



Valley View Charging and Remissions Policy

Review annually in October last review Oct 26

Charging and Remissions Policy

1. Purpose and legal framework

This policy explains the circumstances in which Valley View Primary may charge for school activities, request voluntary contributions or waive charges. It applies to all pupils at the school and is compliant with sections 449–462 of the Education Act 1996 and the Department for Education's guidance, *Charging for school activities*.

The governing body will ensure that education provided during school hours is free, except where legislation expressly permits a charge. No pupil will be treated less favourably because a parent or carer cannot or chooses not to make a voluntary contribution.

2. Activities for which the school will not charge

The school will not charge for:

- Admission to the school.
- Education provided during school hours (including materials, books, instruments and equipment, or statutory assessments such as SATs).
- Education outside school hours when it forms part of the National Curriculum, religious education.
- Instrumental or vocal tuition required as part of the National Curriculum, or the first access to the Key Stage 2 instrumental and vocal tuition programme.
- Transport where the local authority or governing body has a statutory duty or has arranged for the pupil to receive education.
- Education provided on a residential visit (although a charge may be made for actual board and lodging unless a parent/carers is eligible for statutory remission).
- Supply cover for staff accompanying pupils on an educational visit during school hours.

3. Charges the school may make

Subject to this policy and prior agreement from parents or carers, the school may charge for:

- Board and lodging on residential visits, limited to the actual cost and subject to remission.
- Optional extras provided outside school hours that are not part of the National Curriculum, religious education or a prescribed examination syllabus.
- Instrumental or vocal tuition provided at a parent's request, except where a statutory exemption applies.
- Materials or ingredients where a parent has indicated in advance that they wish their child to own the finished item.

- Extended services, such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs and childcare.
- Community facilities or other services where charging is permitted.

Any charge for an optional extra will be limited to the actual cost of providing that activity. It will not include an element of profit or subsidise pupils whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay. Charges will be calculated fairly across participating pupils. Participation will be optional and parental agreement will be obtained before a charge is made.

4. Voluntary contributions

The school may ask for voluntary contributions towards activities or resources that support pupils' education. Requests will state clearly that:

- There is no obligation to contribute.
- No pupil will be excluded or treated differently because their parent or carer does not contribute.
- Contributions may be requested in instalments where appropriate.
- An activity may be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received and the school cannot meet the remaining cost.

The school will not use pressure, colour-coded letters or other methods that could identify or disadvantage families who have not contributed.

5. Residential visits and remission

Where a residential visit takes place mainly during school hours or is required as part of the National Curriculum or religious education, the school will not charge for the education provided. A charge may be made for actual board and lodging costs.

From the start of the 2026/27 academic year, pupils attending eligible state-funded schools who live in households receiving Universal Credit are entitled to a free school meal, provided a claim is made and eligibility is verified. Benefits-based eligibility is recorded as either **Targeted FSM**—including Universal Credit households with annual net earned income of £7,400 or less and other qualifying groups—or **Expanded FSM**, for Universal Credit households above that threshold.

Expanded FSM provides entitlement to a free meal but does not attract Pupil Premium or create Ever 6 FSM status. Other linked entitlements, including the Holiday Activities and Food programme and the extended-rights element of home-to-school travel, continue to be based on Targeted FSM, subject to any separate local arrangements. Transitional protections ended at the end of the 2025/26 academic year. Universal Infant Free School Meals continue separately for pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, and families should still register so that eligibility for Targeted FSM and associated support can be assessed.

For residential visits, remission of board and lodging charges will be applied where the parent or carer meets the statutory remission criteria in force at the time.

Entitlement to Expanded FSM alone does not automatically qualify a family for this remission. Families who believe they may be eligible for statutory remissions should contact the school in confidence. Reasonable evidence of eligibility may be requested.

The governing body may also reduce or waive other permitted charges where there is financial hardship. Decisions will be made consistently, sensitively and within available resources.

6. Music tuition

The school may charge for individual, or group instrumental or vocal tuition provided at a parent's request. The charge will not exceed the cost of provision. No charge will be made where tuition forms part of the National Curriculum, the first access to the Key Stage 2 programme, or where another statutory exemption applies, including for a child looked after by a local authority.

7. Activities partly during school hours

The school will apply the statutory tests in the DfE guidance to decide whether an activity is treated as taking place during or outside school hours. For a non-residential activity, travel time during school hours is included and the midday break is excluded. For a residential visit, the number of school sessions is compared with the number of half-days occupied by the visit.

8. Communication, equality and complaints

Parents and carers will be told in advance whether a payment is a charge or a voluntary contribution, what it covers, the amount, payment arrangements and how to request support. Information will be accessible, and decisions will comply with equality duties and be handled confidentially.

Questions should first be raised with the headteacher. Complaints will be considered under the school's complaints procedure.

9. Responsibilities and review

The governing body approves this policy and the school's approach to charges and remissions. The headteacher is responsible for implementation, ensuring that charges are authorised, accurately calculated and clearly communicated. Appropriate financial records will be retained.

The governing body will review this policy annually, and sooner if legislation or Department for Education guidance changes.