Sacred Heart.
RC Primary School Westhoughton
More than a school. A community of love.
Love | Learn | Serve | Shine

Charging and Remissions Policy

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October 2026 | Maintained voluntary aided primary school | Governing Board approval: pending | Review: October 2027

Ut Diligatis Invicem — That you love one another

1. Statement of intent

Sacred Heart RC Primary School is committed to equitable access to a broad, balanced and Catholic education. No pupil will be disadvantaged in access to education which must be provided free because a parent or carer is unable or unwilling to contribute. The Governing Board adopts this combined charging and remissions policy under the Education Act 1996. Charges are made only where legally permitted, communicated in advance and supported by appropriate consent. The policy is published on the school website and available from the school office.

2. Legal framework and responsibilities

This policy reflects sections 449–462 of the Education Act 1996, section 200 of the Education Act 2002, the Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007, the Equality Act 2010, DfE Charging for School Activities (May 2018) and the DfE maintained-school online publication requirements. Eligibility for free school meals is assessed in accordance with the DfE guidance updated October 2026. The Governing Board approves, publishes and reviews this policy; the Executive Headteacher ensures lawful implementation and makes or delegates discretionary remission decisions; the School Business Manager oversees accurate charges, MCAS records, refunds and confidential applications. Staff organising activities must obtain approval before advertising a charge.

3. Education and activities that are free

No charge will be made for admission applications; education provided during school hours, including materials, books and equipment necessary for it; education outside school hours that is part of the national curriculum, religious education or a prescribed public examination syllabus for which the pupil is prepared at school; prescribed examination entry where the school has prepared the pupil; or statutory transport. No charge is made for ordinary curriculum teaching, curriculum swimming or essential religious education and prayer and liturgy. Pupils are not required to buy materials, though parents may elect to purchase items to own. Statutory provision for pupils with SEND, including reasonable adjustments and support required by an EHCP, will not be made conditional upon payment.

4. Voluntary contributions for visits and activities

The school may invite genuinely voluntary contributions towards educational visits, visitors, enrichment and other activities. Communications must explicitly state that payment is voluntary, no pupil will be excluded because their family does not contribute, and families will not be pressured or identified. The school may explain that an activity may not proceed if insufficient voluntary contributions and other funding are available; the decision to cancel applies to the activity as a whole, not individual pupils. Requests must not be presented as invoices, debts or compulsory instalments. Contributions are recorded separately from enforceable charges.

5. Optional extras and extracurricular clubs

The school may charge, with parents' agreement in advance, for optional education outside school hours that is not national curriculum, religious education or prescribed examination preparation; optional clubs and extended-day provision; permitted transport; and board and lodging on residential visits. Lunch breaks are not school hours for the statutory timing test. Permitted charges must not exceed the actual cost of the optional extra attributable to participating pupils, with allowable staffing, resources, premises and related costs apportioned fairly. Charges must not incorporate a subsidy for non-paying pupils, profit or cover for teachers absent on visits. Each chargeable offer will state the fee, what it covers, payment schedule, cancellation terms and how to request assistance. Written or electronically recorded parental agreement is required before a charge is incurred. The school may choose to provide particular clubs free or subsidised.

6. Breakfast, after-school and wraparound care

Sacred Heart's breakfast and after-school provision is optional extended-day care for which charges may be made. The school does not currently offer a free breakfast-club entitlement. Bookings and payments are managed through My Child at School (MCAS); accepted childcare vouchers and advance-payment arrangements are set out in the separate Wraparound Care Policy. That policy also governs booking changes, cancellations, collection arrangements and late collection charges, and should be read alongside this policy. Any charges will be communicated before booking and will be reasonable and lawful. Financial hardship requests are considered confidentially under section 10. Outstanding sums are addressed under the school's Debt Recovery Policy without affecting a pupil's entitlement to free statutory education.

7. Music tuition

Whole-class curriculum music, weekly singing, and first-access instrumental provision that must be free will not be charged for. Optional individual or small-group instrumental or vocal tuition requested by a parent may be charged under the 2007 Regulations, including tuition delivered by Bolton Music Service or other external providers. Charges will not exceed the permitted cost of provision and will be made clear in advance, including arrangements where families contract directly with providers. No charge will be made for tuition for looked-after children where the statutory exemption applies. Remissions for other pupils may be considered under section 11.

