Charging and Remissions Policy

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Review Date:	Reviewed by:	Changes made:
September 2025	CFO	Reviewed
September 2026	CFO (draft – pending Trust Board approval)	Clarified music tuition, travel and residential-trip charging rules and added a Refunds section, incorporating relevant provisions from the Inclusive Schools Trust Finance Policy (V1.14, Appendix 2) following the merger to form Clarion Inclusive Trust.

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1. Admissions

There is no charge for admissions.

2. School meals

There will be no charge for children entitled to free school meals or infant free school meals, up to the value set by the government. Pupils who are not entitled to free school meals will be able to purchase food and snacks at school using an electronic means of payment decided by the Academy Trust.

3. Public examinations

There is no charge for examinations that are part of the curriculum and on the school's set examinations list, where children have been prepared for the examinations by the school. However, if the pupil fails without good reason to meet an examination requirement, the school may recover the fee incurred from that pupil's parents. This includes re-sits.

There is no charge for examinations that are not on the set list but have been arranged by the school.

There is a charge of the examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school (see Optional extras under section 5).

4. Activities that take place during school hours (this does not include the break in the middle of the school day)

There is no charge for activities during school hours with the exception of music tuition (section 8).

We may charge for:

- books and materials that the parent wishes the child to keep (the cost will be made clear to the parents before charge)
- optional extras (section 5)
- music or vocal tuition (section 8).
- extended day services offered to pupils (such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions
- examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school and the pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus

5. Activities that take place outside of school hours (non-residential)

There is no charge for activities that take place outside of school hours when they are:

- part of the set curriculum, including sports matches against other schools
- part of the syllabus for a public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the school
- part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education.

6. Optional extras

The school will charge for optional extras. Optional extras are:

- education provided outside of school time that is not:
    1. part of the National Curriculum
    2. part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
    3. part of religious education

- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school
- transport that is not taking the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority or Headteacher or Head of School has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education.
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.

6.1 The cost of optional extras

The Headteacher or Head of School will decide when it is necessary to charge for optional activities.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. In no circumstances will there be an element of subsidy required for any pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge (section 12).

When calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra nonteaching staff
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra
- the cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to pay the charges. The school will need to have the agreement of parents before organising the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

- Activities that take place partly during school hours either on or off site

Where the majority of a non-residential activity takes place during school hours the charging of the activity will be the same as is outlined in section 4.

6.2 Travelling time is included in time spent on activity.

In cases where the majority of a non-residential activity takes place outside of school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. So, no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a visit.

In this case the charging of the activity will be the same as is outlined in section 5.

- Residential activities

A residential trip is treated as taking place outside school hours if the number of school sessions missed is 50% or more of the number of half days covered by the trip; otherwise it is treated as taking place during school hours. For example, where pupils are away from noon on a Wednesday to 9pm on the following Sunday, this covers nine half days including five school sessions, so the visit is treated as taking place during school hours.

Our school will not charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours
- education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit
- travel costs where the residential activity is classed as being within school hours
- residential activities that take place during school hours.

Our school will charge for:

Board and lodging
When any visit has been organised by the school where there may be a cost for board and lodging, parents will be informed of this before the visit takes place. The charge will not exceed the actual cost. Parents and carers who receive any of the benefits listed in section 9 will not be charged for board and lodging where the residential visit is treated as taking place during school hours, or where it is part of the National Curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.

Travel
Travel charges may apply when the residential activity takes place outside of school hours. The amount charged will be calculated to cover the unit cost per pupil. These charges may not apply to those pupils entitled to remissions, but no other pupils will be charged extra to cover those costs.

No charge will be made for transporting registered pupils to or from school premises where the local authority has a statutory duty to provide transport, for transporting pupils to other premises where arrangements have been made for them to be educated, or for transport enabling a pupil to meet an examination requirement where the pupil has been prepared for that examination at the school.

Activities
Trust schools may charge for residential activities that fall outside of school hours (see section 5).

- Music tuition within school hours

Clarion Inclusive Trust follows government legislation that states that all education provided during school hours must be free; however, music lessons are an exception to this rule.

Charges will be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil(s), or the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme (Wider Opportunities).

The school may charge for teaching requested by parents and delivered by specialist tutors given to either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing. The cost of these lessons may depend on the size and duration of the class as well as the type of instrument.

