payment remains outstanding one month after the initial reminder, advice may be sought from the Local Authority's Legal Services Department.

Should a decision be made not to pursue recovery of the debt, the Business Committee must formally authorise the debt write-off and ensure an appropriate written record is maintained.

Ravenswood School pupils maybe be offered an access to an alternative school meal because of outstanding debt.

4. Discretionary Charges and Contributions

The school may make charges or request voluntary contributions for the following activities:

School Meals

- Charge applies to pupils who are not eligible for Universal Infant Free School Meals or Extended/ Targeted Free School Meals.



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Individual Music Tuition

- Charge may apply where tuition is provided individually or in small groups and is not part of the National Curriculum.

Educational Visits

- Voluntary contributions will be requested.
- Pupils eligible for Targeted Free School Meals may receive a 50% reduction in the suggested contribution.

Residential Visits

- Charges may be made for travel, board and lodging, and entrance fees.
- Pupils eligible for Targeted Free School Meals may receive a 50% reduction.

Healthy Snacks and Drinks

- Suggested voluntary contribution of £5 per short term.

Practical Subjects

- Suggested voluntary contribution of £5 per short term for ingredients or materials where the finished product is consumed or retained by the pupil.

After-School Clubs

- Charge of £4 per hour.
- One-hour session: £4.
- One-and-a-half-hour session: £6.
- Costs may be subsidised by the Friends of Ravenswood School.

Lost or Damaged Resources

- Replacement cost may be charged for lost books, equipment or materials.

Deliberate Damage

- Parents may be charged up to 25% of the repair or replacement cost resulting from deliberate damage to school buildings, furniture, fixtures or equipment.

Staff, Governor and Visitor Access Badges

- Replacement charge of £10 for lost identification or access badges.

The Headteacher is authorised to determine the proportion of costs met from delegated school funds and non-public funds where appropriate.

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5. Voluntary Contributions Policy

The school may seek voluntary contributions towards activities including:

- Educational visits and enrichment activities.
- Materials and ingredients used in practical subjects.
- Healthy snacks and drinks that support pupils' social communication and independence skills.
- Other activities that enhance learning opportunities and pupil experiences.

All requests for voluntary contributions will:

- Make it clear that contributions are voluntary;
- Explain the purpose of the contribution;
- State that no pupil will be excluded solely because a contribution has not been made.

Where insufficient voluntary contributions are received to make an activity financially viable, the school reserves the right to cancel the activity.

Surplus Funds

Where an activity generates a surplus exceeding 5% of the total cost, the school will offer refunds to those who contributed.

Surpluses of less than 5% may be retained to offset administration and organisational costs associated with the activity.

The Governing Board acknowledges and values the financial support provided by the Friends of Ravenswood School and other charitable organisations, whose fundraising activities help reduce costs and enhance opportunities for pupils.

6. Income from Other Sources

The school may generate income through activities including, but not limited to:

- Premises lettings;
- Traded services;
- Grants and donations;
- Fundraising activities.

Such income shall be managed in accordance with the school's financial regulations and Local Authority requirements.

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7. Managing Outstanding Debts

The school expects all payments to be made within the agreed payment period and will seek to support families experiencing financial difficulty through reasonable repayment arrangements.

Debt Recovery Procedure

- a. A standard payment period of 14 days will apply unless otherwise agreed.
- b. A First Reminder Letter will be issued two weeks after the payment due date.
- c. A Second Reminder Letter will be issued one week later.
- d. If the debt remains unpaid, two formal written warnings may be issued. Records of all correspondence and communications will be retained.
- e. If no response is received, the Headteacher shall refer the matter to the Business Committee.

For debts up to £500, the Business Committee may:

- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Legal Services Department for recovery; or
- Approve the debt to be written off.

Any decision to write off a debt must be formally minuted and retained within school records for a minimum of seven years.

8. Remissions and Exceptions

Pupils eligible for Free School Meals may be asked to contribute 50% of the suggested voluntary contribution for educational visits and residential activities.

No further remissions or exceptions shall apply unless agreed by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances and reported to the Governing Board.

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Board every two years, or sooner where legislative changes require amendment.

History of document

Previous versions now deleted from system. New issue:

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Issue	Author/Owner	Date Reviewed	Approved by Governors on	Comments
1.	Business Committee	05/12/12	05/12/12	Minor changes.
2	Business Committee	Autumn 2013	3/10/13	No change
3	Business Committee	Autumn 2014	2/10/14	Minor changes
4	Business Committee	Autumn 2015	30/09/15	Minor changes
5	Business Committee	Autumn 2016	21/9/16	Minor amends and inclusion of table
6	Business Committee	Autumn 2017	25/9/17	Increase of charge for deliberate damage to property to 25%
7	FGB	Autumn 2018	5/9/18	Provide clearer information on voluntary contributions and request contributions for WEX risk assessments.
8	Business Committee	Autumn 2018	3/10/18	Clarification on charge for after school clubs and voluntary contributions for WEX
9	Business Committee	Autumn 2019	2/10/19	Updated Reform Act Date. Minor changes
10.	Business Committee	Autumn 2020	30/09/2020	
11.	Business Committee	Autumn 2021	26/01/2021	
12.	Business Committee	Autumn 2022	28/09/2022	Removed 'home-school diaries' from costs to replace.
13.	Business Committee	Autumn 2023	27.09.2023	
14.	Business Committee	Autumn 2024	02.10.2024	No changes
15.	Business Committee	Autumn 2025	1.10.2025	Removal of wex risk assessment charges
16.	Business Committee	Autumn 2026	30.09.26	Reformatted and updated re extended/ targeted FSMs