Cornwall Education Learning Trust

Charging and Remissions Policy

Cornwall Education Learning Trust Policies

Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT), Atlantic Centre, Trenance Leisure Park, Newquay, Cornwall TR7 2LZ

Our Mission

At Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT), our mission is clear: to provide every learner with an **exceptional educational experience.** One that enables them to thrive, achieve and succeed in life. We believe in a **100%** mindset, that every learner, in every classroom, in every school, deserves the very best we can offer. For us, 100% means no compromise: no learner left behind, no community overlooked, and no opportunity wasted.

Our strategic goals reflect this ambition. We are committed to empowering and growing our people, building an ambitious all-through entitlement, forging exceptional relationships with our communities, transforming provision through meaningful partnerships, and leading an ethical, effective and innovative organisation. These are not just aspirations; they are promises that shape the way we work and the culture we are building together.



Our Values

Our values are at the heart of everything we do. We believe in the power of **Collaboration**, building strong relationships and working together as one team to achieve our collective goals. We are committed to **Empowerment**, creating a culture where initiative, innovation and trust flourish, and where every individual feels valued, respected and motivated.

As a Trust, we are grounded in promoting **Leadership**, sharing a moral and ethical purpose to improve the lives of others and make a lasting difference for our learners and communities. And we embrace **Transformation**, approaching change positively so that we can all become our best selves and do our best work.

These values guide every decision we make and every action we take. They are the foundation of our Trust and the reason we can offer such exceptional opportunities for our learners and staff. If you choose to join CELT, you will be part of a values-driven organisation where people are supported to grow, contribute, and thrive.

Policy Contents

1. Policy Overview 4
1.1 Policy Purpose and Aims 4
1.2 Policy Approval and Review 4
1.3 Policy Version History 4
1.4 Scope 4
2. Activities for Which the School Cannot Charge 5
3. Activities for Which the School May Make a Charge 5
4. Voluntary Contributions 6
5. Music Tuition 6
6. Residential Visits 7
7. Charging for Materials 8
8. Remissions Policy 8
9. Communication with Parents 8
10. Monitoring and Review 9
Appendix A: Qualifying Benefits for Free School Meals (Targeted FSM) 9
Appendix B: How Charges Are Calculated 9
Appendix C: Educational Visits Charging Flowchart 12

1. Policy Overview

1.1 Policy Purpose and Aims

Introduction

This policy sets out the Trust's approach to charging for school activities and remissions, in line with **Sections 449–462 of the Education Act 1996** and the **DfE guidance "Charging for School Activities" (May 2018)**.

The board of trustees recognises that education during school hours must be free of charge and ensures that no learner is disadvantaged because of their family's financial circumstances.

Aims of the Policy

- To ensure that activities offered wholly or mainly during the school day are available to all learners regardless of ability to pay.
- To clarify the types of activity for which charges *can* and *cannot* be made.
- To outline when the school may request voluntary contributions.
- To define the remissions available for families on low incomes or in receipt of qualifying benefits.

1.2 Policy Approval and Review

Policy Version Number:	2
Approved By:	Audit and Risk Committee
Approved On (Date):	12.10.2026
Review Period:	Annually – by end of October 2027

1.3 Policy Version History

Policy Version	Date Issued	Summary of Changes
1	June 2026	First issue
2	October 2026	Updated for September 2026 FSM changes, clarifying charging, remissions, visit costs, governance requirements and statutory compliance.

1.4 Scope

This policy applies to every academy within Cornwall Education Learning Trust; each school is responsible for administering it for its own learners. This policy applies to learners of compulsory school age. It does not cover nursery or other Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision: charging for children below compulsory school age is subject to separate early years funding and charging arrangements, and is covered by the Trust's Nursery / Early Years Funded Hours and Charges Policy.

2. Activities for Which the School Cannot Charge

In line with the law and DfE guidance, the school **cannot charge** for:

2.1 Education

- Education provided during school hours (including materials, books, instruments, and equipment).
- Education provided outside school hours when it is:
    - part of the national curriculum;
    - part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination the learner is being prepared for; or
    - part of religious education.

