



Christ The King Federation

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Charging, Remissions and Refund Policy

FEDERATION MISSION STATEMENT

Christ The King Federation is a community called by God to work collaboratively for the common good; providing an environment that nurtures and inspires pupils to realise their potential, as we journey together.

This federation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment

Document Detail	
Category:	Finance
Authorised By:	Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee
Chair of Governors Signature:	
Issue:	2024/25 v1
This policy was ratified by the Full Governing Body on:	
Review Date:	Spring Term 2025

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1. Aims

Christ The King Federation aims to:

- Have robust, clear processes in place for charging, remissions and refunds
- 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 and the Education Act 1996, sections 449 to 462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England.

It's also based on guidance from the DfE on statutory policies for schools and academy trusts.

3. Definitions

- Charge: a fee payable for specifically defined activities
- Remission: the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable
- Refunds: to give back or pay back money

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy, but can delegate this to a Committee, an individual Governor or a Headteacher.

Responsibility for approving and monitoring the charging and remissions policy has been delegated to the Finance Committee.

4.2 Headteachers

The Headteachers are responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the charging and remissions policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

4.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently
- Notifying the Headteacher of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies

The school will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

4.4 Parents

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

5. Charging, Remissions and Refund Policy

It is the policy of the Federation to enrich the children's learning through a variety of educational visits, and visitors who share their expertise and practical, first-hand activities. Children learn best when they are able to experience something for themselves and they often remember these occasions long afterwards!

In order to facilitate these activities, it has been standard practice for parents to be asked to contribute towards any extra expense incurred. Without parental contributions, many of the valuable visits and activities would have to cease. The regulations on charging, as stated in the Education Reform Act 1996, provide

guidelines as to when and how schools may charge for school-based activities.

The purposes of these provisions are:

- to maintain the right to a free school education.
- to ensure that activities offered as part of the National Curriculum and wholly within normal school time should be available to all pupils, regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.
- to give educational authorities and schools the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours.
- to confirm that schools may invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or in support of any activity organised by the school, either in or outside school hours.

This policy clarifies how we currently implement these.

5.1 Calculating charges

When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the school and/or charges to parents

There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who can't or won't. In all matters relating to the levying of a charge or asking for a voluntary contribution, the Headteacher (on behalf of the Governing Body) will sympathetically consider the position of any child where the family is either receiving Income Support or suffering genuine financial hardship. Support for cases of hardship will come through voluntary contributions or fundraising. Pupils entitled to Pupil Premium may have some or all of the costs met by this funding stream.

6. Specific Activities During School Hours

6.1 Music Tuition

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum, which is not charged for. There is a charge for individual music tuition if this is not part of the National Curriculum e.g. piano lessons provided by a peripatetic teacher. Parents are charged directly and provided with information about music tuition at the start of each academic year.

6.2 Swimming

The Federation organises swimming lessons for children in KS2. These take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum.

As neither school has a pool of their own, arrangements are made to hire the pool at Blackwater Leisure Centre and William De Ferrers Sports Centre for St Francis and St Joseph's respectively. To meet the additional costs of hiring the pool, tuition and travel, parental contributions are required. If a parent is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution towards costs, we still allow the child to participate fully in the lessons.

We inform parents when these lessons are to take place, and we ask parents for their consent, via both Parent Pay and My Ed, for their child to take part in swimming lessons off site.

6.3 Non-Residential Visits and Visiting Experts

When organising school trips or visits which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, parents will be informed of the nature of the activity and will be invited to make a voluntary contribution towards its cost. This must be a reasonable length of time before the event allowing for it to be cancelled if insufficient voluntary contributions are received.

If a parent wishes their child to take part in a school trip or event, but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, we do allow the child to participate fully in the trip or activity; no child will be excluded on the basis of inability to pay.

Occasionally there are opportunities for children to experience live performances from theatre groups, story tellers or musicians. Sometimes the fees are paid wholly or in part by the Parent's Association and sometimes from the school budget. However, on occasions, parental contributions are needed if such activities are to go ahead.

The following is a list of additional activities organised across the Federation, which require voluntary contributions from parents. This list is not exhaustive:

- Visits to museums;
- Sporting activities which require transport expenses;
- Outdoor adventure activities;
- Visits to the theatre;
- School trips
- Musical events
- Workshops provided by outside agencies e.g. touring theatre groups, Medieval Day etc

6.4 Residential visits

The educational and social benefits of such visits are highly valued by the Federation. The procedures will be as follows:

1. Parents are invited to a meeting to discuss the plans, including the provisional cost, and will be asked whether they would like the visit to proceed.
2. A deposit to indicate positive commitment will be requested. If there are sufficient children wanting to go, the booking will be confirmed. In the event of there not being sufficient children to make the visit viable, the booking will be cancelled.
3. Parents will be told how to make payments, either in instalments or in full. In cases of particular hardship, we will discuss, in confidence, ways in which we may be able to support the family concerned.

In order that residential visits can continue, the cost to the parent will include board and lodging (for which a full charge can be levied), as well as travel, adult supervision, insurance and other incidental expenses which, according to the Act,

need to be met by a voluntary contribution. A breakdown of costs per child should be available for parents on request. Should any parents wish their child to participate, but are unable to pay the necessary contribution, the Finance committee of the Governing Body will decide whether the visit is to proceed or not. Pupils entitled to Pupil Premium may have some or all of the costs met by this funding stream.

Pupils whose parents are in receipt of support benefits are entitled to the remission of board and lodging charges.

Any residential visit organised out of school hours, will be financed on the basis of charging the full cost of the visit, covering travel, board and lodging, adult supervision, insurance and all other incidental costs. Only those prepared to accept the full cost will be entitled to participate.

7. Remissions

7.1 Parents in receipt of any of the following benefits may request assistance with the costs of activities:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of 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 - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018, your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

To request assistance, parents should contact the Headteacher.

7.2 Remission of a percentage of musical instrument tuition fees may be obtained under the Essex County Council scheme. No further remission from the school.

8. Other Charges

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.

8.1 Consumable Materials

If it becomes necessary to recoup expenses for such activities such as cooking, design technology or craft work, parents will be informed that a charge will be levied if they wish to own the end product. No child will be excluded from such activities through non-payment.

8.2 School Clubs

No charge for adult time will be levied for out of school clubs, organised and run by teaching staff. If the activity involves specialist equipment or resources, a cost to the parents may be required. Where visiting experts or sports coaches run clubs on school premises, a fee may be charged.

9. Malicious Damage

Where it can be proved that a child or group of children have caused damage to school property or resources, the school reserves the right to seek to recover costs from the parents in order to replace or repair the damaged property.

10. Refunds

Refunds are only available in the following circumstances:

If a pupil is unable to take part in an activity or attend a trip and the parent gives sufficient notice to the School, any refund of costs obtained by the School will be reimbursed. This does NOT include, in the case of a School visit, transport costs as this is purchased collectively.

In all cases of withdrawal, either voluntarily or otherwise, applications for refunds should be made in writing to the School's Finance Office. Where the original payment was made by debit/credit card on Parent Pay, the refund will be made to the same debit /credit card. Other refunds will be made by BACS and all applications for refund should include the payee details.

11. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governors.