POLICY DOCUMENT

Charging and Remissions Policy

Princess May Primary School's approach to charging and remissions — 2026–2027

Governing Body Representative (GBR)	Kristofer McGhee (Chair of Governors)
Signed by (GBR)	
Date approved	4 September 2026
Next review due by	September 2027
Related policies	Equality Policy; Complaints Policy
Aligned to	Sections 449–462 of the Education Act 1996; the DfE's departmental advice Charging for School Activities; and the DfE's free school meals eligibility criteria (updated September 2026)

1. Introduction

This document sets out the school's policy on charging and remission for school activities and school visits, in line with the Education Act 1996. The Headteacher and Governing Body recognise the value of providing a wide range of experiences to enrich and extend pupils' learning and to contribute to their personal development. The school therefore aims to promote and provide such experiences for our pupils, both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and as additional optional activities.

Activities must be accessible to all pupils regardless of family income, offered at a minimum cost to parents, pupils and the school, while recognising the wide variations in family income and while not adding additional unexpected burdens to the school budget.

The Headteacher will ensure that staff are familiar with and correctly apply this policy, and the Governing Body will review the policy annually.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on sections 449 to 462 of the Education Act 1996, which set out the law on charging for school activities, and on the Department for Education's non-statutory departmental advice, Charging for School Activities. It also reflects the DfE's current free school meals eligibility criteria, updated for September 2026.

No charges can be made for any school activity unless the Governing Body has drawn up a charging and remissions policy giving details of the optional extras or board and lodging for which a charge may be made. This policy meets that requirement and will be made available to parents on request and on the school website.

3. Definitions

Charge: a fee payable for a clearly defined activity or item.

Chargeable activity: an activity for which the school is permitted by law to make a charge, as set out in section 4 below.

Optional extra: an activity provided wholly or mainly outside school hours which is not required to fulfil statutory curriculum requirements, and for which the school may charge the full cost.

Voluntary contribution: a request for a donation towards an activity that takes place during school hours; no child may be excluded from the activity for their parent's inability or unwillingness to contribute.

Remission: the full or partial waiving of a charge for a pupil who meets the eligibility criteria set out in this policy.

4. What we can and cannot charge for

Charges can be made for:

- Any activity which the Governing Body authorises and which is chargeable under the Education Act 1996, where the activity takes place wholly or mainly outside school session time (an 'optional extra')
- Board and lodging on residential visits, except for pupils whose parents/carers are entitled to remission (see section 6)
- Music tuition, in limited circumstances (see section 7)
- Materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the parent wishes their child to own them
- Damage or breakage caused wilfully or through negligence (see section 10)
- Childcare provided before and after school, and during the holidays (see section 11)

No charge will be made for:

- Education provided during school hours, including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or equipment
- Education provided on a visit that takes place during school hours

- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education
- Entry to a prescribed public examination, or an examination re-sit, where the pupil has been prepared for it at the school
- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school, where the local authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- Supply teachers covering for staff who are absent accompanying pupils on a visit taking place during school hours
- Admission to the school

Activities partly inside and partly outside school hours

Where an activity, including any connected travelling time, takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, it is treated as taking place entirely within school hours — and so cannot be charged for — if at least 50% of the time spent on it falls within school hours. Only where less than 50% of the time falls within school hours can a charge be made, and then only if the activity is not part of the National Curriculum, a prescribed examination syllabus, or religious education.

Where a charge is made for any activity, it will not exceed the actual cost of providing it, divided equally among the participating pupils; the school will not seek to make a profit on any chargeable activity.

5. Day visits and journeys

To enrich the curriculum, e.g. educational visits and other activities such as visiting theatre groups, drama groups or storytellers which incur costs to the school: where the visit takes place wholly within normal school hours, parents will be asked to make a voluntary contribution to cover the costs of activities, transport, insurance, etc. Parents are not obliged to make a contribution, and pupils will not be excluded through inability or unwillingness to pay. However, the visit can only go ahead if there are sufficient contributions to cover the costs.

Wherever possible, teachers will aim to organise trips that are free of charge, including applying for free travel through the Transport for London School Travel Scheme.

6. Residential trips and remissions

Travel

If the residential trip is classified as being within school hours, no charge will be made for travel costs, although a voluntary contribution may be sought. Where the residential trip is classified as being outside school hours, a charge will be made for travel to cover the unit cost per pupil, other than for pupils entitled to remission.

