



## Houghton Conquest Lower School Charging and Remissions Policy (September 2024 – August 2025)

**Originated by: Anna Allen**  
**Ratified by Governors: 21-10-2024**

*The policy has been established with the framework of legislation, rules and guidance laid down by the Department for Education (DfE). Any legislation and binding DfE rules within that framework will **always** take precedence over this policy. The most current guidance note from the DfE at the time of drafting this school policy is “Charging for School Activities – May 2018”.*

*Please also refer to the Houghton Conquest Lower School Lettings Policy and HCLS Policy and Procedure for Collection of Unpaid Fees*

### **1. Introduction**

The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that a wide range of additional activities, including educational visits, writers and artists in residence and clubs can make toward pupils’ personal and social development. The Governing Body aims to promote and provide for such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

### **2. School Visits**

2.1 The legislation regarding educational visits refers to ‘school hours’. ‘School hours’, in turn, refer to the school day which is split into two sessions regardless of start or finish times; a ‘half day’ means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight (00:01-12:00 or 12:01-23:59) *This definition only applies to the 190 school days as per the published term dates (exc. weekends, school/ bank holidays).*

#### 2.2 Day Visits

No charge will be levied in respect of day visits that take place mainly (over 50%) or wholly during ‘school hours’ and are an essential part of the curriculum (please also refer to section 8).

#### 2.3 Day Visits (Outside ‘School Hours’ or optional)

A charge will be levied for all non-residential activities which take place mainly (over 50%) or wholly outside ‘school hours’, or which are optional and do not constitute an essential part of the curriculum, where the child’s participation has been agreed in advance by parents. The charge will include the following costs (where appropriate): travel, entrance fees, insurance, books and equipment, and any staff (teaching or non-teaching) engaged specifically for the activity.

#### 2.4 Residential Visits

If the proportion of ‘school hours’ on the visit is less than 50% of the total time of the visit, a charge will be levied for the full cost of the visit (to include the costs outlined in 3.2). If the proportion of ‘school hours’ on the visit is more than 50% of the total time of the visit, a charge will be levied for board and lodging only (please also refer to section 8).

### 3. Optional Services

#### 3.1 Extra-Curricular Clubs

Since extra-curricular clubs are not a necessary part of the National Curriculum a charge will be levied for these activities.

These will be committed to in half term blocks (varying number of weeks) and parents are expected to make payment in full, and in advance, for these activities. The cost of these activities will be determined at the time of organisation and communicated in a clear and transparent way to parents.

Where they are provided **by outside providers** at a cost to the school, parents will be asked to cover all costs, making payment in full, and in advance, for these activities.

With all clubs, no refunds will be given if a child decides to stop attending the activity.

#### 3.2 Hot School Meals

3.2.1 Currently, all children in Foundation Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a fully- funded, lunchtime meal [Universal Infant Free School Meals]. No charge will be levied for these.

3.2.2 Parents of children in Pre-school and Year 3 & 4, whose children are eligible for free school meals, must ensure that they apply through Central Bedfordshire/s (CBC) free schools meals help desk. CBC will communicate entitlement directly to the school. If this process is not followed it may result in a parent being charged for the meals they have ordered.

3.2.3 For all other children in Year 3 & 4, hot school meals are optional and, therefore, parents will be expected to make payment in full, and in advance, for this service.

Agreed Hot School Meal Charges;

- **September 2024-January 2025 - £2.60 (child's meal)**
- **September 2024-January 2025 - £3.20 (Adult meal)**
- **January 2025-July 2025 - £2.70 (child's meal)**
- **January 2025-July 2025 - - £3.30 (Adult meal)**

#### 3.3 Out-of-hours Childcare (Home from Home Breakfast and Afterschool Clubs)

The provision of out-of-hours childcare is not a requirement and this is an additional service that the school facilitates to those parents who require it. Therefore, a charge will be levied for this service by the contracted supplier.