2.2 Examinations

- Entry for a prescribed public examination if the learner has been prepared for it at school.
- Examination re-sits where the learner is being prepared for them at the school.

2.3 Music Tuition (with exceptions)

- Vocal or instrumental tuition during school hours unless provided at the request of parents.
- No charge may be made for learners who are **looked after by the local authority**.

2.4 Transport

- Transporting learners to/from school where the local authority must provide it.
- Transport to other premises where the school has arranged for education.
- Transport required to meet examination requirements.
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

2.5 Residential Visits (Educational Elements)

- Education provided on any visit during school hours.
- Education provided on visits outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, exam syllabus preparation, or religious education.
- Supply teacher cover for staff attending residential visits.

3. Activities for Which the School May Make a Charge

3.1 Optional Extras

Charges **may** be made for the following optional extras:

- Education outside school hours that is not part of the national curriculum, exam preparation or religious education.

- Examination entry fees when the learner has not been prepared for that exam at the school.
- Board and lodging on residential visits (except for learners qualifying for remissions).
- Transport that is not required for educational purposes (e.g., optional trips).
- Extended day services (e.g., breakfast club, after-school club, supervised homework sessions).

The charge for an optional extra is calculated so that it does not subsidise learners who do not pay: for example, where a learner's charge is remitted, or a learner does not take part, the school meets that shortfall itself rather than increasing the charge to other participating learners (see Appendix B). Where a trip falls partly within and partly outside school hours, see Appendix B and the flowchart in Appendix C.

4. Voluntary Contributions

The school may request **voluntary contributions** for activities during school hours, including:

- Educational visits
- School equipment
- General school funds

However:

- There is **no obligation** for parents to contribute.
- Learners will **not** be treated differently or excluded if parents do not contribute.
- Activities may be cancelled if insufficient funds are raised.
- Parents will be informed in advance if cancellation is possible.

Where a parent/carer wishes to contribute more than the actual cost of an activity — for example, to help support the participation of learners who could not otherwise attend — they may do so as a voluntary contribution under this section. Any surplus raised in this way will be used to support learners' participation and will not be used to reduce the school's own contribution to the activity.

5. Music Tuition

The school may charge for:

- Individual or group tuition in playing a musical instrument or singing, **when requested by parents**.
- These charges will not exceed the cost of the provision.

No charge will apply for:

- Tuition required as part of the national curriculum.
- Tuition provided under first access KS2 instrumental and vocal programmes.
- Any looked-after child.

6. Residential Visits

6.1 Charges Permitted

- **Board and lodging** (up to actual cost).

6.2 Remissions for Residential Visits

Parents who receive any of the qualifying benefits for **free school meals** will be exempt from paying board and lodging (see Appendix A for the list of qualifying benefits).

6.3 Deposits, Part-Payments and Cancellations

Where a place on a paid visit or activity is confirmed, an initial deposit is payable. This deposit is non-refundable, reflecting costs the school commits to providers (such as transport, accommodation or activity providers) in advance.

Withdrawal by the family

Where a parent/carer withdraws their child from a visit or activity, any payment beyond the deposit will normally be refunded on request, including by phone or in person; where a request is not made in writing, the school will make a written record of it. The school may retain any part of that payment which it has already committed to a provider and cannot recover, and will tell the parent/carer clearly what, if anything, cannot be refunded and why.

Cancellation by the school or a provider

Where the school or a provider cancels a visit or activity — for example, because of insufficient numbers, provider withdrawal, or safeguarding or health and safety concerns — all money paid, including any deposit, will be refunded in full, except for a specific cost the school has already committed to a third party and cannot recover. Where this applies, the school will explain the irrecoverable cost to parents/carers at the time of cancellation.

If the school subsequently recovers a cost from a provider, insurer or other source after retaining part of a family's payment, the school will recalculate the amount due and refund the recoverable balance promptly.

This deposit and payment arrangement does not affect a family's entitlement to remission under Section 8. Families experiencing financial hardship, including in relation to a cancelled or withdrawn-from visit, may apply for support under Section 8 regardless of the deposit arrangements set out above.