Residential activity

The DfE's guidance states that for a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or essential to the education provided at the school, no charge may be made for either the education or the costs of travel.

However, charges will be made for board and lodging in these circumstances, except for pupils entitled to remission. The Headteacher will tell all parents of the right to claim remission if they are in receipt of a qualifying benefit. Charges may also cover entrance fees, insurance, and costs associated with staff subsistence and travel.

Who is entitled to remission?

What's changed: free school meals eligibility expanded from September 2026 to include all households receiving Universal Credit, removing the previous £7,400 household earnings threshold for eligibility. The list below has been updated to reflect this, and we have removed a reference to the 16–19 Bursary, which does not apply to primary-aged pupils.

A pupil is entitled to remission of board and lodging charges on a residential trip where their parent/carer is in receipt of one of the following:

- 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 the parent is not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income does not exceed the prescribed amount
- Working Tax Credit run-on — paid for 4 weeks after a parent stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit — from September 2026, any household in receipt of Universal Credit qualifies, regardless of earnings
- State Retirement Pension, if this is the parent's only form of income
- Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, if this is the parent's only form of income

Pupils who are eligible for free school meals under the above criteria are automatically entitled to remission; parents do not need to make a separate claim. The school will also consider, at the Headteacher's discretion, the use of Pupil Premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils' access to residential and other chargeable activities, in line with the school's Pupil Premium Strategy.

7. Music lessons

Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music lessons are an exception to this rule.

Charges will be made for teaching either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size to play a musical instrument or to sing. Charges will only be made if the teaching is not an essential part of the National Curriculum.

In cases of hardship, the Governors will consider, in their absolute discretion, the remission of fees (either in full or in part) for pupils they consider will benefit from such tuition.

No charge will be made if the music tuition is an essential part of the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil, including instrument hire and music books.

8. Concessions

The school may choose to subsidise, in full or in part, charges for certain activities and pupils, as determined by the Governing Body, advised by the Headteacher. The circumstances in which concessions are applied will be reviewed regularly.

9. Voluntary contributions

Where the school asks for voluntary contributions, we will make it clear that children of parents who choose not to contribute will not be treated differently from those who do. No pupil will be excluded from the activity if their parents do not contribute.

However, if an activity cannot go ahead without sufficient voluntary contributions, this will be explained to parents when the contribution is requested. If the activity has to be cancelled due to insufficient funds, all monies received will be returned to parents.

10. Damage to property and breakages

The school may seek to recover some or all of the costs incurred due to wilful or negligent damage or breakage of school property, or the property of a third party where the school has been charged. This will be determined by the Headteacher.

11. Childcare

The school will charge families for any childcare offered to children before and after school, and during school holidays, with the level of fees and any remissions set and reviewed regularly by the Governing

Body, and in accordance with any requirements set by the local authority where it is subsidising the provision.

12. Hire of premises

The school may hire its premises as part of its community engagement programme. A separate contract has been signed with an external company to manage the school's lettings.

13. Other charges

Optional extras: for an activity taking place outside school hours. The Headteacher will decide which activities we make a charge for. Costs may include teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra (including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide it); non-teaching staff; any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra; transport to an activity outside school hours; and materials, books, instruments or equipment where the parent wishes their child to own them.

Third party activities: arranged during school hours for which a child is released from school at the parent's request. Any charge arising may be agreed and paid by the parent directly to the third party.

Other transportation: the cost of using alternative transport between home and any other place where education is to be provided, when transport from the school is available.

Lunches: payments for school dinners are usually collected either weekly or in advance for a period of weeks (half-termly or termly).

Photocopying: any photocopying requested by parents relating to their child, under the Freedom of Information Act.

Private fees: any report or data requested on a child for the purpose of a third-party private assessment requested by a parent (e.g. a mid-year pupil progress report for solicitors, or private psychologist or solicitor reports) will be charged at an agreed rate set by the Headteacher in discussion with the Chair or Vice-Chair of Governors. This rate will include a cost for staff time to sort and collate the relevant information, as well as photocopying charges and postage.

14. Monitoring and review

This policy will be made available to parents on request and published on the school website. The Headteacher will ensure that staff are familiar with and correctly apply this policy. The Governing Body will review this policy annually, or sooner if there is a change in relevant legislation or DfE guidance.