### 4. Music Tuition

4.1 When offered the school levies a charge in respect of individual music tuition, group music tuition and associated examination entries, if the teaching is not an essential part of the National Curriculum followed by the pupil. *The parent will be responsible for purchasing all other resources (e.g. instrument, sheet music, music stand).*

The charge will be agreed with the company offering this facility and payments will be made directly with them.

### 5. Art / Design Technology (inc. Cookery)

5.1 Where the parent has indicated in advance that they wish to retain the items produced by their child as a result of Art or Design Technology (including cookery), a charge may be levied for the cost of the materials used. The school will send home a letter as appropriate.

## **6. Swimming**

7.1 Learning to swim is a National Curriculum requirement before the end of year 6 (KS2). As the school is a lower school and only go up to year 4, swimming lessons may not be offered. . However, when we do offer this provision due to small class sizes it will be offered bi-annually. Learning to swim is a National Curriculum requirement and, therefore, no charge can be levied. However the governors have agreed to request a voluntary contribution (see section 8) to assist the school with the cost of providing these lessons. As noted in section 8, pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the invitation. This provision will be reviewed by the Headteacher on an annual basis.

The requested voluntary contribution rate will be decided by the governing body, for academic years in which the school intend to offer this provision.

## **7. Damage to Property / Loss**

8.1 A charge will be levied in respect of willful damage, neglect or loss of school property (including premises, furniture, equipment or resources), the charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide.

7.2 A charge will be levied in respect of willful damage, neglect or loss of property (including premises, furniture, equipment or resources) belonging to a third party, where the cost has been recharged to the school. The charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide.

## **8. Voluntary Contributions**

8.1 Where the school cannot levy charges, and it is not possible to fund this additional activities / equipment from within the resources ordinarily available to the school, the school may invite parents to make a contribution towards the cost of the activity/equipment. Pupils will not be treated differently according to whether their parents have made a contribution or not, in response to the invitation.

8.2 Where there are insufficient voluntary contributions to make an activity possible, then it will be cancelled.

8.3 In view of the cost of educational visits on the school budget, the Governing Body have agreed that no refunds shall be given from now on except in exceptional circumstances. Refunds given in exceptional circumstances need at least 48 hours prior to the visit taking place and the Headteacher, or the School Business Manager only, may authorise refunds.

8.4 For 2024/2025, the governors will set the viability threshold for voluntary contributions for educational visits/visitors at 75%. This is dependent on the school budget and the funding that they allocate to supplement these. This will be agreed during the Autumn Term 2024 and published on the school website.

## **9. Lettings (please also refer to the Lettings Policy)**

9.1 The school encourages links and liaison with the local community and welcomes its premises being used after the school day or at other times by groups which directly or indirectly help create a richer and more diverse environment for pupils and staff.

9.2 Many of the groups which the school would wish to use its facilities generate no income for themselves. Whilst recognising that the school has a statutory duty to ensure that it does not suffer a net loss in letting out facilities, the Governors believe that the school should seek to set any scale charges at a reasonable level that is not unduly onerous for those organizations within the community which operate on a voluntary basis.

9.3 Whilst the school encourages a wide variety of activities to take place on the premises, the Governors reserve the right to refuse a letting if the nature of the event proposed is likely to create tension in the school or local community or is in any other way seen to be divisive.

#### 9.4 Agreed Letting Charges

September 2024-August 2025 - £11.00

### 10. Pre-school

We provide sessional day care for children from the term after their 2nd birthday.

Up to 15 hours of free early years provision is available for 2yr olds where they are in receipt of certain benefits. Applications for 2yr old funding should be made to the local authority. Confirmation of eligibility for free funding will be required before commencement for 2-year-old funded places.

Houghton Conquest Pre-school supports the entitlement to free 15 hours early years provision for 3- and 4-year-olds. **Universal** free 15 hours provision is available from the term following a child's third birthday up until they reach compulsory school age, for every child, irrespective of background or family circumstances.

