Charging and Remissions Policy

Approved by:	Trustees	**Date: Autumn 2026**
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Our Vision and Ethos

Nishkam schools are Sikh ethos multi-faith or faith ethos schools that take a distinctive approach to many traditional faith schools. The Nishkam School's Multi-Academy Trust education model is led by virtues such as, compassion, humility, service, contentment, optimism, trust and forgiveness. Virtues are prevalent throughout our teaching and learning model and are modelled by our pupils, staff and teachers. Our pupils explore the divine context of humanity and wonder of all creation and also learn from the wisdom of all religions and in doing so explore the infinite human potential to do good unconditionally. We support all pupils and staff to develop aspects of their own religious, spiritual or human identities. In service of God, we pray for guidance in this endeavour and forgiveness for the errors we may make.

1. Introduction

The School Leader and Trust Board recognises the value of providing a wide range of experiences to enrich and extend pupils' learning and to contribute to their personal development. The School Leader and Trust Board 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.

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

2. Statement

The policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1996 (where 'parent' is referred to this will include adults with a responsibility for the pupil).

We aim:

- To make school activities accessible to all pupils regardless of family income
- To encourage and promote external activities which give added value to the curriculum
- To provide a process which allows activities to take place at a minimum cost to parents, pupils and the school
- To respond to the wide variations in family income while not adding additional unexpected burdens to the school budget

3. Legislation

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on charging for school activities and the Education Act 1996, sections 449 to 462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England. Academies are required to comply with this Act through their funding agreements.

It's also based on guidance from the DfE on
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/-governance-in-academy-trusts/statutory-policies-for-trusts

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

During School Hours

DfE guidance states that "education provided during school hours must be free. The definition of "education" includes materials, equipment and transport provided in school hours by school to carry pupils between the school and an activity." It gads that "although schools cannot charge for school time activities, they still invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions (in cash or in kind)"

- A CHARGE is defined as a fee payable for specifically defined activities.
- A REMISSION is defined as the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable.

When additional costs are incurred by Nishkam School to enhance the curriculum opportunities for the pupils, parents may be requested to make voluntary contributions. However, no pupil will be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind.

Outside School Hours

DfE guidance states that "Parents can only be charged for activities that happen outside school hours when these activities are not a necessary part of the national curriculum or religious education. No charge can be made for activities that are an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination. Charges may be made for other activities that happen outside school hours if parents agree to pay. The Education Reform Act 1988 describes activities which can be charged for as "optional extras".

4. Remissions

To ensure that access to activities reflects our intentions, NSMAT will implement the following Remissions Policy. The fundamental aim of this policy is to ensure that all pupils gain fully from everything that the school is able to offer them and is based on an understanding of the relationship between low income, entitlement and access.

This policy takes into account the very real and persistent difficulties which people on low income have in meeting the costs of educational activities for their children.

Where parents are in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Support under part IV of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999 or Child Tax Credit (provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received), the Trust Board will observe its statutory requirement to remit in full the cost of board and lodgings for any residential activity that the school organised for the pupil if the activity is deemed to take place within school hours.

There is recognition that there may be cases of family hardship which make it difficult for pupils to take part in other particular activities for which a charge is made. When arranging a chargeable activity, the Trust Board 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 School Leader.

In line with DfE guidance, we confirm that pupils up to and including the age of 18 who are eligible for free school meals will have any charge for school milk remitted.

5. Data Protection of pupils and families

Teachers will ensure that these children are not publicly identified and stigmatised. This is particularly important as the fear of stigmatisation is often a key element in the non- take up of Free School Meals.

6. Contributions

Voluntary contributions may be requested to help with providing activities even though they may be part of the normal school day or part of the National Curriculum. If voluntary contributions are requested for an activity it should be clearly understood that there is no obligation to contribute and that if the parent is unable or unwilling to pay, the child will not be excluded from the activity but that the activity might not be able to run.

7. Charges

The Trust Board reserves the right to make a charge for the activities and items detailed below:

- Trips which are not part of the school curriculum or are outside the school day (i.e. weekend residential)
- After school and pre-school clubs

- Music tuition if it is not required for the National Curriculum and is provided for an individual pupil or for groups of pupils.
- Damage to school property - the cost of replacing any item, such as a broken window or defaced, damaged or lost book, where this is a result of a pupil's behaviour.
- Visits to school by professionals e.g. Authors, storytellers, musicians, dancers, artists etc.
- Damage to school books (Reading scheme)

Individual Music Tuition

Charges may be made to parents for individual tuition in playing any musical instrument, even if such tuition takes place during school hours. Parental agreement and a signed contract will be obtained before the tuition is provided.

Ingredients or Materials for Practical Subjects

Parents are encouraged to provide ingredients, materials, etc. needed for practical subjects such as Food Technology. The Trust Board may charge for, at cost or less, or require the supply of, ingredients and materials if parents have indicated, in advance, their wish to own the finished product.

Lost School Equipment, Books

Parents will be expected to replace or pay for the cost of lost items of School property.

Breakages and Damage to School Buildings, Furniture or Property

Parents will be charged for damage caused as a result of a pupil's behaviour.

Visits during the school day

A voluntary charge will be made to cover the cost of educational visits and other activities. However, as detailed at the outset, charges cannot be enforced where this forms part of the curriculum. Where the level of non-payment renders a trip financially unviable consideration will be given to cancellation.

Residential Activity

This charge will be fully remitted (waived) for pupils whose parents/carers are in receipt of the benefits listed in the current statutory guidance for free school meals eligibility. These benefits typically include: Universal Credit (subject to income threshold), 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 guaranteed element of State Pension Credit, and Child Tax Credit (provided you're not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190). The School Leader will ensure all parents are informed of their right to claim this remission if they meet the eligibility criteria.

Public examinations

No charge shall be made in respect of the entry of a registered pupil at any Nishkam school. Charges are applied for the entry of a student for an examination for which he/she has not been prepared by the school. Re-sit examinations are not subject to charge where the pupil has been prepared by the school. Where a student has paid for an examination re-mark and the new grade exceeds the original, then a refund is made for the fee.

Early Years Transparency

In line with statutory guidance effective from April 2025, we are committed to transparent charging for our Early Education and Childcare Entitlement (EEC) provision. To ensure parents are fully informed, all invoices and receipts for children receiving funded hours will be itemised separately to show the value of the free entitlement hours, charges for additional private paid hours, food charges (e.g., lunch, snacks), non-food consumables charges (e.g., suncream, nappies), and charges for optional activities. We ensure that the 15 or 30 hours free entitlement remains accessible free of charge, with no mandatory charges for consumables or activities.

8. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Executive Team and approved by the Trust Board.