Risk assessment, consent, staffing and safeguarding arrangements for all school visits are set out separately in the Trust's "CELT Health and Safety Procedures – Educational Visits" document (currently Version 4.0, 01.03.2024), which does not itself cover deposits or refunds.

7. Charging for Materials

The school will not make a compulsory charge for materials, ingredients, books, instruments or equipment required for education provided during school hours.

For practical subjects, the school may invite parents/carers to provide ingredients or materials, or may request a voluntary contribution towards their cost. A learner will not be excluded from the lesson or treated differently because a parent/carer does not provide the requested item or contribution.

Where a parent/carer has indicated in advance that they wish the learner to own the finished product, the school may charge no more than the cost of the materials or ingredients used in producing that product.

The school may provide support under Section 8 where a family would otherwise experience financial hardship.

8. Remissions Policy

The school will remit charges for board and lodging for residential visits when parents are in receipt of one or more of the DfE-identified benefits linked to free school meals (see Appendix A).

The school may also provide further assistance, where possible, to families experiencing hardship — including families receiving Expanded Free School Meals, who do not qualify for the automatic remission in Section 6.2, using school funds or charitable subsidies where available.

Local Pupil Premium remission. Each school may also decide locally to offer full or part remission of charges to learners who are eligible for Pupil Premium, for both optional extras and educational visits. This is a local decision for the school and is met from the school's own resources, in line with its Pupil Premium strategy; it does not change the amount charged to other parents/carers (see Section 3.1 and Appendix B). Any local arrangement should be published alongside this policy on the school website.

9. Communication with Parents

The school will:

- Publish this policy on the school website.
- Explain clearly, before activities take place:
    - whether contributions are voluntary or compulsory;
    - how charges are calculated (see Appendix B);
    - eligibility for remissions;
    - the possibility of cancellation due to insufficient voluntary contributions.

10. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the board of trustees or its delegated committee, and updated in line with future DfE guidance or legislative changes.

Appendix A: Qualifying Benefits for Free School Meals (Targeted FSM)

A learner qualifies for Targeted Free School Meals, and for the remissions described in Sections 6.2 and 8 of this policy, where their parent/carer is in receipt of one or more of the following:

Qualifying Benefit	Notes / Threshold
Income Support	
Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)	
Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)	
Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999	Asylum seeker support
The guaranteed element of Pension Credit	
Child Tax Credit	Only where the family is not also entitled to Working Tax Credit, and has an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
Working Tax Credit run-on	Paid for 4 weeks after a family stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
Universal Credit (Targeted FSM)	Household net earned income of no more than £7,400 a year, assessed on up to three of the most recent Universal Credit assessment periods

Expanded Free School Meals. From September 2026, children in households receiving Universal Credit with earnings above the £7,400 threshold qualify for Expanded Free School Meals. Expanded FSM does not count towards the 'Ever 6' disadvantage cohort or attract Pupil Premium funding, and is not covered by the automatic remission in Section 6.2. Families in this position may apply for discretionary hardship support under Section 8.

This list reflects DfE criteria for the 2026/27 academic year and will be checked annually, or when DfE guidance changes, as part of the policy's annual review.

Appendix B: How Charges Are Calculated

This appendix sets out how the school works out a charge, as explained under Section 9. No charge under this policy ever includes a profit margin, a contribution to unrelated school costs, or the cost of core teaching staff, which cannot be charged for under Section 2. The initial per-learner charge is calculated using the total legally chargeable cost and the number of confirmed

participating learners at the point the charge is set. A charge will not be increased to make another parent/carer subsidise a learner whose charge is remitted or who is unable or unwilling to pay. Any resulting shortfall will be met from school funds, an available subsidy or voluntary contributions. This is separate from the voluntary contribution described in Section 4, which a parent/carer may choose to give in addition to the charge.

