



# **Hazelwood Schools**

## **Charging, Remission and Debt Policy**

Reviewed and Adopted: **Spring Term 2025**

Reviewed by: HT/Resources committee

Next Review: Spring Term 2028

**Review every three years**

# Hazelwood Schools Charging, Remission and Debt Policy

Hazelwood Schools aims to deliver a balanced and carefully planned curriculum, which addresses the needs of our children and changing demographic and context. 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. Without this valuable support, our Schools would find it difficult to provide these additional opportunities to enhance our children's education.

The overall aim of the Charging, Remission and Debt Policy is to provide clarity on charges for school activities while ensuring that financial constraints do not hinder any pupil's ability to participate fully in the school's offerings. This policy aligns with our school ethos of inclusivity and equity as well as providing real, relevant, immersive and purposeful opportunities for all children. It supports our commitment to nurturing responsible citizens and achieving educational excellence.

In accordance with the above, Hazelwood Schools:

- Will make school activities accessible to all pupils regardless of family income.
- Provide a process, which allows activities to take place at a minimum cost to parents, pupils and the school.
- Respond to the wide variations in family income while not adding additional burdens to the school budget.
- Refund all financial contributions should the trip / activity be cancelled.
- Ensure that charges to the parents will not exceed cost.
- Can provide information to parents, on request, as to how trips are funded.

## **Educational Visits / Activities (non-residential)**

The schools may charge for some School-Time activities by inviting parents and others, in writing, to make voluntary contributions to enable School funds to go further. Children of parents who do not contribute will not be treated differently from those who do make contributions and will not be prevented from taking part in the visit or activity. If there is a major shortfall in contributions it will be at the discretion of the Headteacher whether or not the trip/activity will take place.

Some pupils have their fees covered by Pupil Premium Funding, these include:

- Pupils who are in receipt of Free School Meals (**NOT** Universal Free School Meals);
- Pupils who have been in receipt of FSM in the last 6 years;
- Pupils who are Looked After by the Local Authority;
- Pupils who are Adopted or under a Special Guardianship.

## **Residential Visits**

Hazelwood Schools will charge for board and lodgings on residential visits. Discounts are available for parents who are eligible for Pupil Premium Funding (see above) and/or receive 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;
- Universal Credit
- Working Tax Credit

Parents should contact the Headteacher to discuss any support required.

In exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher will also consider requests for financial support from families who are in financial difficulty but do not meet the above criteria.

### **Extra-Curricular Clubs**

Outside organisations will charge for the clubs and activities they run after school. The school charges a minimal amount for the clubs that are school-led. This amount is to go towards the cost of staffing and resources. Those parents that are entitled to the Pupil Premium are entitled to one free school-led club per term. If a parent fails to make payment for clubs in a timely manner, further clubs may not be offered to those pupils.

For more information about our extra-curricular clubs, please click here to access the website page: [Hazelwood Extra-Curricular Clubs](#)

### **Wrap Around Care**

Hazelwood Schools offer wrap-around care services for all pupils in the school led by school staff. This includes a breakfast club and after school club.

For more information on our wrap around care, including cost, registration, policies and procedures, please click here to access the website page: [Hazelwood Wrap Around Provision](#).

### **Nursery**

Hazelwood Schools currently offer the 15- and 30-hours provision for nursery. Any additional hours in excess of the 15 universal hours will be charged at a termly rate set by the Local Authority. If the parents/carers qualify for the 15- or 30-hours funding, the school will apply for this on their behalf. Eligibility codes and NI numbers will be provided to the school one week before the end of the current term for funding for the following term. Any parents who do not provide this information, or if after checking with the local authority they are found to be ineligible for 30 hours funding, any additional hours which exceed the 15 will be payable by the parent.

Fees for Nursery will be payable at the start of every term and will be calculated on one whole term.

### **Childcare Vouchers and Childcare Grant Services**

Childcare vouchers and Childcare Grant funding (for full-time student parents) can be used to pay for our Wrap Around Provision, External Clubs and our Nursery provision. Any amount that is not covered by the vouchers will be payable by the parent.

### **Dinner Fees**

All applicable dinner fees will be paid in a timely manner, if not in advance of the half term. Dinner fees will be pursued as per the debt policy below. Any pupil who remains in debt may have the service suspended until the debt is cleared. School dinner fees can be increased every financial year as per the analysis of the cost per meal. The Governing Body will set this. The increase will be no more than 5% per year.