Trust schools will not charge if the music tuition is part of the National Curriculum or public examination syllabus being followed by the student. This includes instruments, music books and exam fees.

7. Extended services

Clarion Inclusive Trust is dedicated to providing a well-rounded and extensive education for our students which includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities (extended services). Extended services enable our school to provide:

- high-quality learning opportunities either side of the school day
- ways of intervening early when children are at risk of poor outcomes, e.g. by providing access to study support, parenting support or to more specialist services (such as health, social care or special educational needs services)
- ways of increasing pupil engagement
- ways of improving outcomes and narrowing gaps in outcomes between different groups of pupils.

The total charge will not exceed the cost of providing the activity and no parent will be asked to subsidise others.

Where the Trust or its schools provide services that are open to the wider community or are commercial in nature, such as wraparound childcare, holiday clubs or lettings of premises, charges will be set at full cost recovery, in line with the Academy Trust Handbook. A rate of return may be applied where the service operates in a commercial environment. Public funds intended for pupils' education will not be used to subsidise commercial services, other than through approved remissions or targeted support for disadvantaged pupils.

8. Damage to property and breakages

Where school property has been wilfully or recklessly damaged by a student or parent the school may charge those responsible for some or all of the cost of repair or replacement.

Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a pupil, and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible.

Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the Headteacher or Head of School and dependent on the situation.

9. Remissions and concessions

The school will remit charges where required by law, and may remit other charges at its discretion, for parents and carers who receive any of 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
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Universal Credit, subject to the eligibility criteria in current Department for Education guidance

Children of families who receive these payments are also entitled to free school meals. Parents who are eligible for the remission of charges will be dealt with confidentially.

The Headteacher or Head of School and chair of governors will authorise the remission of charges.

Decisions on the remission of charges will be made by the Headteacher or Head of School, in line with the financial limits in the Trust's scheme of delegation. Where a remission or subsidy exceeds the Headteacher's delegated limit, it will be approved by the Chief Financial Officer or by the chair of the school's local governing body, as set out in the scheme of delegation. Schools may choose to subsidise all or part of the cost of an activity for some pupils from their own budget, provided the subsidy is affordable, recorded, and approved within the school's delegated authority

10. Voluntary contributions

Trust schools may ask for voluntary contributions for general funds and/or to fund activities that will enrich our pupils' education.

In any case where an activity cannot be afforded without voluntary funding, this will be made clear to the parents by the school. If the activity is cancelled all monies paid will be returned to parents. There is no obligation for a parent or carer to make any contribution and the school will in no way pressure parents to make a contribution.

11. Unpaid charges and debt recovery

Where a charge has been properly made under this policy and remains unpaid, the school will contact the parent or carer to remind them of the amount outstanding and to discuss any difficulty in paying, including whether remission or a payment plan is appropriate. The Trust will always pursue recovery of amounts owed to it, including overpayments and erroneous payments, in a proportionate way that takes account of the family's circumstances and the cost of recovery. A debt will only be considered for write-off after careful appraisal, including confirming that all reasonable recovery action has been taken and that there is no feasible alternative. Write-offs will be approved in line with the Trust's scheme of

delegation. In line with the Academy Trust Handbook, the Trust will obtain the Department for Education's prior approval before writing off any single debt that exceeds 1% of total annual income or £45,000, whichever is smaller, or where cumulative write-offs in a financial year would exceed the limits set out in the Handbook. A pupil will not be excluded from future activities because of a parent's or carer's unpaid debt where this would conflict with section 11.

12. Inability or unwillingness to pay

Clarion Inclusive Trust is committed to ensuring fair access and treatment of all pupils, and this means ensuring that no child is excluded from an activity because the parents or carers of that child are unwilling or unable to pay.

If there is insufficient funding for an activity, then it will be cancelled.

The identity of the child or parents of the child who did not want to make the payment, or could not make the payment, will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

13. Publication and review

This policy will be published on the Trust's website and on each school's website, in line with the Department for Education's requirements on what academies must publish online. It will be reviewed annually by the Chief Financial Officer and approved by the Trust Board, or sooner if relevant legislation, Department for Education guidance or the Academy Trust Handbook changes. Schools will make sure parents and carers are told about any charges, and their right to ask for remission, before an activity is arranged.