Last reviewed: September 2026
Next Review Due: Autumn Term 2027

Cornerstone Academy Trust

Charges and Remissions Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The CEO and Board of Trustees recognise the value of providing a wide range of experiences to enrich and extend pupils' learning and to contribute to their personal development. The CEO and Board of Trustees aims to promote and provide such experiences for the pupils of the school, both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and as additional optional activities.

However, many of these activities have an associated cost and cannot be provided unless voluntary contributions are received, or parents are charged for the cost.

1.2 This policy will set out the circumstances in which charges will or will not be made for school activities and when charges may be reduced or waived in order to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to benefit from school visits, curricular and extra-curricular activities.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Under the terms of the Education Act 1996, the Board of Trustees of Cornerstone Academy Trust ('the Trust') must have a policy on charging students to participate in school activities. By law, children may not be charged for activities that take place during the school day. Parents may be asked for voluntary contributions, but if they do not pay their child cannot be prevented from participating, should the activity go ahead. In any request for voluntary payments, it must be clear from the terms in which it is made that:

- there is no obligation to make any contribution; and
- that pupils will not be treated differently according to whether their parents have made a contribution.

2.2 The Board of Trustees has to adopt a policy on charges and remissions, but these must remain within the law. These charges may be remitted for families receiving Family Credit, Income Support, an Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance or Disability Working Allowance.

3. CHARGES

3.1 Provision of Education

No charge shall be made in relation to the education of registered pupils where education is provided during school hours. Where education is provided outside of school hours, no charge shall be made provided it is required as part of the syllabus for the National Curriculum. The Trust may charge persons who are not registered pupils at the Trust for education provided or for facilities used by them at the Trust.

3.2 Musical Instrument Tuition

The Trust may charge for practical instrumental lessons held during the school day which are provided either individually or to a group of not more than three pupils, unless they are required by the syllabus or National Curriculum.

3.3 Extra-Curricular Activities

In practical extra-curricular activities (e.g., cooking), so that pupils may experience a wide range of activities and develop essential basic skills, a number of items will be made either to take home and keep or to consume on

the premises. Therefore, a letter may be sent to all parents at the beginning of the school year, and to parents of students admitted during the school year, asking them to make a voluntary contribution for materials and equipment used in this way.

3.4 Incidental Charges

No charges shall be made in respect of the supply of any materials, books, instruments, or other equipment (not including clothing) provided for the provision of education or examination.

3.5 Visits during the school day

Parents cannot be asked for a compulsory payment for any visit that is taking place during a normal 'school' day. Voluntary payments (including full staff costs) will be requested in order to make the visit viable, but if the visit proceeds, pupils wishing to go but whose parents are not prepared to pay, must be allowed to attend. They cannot be subsidised by other parents. This will probably mean that insufficient funds will be available, and the member of staff involved will seek additional funding from the Executive Headteacher. If this is not possible, the trip must be cancelled.

3.6 Swimming

The National Curriculum requires taught swimming lessons until the point a child can swim 25 metres. Schools are targeted to achieve this before the end of Year 6. Voluntary payments will be requested towards the cost of swimming lessons, as well as for those who take part in any squad sessions.

3.7 Optional extra visits out of school time

These are visits where at least half of the time for the trip is out of normal 'school' hours. Here the parents can be asked to meet the full cost of the trip. This compulsory payment cannot include:

- subsidising pupils unable to pay; and
- staff costs.

Staff costs are to be met on a voluntary basis, but the visit may not proceed unless these costs are met in full.

3.8 Residential visits including study visits abroad

Where at least half of the time away from home is not normal school time or where the work undertaken is not an integral part of the examination course, the trip can be classified as optional. As an optional trip, the cost of board and lodging for the pupil can be passed on to parents. The cost of staff accommodation, insurance and transport must be obtained by voluntary payments if the trip is to go ahead.

Where a child is in receipt of Free School Meals, a discount of up to 40% for residentials and trips will be offered.

3.9 Recovery of sums payable by parents

Any sums payable by parents - e.g., for optional extras to which they have agreed, or for board and lodging, are recoverable as a civil debt.

3.10 Breakages and fines

Parents will be charged for the cost of replacing damaged or lost equipment where appropriate, or the excess of any item covered by Trust insurance arrangements.

3.11 Transport

Where a pupil makes use of transport not provided by the Trust to travel direct from home to an activity sanctioned, though not provided, by the Trust, then parents will be expected to meet the costs of such travel.

3.12 The Board of Trustees may, from time to time, amend the categories of activity for which a charge may be made.

4. REMISSIONS

4.1 The charges in Section 3 above will, subject to proof of receipt, be remitted by 40% for families who

- Are eligible for Free School Meals;
- Are in receipt of benefits that qualify a child for Free School Meals;
- Are experiencing financial hardship;
- Are receiving support from social care services;
- Have exceptional personal or family circumstances which may impact their ability to contribute;
- Are otherwise identified by the Headteacher as requiring support to enable a pupil's participation.

4.2 The Trust is sympathetic to families who are unable to afford the cost of additional school activities and/or extra-curricular activities. When arranging a chargeable activity, the Trust will invite parents to apply in confidence for the remission of charges in part or in full. Authorisation of remission will be made by the Executive Headteacher in consultation with the Chair of Trustees.

4.3 Where a family has two or more children in the same year group (for example, twins) the Trust may apply a remission of 40% to the second (and any subsequent) child's charge when the pupils are taking part in the same activity.

4.4 The Trust will ensure that children qualifying under the remissions policy will not be publicly identified.

5. APPROVAL AND REVIEW

5.1 This Charging and Remissions Policy is subject to annual review.