Up to 30 hours of **'Extended'** free early years provision is available for families of 3 year old children who fulfil the eligibility criteria, see here <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>.

Up to 15 hours of **'Expanded'** free early years provision is available for families of 2 year old children who fulfil the eligibility criteria, see here <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>.

Applications for extended or expanded funded hours are made by the parent through HMRC. An 11-digit eligibility code must be presented to the school, and validated, to claim the free hours. The code validity date must be before the first day that the term begins. Paid sessions can also be purchased, detailed in section 10.1.

Regulations prescribe that children become eligible for free early years provision on the dates set out below;

<b>Period child born</b>	<b>Date free place eligible from</b>
1st April to 31st August	1st September following child's 3rd birthday (Autumn school term)
1st September to 31st December	1st January following child's 3rd birthday (Spring school Term)
1st January to 31st March	1st April following child's 3rd birthday (Summer school Term)

The half hour lunch club is chargeable and cannot be used as a funded session.

#### 10.1 Agreed Preschool Charges for Paid Sessions

From September 2024 to August 2025

- 2yr Olds - £6.50 per hour
- 3yr Olds - £5.50 per hour
- Packed Lunch Session - £3.00
- Extended and Expanded hours Group Time Charge 30minutes - £3.00
- Late Collection Fee - £10.00
- LATE Payment Fee - £10.00

### **11. Remissions Policy**

11.1 If a parent of a child is in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Job Seekers' Allowance, support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, the guarantee element of State Pension Credit or Child Tax Credit (providing that they do not also receive Working Tax Credit and have an Annual Income, as assessed by the Inland Revenue, charges in respect of board and lodging will be remitted in full.

11.2 Parents whose family circumstances make it difficult for their children to take part in particular activities for which a charge is made are invited to apply in confidence for the remission of such charges in part or in full. Authorisation of remission will be made by the Headteacher/School Business Manager (see Appendix A).

Refer: DfE Charging for School Activities – May 2018

### **12. Collection of Unpaid Fees/Debt**

Information regarding our policy and procedure for the collection of unpaid fees can be found on our website; [hcschool.org.uk](http://hcschool.org.uk) under the 'Our School' then 'Policies' tab (School and Pre-school Policy Procedure for the collection of unpaid fees)

## Appendix A

### **Wise Pay Payment Procedure and The Payment of Goods and Services Terms and Conditions**

This Payment Procedure applies to all payments made for goods and services from Houghton Conquest Lower School and Houghton Conquest Pre-school.

Wise Pay is an online booking and payment system for school goods and services.

All parents will be allocated a Wise Pay user name and receive an invitation by email to log into Wise Pay. They will be prompted to reset their password. Parents can log into their account and see all historical orders and payments made through Wise Pay.

Card details are not visible or shared with the school at any time. Passwords are not shared with the school.

The school adds products for the parent to choose and add to their basket. Several items can be added to the basket at any one time. When the selection of products is complete one payment can be made for all of the products in one payment.

Where applicable the school will offer the Wise Pay facility for parents to book trips and events. It may also add sundries such as water bottles and library book replacement fees.

#### Monitoring of School Policy and Practice

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher, staff and Governors.

Appendix A



## Application for Funding against the School's Charging and Remissions Policy

Child's Name:	Class:	
Educational Visit to:		
On (date):	Cost for Visit:	£
I am able to pay a contribution towards the cost of the visit of:	£	
Please give details why you feel you should be granted a remission on charges levied for the above Educational Visit. All details will be kept private and confidential.		

Your application will be considered by the Headteacher/School Business Manager and may be taken to the Governing Body for their approval.

School will grant full remission of charges:

School will grant part remission of charges:

Parent contribution required:

£ \_\_\_\_\_

No remission can be granted on the information supplied:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Headteacher / SBM / Governing Body