8. Educational visits and residentials

No charge will be made for education on a visit taking place during school hours or outside school hours where it forms part of the national curriculum, religious education or prescribed examination preparation. The school may request voluntary contributions towards eligible visit costs. For residential visits, actual board and lodging costs may be charged, but no more than actual cost; any charge for other optional elements must independently meet the statutory conditions. No charge is made for supply cover for teachers accompanying a visit. For non-residential activities spanning school and non-school hours, the 50% school-hours test applies, including travel during school hours. For residentials, the statutory school-session/half-day test is applied. Parents will receive a clear breakdown of compulsory permitted charges and voluntary requests.

9. Statutory remission of residential board and lodging

Where a residential visit provides education for which charging is prohibited, the school will remit the full cost of board and lodging for pupils whose parents satisfy the qualifying-benefit conditions prescribed under section 457 of the Education Act 1996 and applicable regulations. The prescribed categories include, subject to the current statutory conditions: 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 guarantee element of Pension Credit; qualifying Child Tax Credit; qualifying Working Tax Credit run-on; and qualifying Universal Credit. The school will check the precise statutory thresholds and eligibility rules in force at the time of the visit, including any changes associated with the September 2026 free school meals expansion. Receipt of a universal infant free school meal or an expanded free school meal does not by itself establish entitlement to this separate statutory remission. Parents will be told how to request remission when the visit is advertised, and eligibility will be checked sensitively. Statutory remission is mandatory where the conditions are met, is not dependent on the hardship budget, and is funded by the school.

10. Discretionary remissions and hardship support

In addition to statutory entitlements, the school may wholly or partly waive otherwise lawful charges for optional clubs, residential extras, music tuition, wraparound care and other chargeable activities. Decisions may take account of financial hardship, household income, benefits, care experience, exceptional circumstances and the educational or pastoral benefit to the pupil. The Executive Headteacher alone authorises discretionary full or partial remission, within the school's delegated financial authority; any decision outside that authority will be referred through the appropriate governing arrangements. Applications may be made confidentially through the school office or directly to the Executive Headteacher or Head of School. The Executive Headteacher's decision and rationale will be recorded confidentially on CPOMS, with corresponding transactions maintained in the school's financial records and access limited to authorised personnel. The Governing Board will receive anonymised reports on the number, nature and financial implications of remissions, without identifying families. Statutory remissions will always be applied where required by law; discretionary assistance depends on available resources and individual circumstances.

11. Payments, cancellation and refunds

Charges will ordinarily be collected through MCAS, with agreed alternative methods where needed for accessibility. A voluntary contribution does not become a recoverable debt. For chargeable activities, published terms will identify any genuine, non-recoverable deposit or supplier cost before payment; the school will not impose blanket non-refundable deposits regardless of circumstances. If the school cancels an activity, it will refund amounts not legitimately applied to a service already delivered, and will seek supplier refunds or insurance recoveries. If a pupil withdraws, the school will consider recoverable costs, replacement bookings, contractual terms and exceptional circumstances, including illness or hardship. Where a trip is postponed, parents will be offered clear choices consistent with the circumstances and any legal rights. Excess contributions will be handled transparently, including refunds or an expressly agreed alternative use. A previous cancellation or request for refund will not itself exclude a pupil from future activities.

12. Damage, loss and other permitted charges

The school may seek reasonable reimbursement for deliberate or negligent damage to, or loss of, school property where appropriate, taking account of age, circumstances, SEND, fairness and hardship; this is not a charge for statutory education. The school may charge for optional items that parents choose to own. Charges for copies or information requests are governed separately by applicable Freedom of Information and data protection law, including free access where required. Lettings and community use are governed by the school's separate lettings arrangements and relevant financial controls.

13. Equalities, safeguarding and complaints

The school will consider its duties under the Equality Act 2010, reasonable adjustments and the best interests of pupils. Staff will not discuss a family's payment position publicly or with pupils. Payment information will be handled under the school's data protection arrangements. Questions about a charge or remission should first be directed to the school office or Executive Headteacher; unresolved concerns may be raised under the school's published Complaints Procedure. No pupil will be penalised for a parent raising a concern.

14. Publication, monitoring and review

The Governing Board will review this policy at least annually and sooner following significant changes to law, DfE guidance or school provision. The school will publish the current policy on its School Policies webpage and ensure that letters, MCAS requests and booking terms are consistent with it. The School Business Manager will maintain an auditable record of cost calculations, consents, income, remissions and refunds. Approved by Governing Board: [insert date following approval]. Next scheduled review: October 2027.

Key statutory and operational references

- Education Act 1996, sections 449–462; Education Act 2002, section 200.
- DfE, Charging for school activities (May 2018): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charging-for-school-activities
- DfE, Free school meals guidance and implementing changes (updated 7 October 2026): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools-and-local-authorities

- National College, Charging and Remissions Policy (September 2025); How to Charge for School Clubs (June 2025).