



Charging & Remissions Policy

Review Date: 1st February 2025
Next Review Date: September 2026

1. Statement of Intent

Community First Academy Trust is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of financial circumstances, and has established the following policy and procedures to ensure that no child is discriminated against by our offering of school trips, activities and educational extras. We believe in the highest quality of provision for our pupils and we allocate resources appropriately and within guidelines to ensure that good value for money is achieved.

In addition, we are committed to adhering to legal requirements regarding charging for school activities, and meeting all statutory guidance provided by the DfE.

We promise:

- Not to charge for education provided during school hours.
- To inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of relevant benefits of the support available to them when asking for contributions.

2. Legal Framework

Academies are required through their funding agreements to comply with the law on charging for school activities.

This policy takes account of, and is compliant with, the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Education Act 1996

- The Children Act 1989
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for School Activities'
- DfE 'Governance Handbook'
- 'Our Funding Agreement'.

The policy makes the distinction between those school activities and school visits for which we are prohibited from charging and those school activities and school visits for which it is permitted to charge.

3. Prohibition of Charges for Education

The school is prohibited from and will not charge parents in respect of the following:-

- 3.1 **Admission applications** - No charge shall be made in respect of admission to the school.
- 3.2 **Provision of Education** - All education provided during school hours is free to a pupil who is a registered pupil at the school.
- 3.3 **Educational Resources** - In accordance with the Education Reform Act of 1988 and in accordance with sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996, no charges are made for any books, materials, equipment or apparatus used by pupils during school hours. We may consider applying the charging policy, however, in line with Section 457 of the Education Act 1996 which allows charges to be made for any materials, equipment and other artefacts made in school and taken home as the parents wish their child to own them.
- 3.4 **Education provided outside of school hours** - No charge shall be made if it is part of the national curriculum, part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school; part of religious education or early years provision.
- 3.5 **Vocal or instrumental tuition** - The school cannot charge if the teaching is part of the national curriculum; where the tuition is part of the syllabus for a public examination for which the pupil is being prepared for by the school or is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme. A charge will be applied for instrumental or vocal tuition provided at the request of the pupil's parents.

4. Permitted Charges

4.1 We may charge parents for the following services:-

- **Educational Resources** - We will apply the charging policy for any materials, equipment and other artefacts made in school and taken home as the parents wish their child to own them.
- **Optional Extras** – see 4.2 below
- **Music and vocational tuition** – provided at the request of a pupil's parents.
- **Certain Early Years Provision** – the school can charge for education which is early years provision provided that the early years provision is not made in pursuance of the duty imposed by Section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006 or for early years provision for a pupil who is of compulsory school age.

- **Community Facilities** – the school can charge for the provision of facilities that can be used by the local community such as out of hours / holiday child care, summer school and sports clubs.

4.2 Optional Extras – Charges may be made for some activities that are known as “optional extras”. Optional extras include:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - ❖ part of the national curriculum;
 - ❖ part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school;
 - ❖ part of religious education.
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- Additional transportation costs, which are not incidental to the education provided to registered pupil;
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit;
- Extended day services offered to pupils, eg breakfast or after school provision.

When calculating the cost of optional extras, any charge that is raised will be payable by the parents of the pupil concerned and will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra.

4.3 Participation in any optional activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Therefore, parental agreement is a pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra.

5. Examination Fees & Resits

Charges cannot be made in respect of the entry of a registered pupil for a prescribed public examination for which the pupil has been prepared at the academy, unless the academy have paid the examination fee and the pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for that syllabus. In such circumstances the academy may recover the amount of the fee from the pupils' parent / carers.

6. Voluntary Contributions

- 6.1 We may, from time-to-time, ask for voluntary contributions towards the benefit of the school or school activities. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, we will make this clear to parents at the outset. We will also make it clear that there is no obligation for parents to make a contribution, and notify parents whether assistance is available.
- 6.2 No child will be excluded from an activity simply because their parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal opportunity to take part in the activity. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity, and the school cannot fund it via another source, the activity will be cancelled.
- 6.3 We will strive to ensure that parents do not feel pressurised into making voluntary contributions.
- 6.4 The information sent to parents will make it clear at the outset what the policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

7. Transport

We will not charge for:

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where there is a statutory obligation to provide the transport.
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the school has arranged for pupils to be educated.
- Transporting pupils to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for the examination at the school.
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

8. Education provided partly during and partly outside school hours

If 50 percent or more of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours (including time spent travelling if the travel occurs during school hours), it is deemed to take place during school hours and no charge will be made. Whatever the start and finish times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into two sessions. School hours will not include the break in the middle of the day.

If less than 50 percent of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours and we may charge for the activity; however, we will not charge if the activity is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.

Residential visits: Where any education is provided on a residential trip, if the number of school sessions covered by the visit is equal to or greater than 50 percent of the number of half days (any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day) spent on the visit, we will not charge for the activity. The school may charge for overnight board and lodging but the charge will not exceed the actual cost.

9. Damaged or lost items

The school may charge parents for the cost of replacing items broken, damaged or lost due to the negligence or poor behaviour of pupils or their parents. Parents will only be charged the replacement cost to purchase the same or equivalent item.

10. Remissions

- 10.1. There is limited funding available to enable families in financial difficulty to send their children on visits/activities. There is no guarantee that all requests can be met. Assistance will be allocated on a needs basis, and if the full cost of the trip/activity cannot be met through assistance funding and voluntary contributions, the trip/activity will be cancelled.

- 10.2. Parents in receipt of any of the following benefits may request assistance with the costs of activities:
- Income Support
 - Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
 - income related Employment and Support Allowance
 - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) did not exceed £16,190 in the previous financial year
 - The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- 10.3. To request assistance, parents should contact the school.
- 10.4. Parents/carers of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, or those experiencing financial hardship may be eligible for a longer period of instalments to enable their child to access the activity.

11. School Trip Refunds

All initial deposits for school trips will be non-refundable. Parents will be informed of this when they are provided with initial information about the trip.

If the school has to cancel a trip due to foreseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded. If a school trip is cancelled by a party other than the school due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents.

If a pupil or their parents cancel the pupil's place on a trip, it will be at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school will consider the reason for cancellation, whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip, and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

Where a pupil or their parents have previously cancelled a place on a trip and received a full refund, the school will have the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future trips and visits.

If a pupil cannot attend a trip at the last minute, e.g., due to illness, it will be at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school will consider whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

If a school trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it will be at the school's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.

If the decision is made to postpone a trip due to foreseen circumstances, it will be at the school's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.

Once trip arrangements have been booked and confirmed, if contributions exceed the total cost of the trip, a refund will be given where the excess is greater than £1 per pupil.

The school will deal with cancellations and refunds on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all pupils and their families are treated equally. If a parent wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they will be able to do so via the Complaints Procedures Policy.

12. Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

The school's Freedom of Information Policy and Freedom of Information Publication Scheme will set out where fees may be charged for the provision of information.

13. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually to take account of changes in statutory regulations and guidance.