Charge Type	How the Charge is Calculated	What's Included
Optional extras provided wholly or mainly outside school hours, excluding curriculum, examination-syllabus and religious education provision	Total activity cost ÷ number of participating learners	Transport, entry/activity fees, any additional adult supervision required beyond normal ratios, insurance where applicable
Board and lodging (Section 6.1)	Actual accommodation and meal cost ÷ number of learners on the visit	Identifiable accommodation and meal costs only. Where a provider supplies a combined package, the school will identify and separate the board and lodging element from education and other non-chargeable elements before calculating the charge.
Music tuition (Section 5)	Cost of tutor provision ÷ number of learners receiving that tuition	Tutor fees, or the school's cost of providing the session
DT / Food Technology materials (Section 7)	Cost of ingredients/materials per learner	Ingredients or materials for the finished product the learner keeps
Extended day services (Section 3.1)	Staffing and resource cost ÷ number of learners attending	Staff time, consumables (e.g. breakfast items)

A visit or activity taking place during school hours, or forming part of the National Curriculum, a prescribed examination syllabus or religious education, will not be treated as a compulsory-charge optional extra. The school may request voluntary contributions in accordance with Section 4.

Trips that are partly within and partly outside school hours

Some visits start in the school day and finish after it, or take in a weekend. The school must decide before any charge is set whether the visit as a whole is in school time or out of school time, and then apply the rule for that category. A visit is not split into a chargeable part and a non-chargeable part. The flowchart in Appendix C summarises the steps.

Step 1: statutory requirement. If the visit is designed to fulfil a statutory requirement (for example the National Curriculum, religious education or the syllabus of a prescribed public examination), it is treated as in school time whatever time it takes place.

Step 2: non-residential visits. Add up all the time spent on the visit, including travel but not the school lunch break. If 50% or more of that time falls within the school day, the visit is in school time. If less than 50% falls within the school day, it is out of school time.

Step 3: residential visits. Split the visit into half-day sessions (morning and afternoon), including travel days. If 50% or more of the sessions are school sessions, the visit is in school time. If less than 50% are school sessions, it is out of school time.

What follows. In school time: no charge may be made for the activity or for transport; for a residential visit the actual cost of board and lodging may be charged but must be remitted in full for families receiving a qualifying benefit (Section 6.2 and Appendix A). Out of school time: the full cost of the visit may be charged, calculated as set out in this appendix. In both cases the school may request voluntary contributions under Section 4, and may offer remission under Section 8.

Examples

Non-residential, in school time: a visit leaves at 9:00am and returns at 4:30pm. The school day runs from 8:45am to 3:15pm with a 45-minute lunch break. Time on the visit excluding lunch is 6 hours 45 minutes, of which 5 hours 30 minutes is within the school day (about 81%). The visit is in school time, so no charge may be made.

Non-residential, out of school time: a visit leaves at 1:30pm and returns at 6:30pm, with no lunch break during the visit. The school day ends at 3:15pm. Time on the visit is 5 hours, of which 1 hour 45 minutes is within the school day (35%). The visit is out of school time, so the full cost may be charged.

Residential, in school time: a visit leaves at 12:00pm on Wednesday and returns at 5:00pm on Sunday. Five half-day sessions are school sessions and four are not (5 of 9, about 56%). The visit is in school time, so only board and lodging may be charged, and this must be remitted in full for families receiving a qualifying benefit.

Worked example: Year 4 trip to the National Marine Aquarium, Plymouth

Figures below are illustrative only — schools should use current supplier quotes when completing the Trust Trip Costing Form.

Coach transport (return)	£310.00
Aquarium entry (£9 × 28 learners)	£252.00
Total cost	**£562.00**
Number of participating learners	**28**
Cost per learner	**£20.07, shared equally in line with Section 3.1**

Charges should not be rounded up, as this would create a small excess across the group. A school may round down for convenience; any resulting shortfall is met in the same way as any other shortfall under this appendix.

For every paid activity, the school must use the Trust Trip Costing Form to work out the charge to parents/carers. The completed form must be reviewed by finance before any charge is communicated to parents/carers. The school will then give parents/carers a short itemised breakdown before the activity takes place (for example: "Coach: £X, Entry: £Y, ÷ 32 learners = £Z each").

Appendix C: Educational Visits Charging Flowchart

Use this flowchart with Appendix B to identify what may be charged for an educational visit, including visits that fall partly within and partly outside school hours.