### **Music Tuition**

Parents may take up the option of their children being taught on the school premises by the Enfield Music Service. The full cost of the lessons must be paid for by the parents to the London Borough of Enfield either directly to the Music Office or via the school office. Some pupils may be entitled to free tuition, please see page one for pupil premium criteria. If your child does qualify for pupil premium, they will be expected to pay for the hire of the instrument.

### **Equipment**

Depending on the circumstances, the school will ask for payment for lost or damaged books, or wilful damage to school property.

## **Freedom of Information Act**

Under the FOIA the school is permitted to charge for any copying, postage, materials or disbursements. Hazelwood Schools will make reasonable charges in relation to these aspects and each case will be dealt with on an individual basis. The school will issue an invoice prior to information being sent. In these instances, there will be no additional charges for staff time.

## **Policy Statement on Debt Recovery**

The Governing Body has a responsibility for ensuring that appropriate procedures are in operation to enable the School to receive all income to which it is entitled. If debts are incurred, then the Schools are liable for this debt and this will mean money which should be spent on your child(ren)'s education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents. We believe that every parent will agree that this is unacceptable.

This debt recovery policy has been developed to support the Schools' Financial Regulations and is stated below.

1. **The School will actively pursue the collection of monies owed to it.**
  - Parents of the pupil(s) are liable for the charge.
2. **The School Business Manager is required to ensure that:**
  - All invoices outstanding are accurately recorded and maintained;
  - There is documentary evidence of all steps undertaken by the school to recover the debt. This includes recording the dates that invoices and statements were distributed, and / or phone calls and letters that have been sent to debtors;
  - For all outstanding debt, a final statement (stamped final notice) is issued to all persons liable for the charge. This statement must state "further action will be taken if this account remains outstanding after a period of no less than 10 days".
3. **The Governing Body must:**
  - Consider the arrangements for debt recovery;
  - Determine whether the school undertakes legal action on a case by case basis;
  - Include in the minutes of the Governing Body their approval to pursue any outstanding debt;
  - Ensure the anonymity of the families involved is preserved at all times.
4. **Pursuance of Debt:**
  - The costs incurred in pursuing the outstanding debt cannot be passed onto the debtor;
  - The debtor must be given appropriate notification and time to pay the outstanding charge;
  - The debtor must receive, as a minimum, a final statement, which states that this is a final notice and that further action will be taken;
  - If a debt is in excess of £500, the school will notify the Governing Body of any outstanding debts
5. **Waiving of Debt:**
  - The Headteacher / Governing Body can waive or reduce the debt, where it is believed the debtor is experiencing financial hardship;
  - The waiving or reduction of the charge is to be dealt with confidentiality between the debtor, Headteacher, School Business Manager and the Governing Body;

- A recommendation to write off a debt can be made when all reasonable avenues to recover the debt have been exhausted, and where it is not cost effective to pursue the debt through legal action or where it is shown that the debtor is experiencing financial hardship.
- In accordance with the LA finance manual, should a debt be in excess of £500 then this will be presented to the Governing Body. At this point, a decision will be made on pursuing the debt, or in exceptional circumstances, written off.

#### **6. School Meals / Wrap Around Care**

- School Meals / Wrap Around Care should be paid in advance of being taken;
- The Admin Officer will monitor school meals weekly and if payment falls overdue to the equivalent of two weeks of school meals, the Admin Officer will seek urgent payment;
- The Wrap Around Care Manager will monitor late payment of Wrap Around provision fees and follow up with telephone calls and emails to the parents. If parents do not respond to requests for payment, or an agreement is not reached, this will be referred to the School Business Manager, who will send a letter to request settlement;
- No debt must accrue above one month. If a family still fails to pay, the matter will be referred to the Headteacher / School Business Manager;
- Every effort must be made to recover debt through phone calls and letters, and records must be kept of phone calls and letters sent;
- Any debt, which remains outstanding, for over one month will be referred to the Governing Body who may refer to the legal team for the litigation department to pursue.

#### **7. Money unpaid through provision of services**

- Lettings – All lettings are dealt with through School Hire & Functions Ltd (Jo Bukin), who receives payments and deals with debt;
- No letting can take place without prior payment;
- The terms of settlement (30 days) will be stated on the invoice;
- Where no payment is received, a second invoice will be sent, followed by phone calls and letters;
- If no payment is forthcoming after 60 days, the Headteacher will be advised;