

Charges and Remissions

POLICY

‘Fair access, clear charges and support for families’

Protecting access to learning while managing school resources responsibly



Policy owner	Headteacher and School Business Manager
Approved by	FSP / Governing Board
Approval date	To be recorded following approval
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Next review	October 2027, or sooner following relevant changes
Policy status	Approval-ready draft Academic year 2026-27

This policy applies to school charges, voluntary contributions, remissions and associated services.

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1 Purpose, principles and responsibilities

Falconhurst School aims to ensure that cost does not prevent pupils from accessing their education. This policy sets out when a charge is permitted, when contributions are voluntary and how families can seek confidential support. It operates within sections 449–462 of the Education Act 1996, including section 457, and the Equality Act 2010.

The Governing Board approves this policy and reviews school-set charges annually. The Headteacher and School Business Manager administer charges, check their legal basis and keep records of agreed reductions or waivers. Delegated decisions must remain within the school's financial procedures.

The school will apply this policy fairly, consider individual circumstances and make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. Families will not be charged for reasonable adjustments the school is legally required to make.

2 Education provided without charge

The school will not charge for education during school hours, including the books, materials, instruments and equipment needed for that education. School hours are the sessions during which the school is in session and exclude the midday break.

Education outside school hours is also free where it forms part of the national curriculum, religious education or a prescribed examination syllabus for which the school prepares the pupil. Admission applications and entry to prescribed examinations for which the school prepares the pupil are not charged.

Transport is free where required by the charging legislation, including transport between school and an activity forming part of education for which no charge can be made. Staff will establish the legal category before requesting payment for a visit.

3 Voluntary contributions

Families may be invited to contribute towards trips, visitors and enrichment. A voluntary contribution is not a charge or a condition of participation. No pupil will be excluded or treated differently because their family cannot or chooses not to contribute. This protection does not depend on grant funding being available.

Letters will explain the activity, its cost, the voluntary nature of payment and available support. If the activity depends on sufficient contributions, this will be explained before collection. Where funding is insufficient the activity may be cancelled for everyone; contributions for a cancelled activity will be returned.

Requests will not exceed the actual cost of the activity. Instalments may be arranged. Staff will handle enquiries privately and avoid pressure on pupils or families.

4 Optional extras

A charge may be made for a genuinely optional activity outside school hours which is not part of the national curriculum, religious education or an examination syllabus for which the school prepares the pupil. Participation and payment require parental agreement in advance.

Charges for optional extras will not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity, divided appropriately between participants, and will not include a subsidy for another pupil. Where a parent asks to own materials or an item made in a practical activity, an agreed charge for the materials may be made.

For activities spanning school and non-school hours, staff will apply the statutory rules for classifying non-residential activities and residential visits before setting any charge. Merely describing an activity as optional does not make it chargeable.

5 Residential visits and what help is available

Receiving free school meals or Pupil Premium does not automatically mean that your child's whole residential visit is free. Before you book, the school will explain which costs are payable, which contributions are voluntary and what help is available.

Accommodation and meals: the school may charge the actual cost of staying overnight and eating on the visit. For residential visits covered by the statutory remission rules, families who meet the qualifying benefits criteria do not have to pay these costs. This help is required by law. Please ask the school office privately so that we can check whether you qualify.

Transport and educational activities: where the law requires these to be provided without charge, that rule applies to all pupils, regardless of free-school-meal status. We may ask for a voluntary contribution towards these costs. Your child will not be excluded from an activity funded by voluntary contributions because you cannot or choose not to contribute. If there is not enough funding, the activity may be cancelled for everyone.

Free school meals: targeted and expanded FSM are now in operation. These categories, universal infant free school meals and Pupil Premium have different eligibility rules. We check entitlement to help with accommodation and meals separately, using the current statutory rules. Receiving any one of these forms of support does not automatically make every part of a residential visit free.

Other costs and extra help: a genuinely optional visit or activity for which the law allows charging may have costs that families must agree to pay before booking. Any extra school-funded discount or support beyond a legal entitlement is considered individually under section 9 and is not guaranteed. The school will confirm any agreed help before you commit. Children who do not attend a residential visit will receive suitable education in school.

6 Breakfast Club

The existing grant for Breakfast Club ensures that any pupil may attend free of charge and for any number of sessions per week.

7 Falconhurst Nursery

Eligible funded early education hours are free. A child's agreed entitlement may be 15 or 30 hours, according to eligibility and the agreed pattern of attendance. Parents will receive a clear schedule showing funded hours and any separately agreed paid hours.

The existing £5.73 hourly rate is retained for additional private childcare beyond the child's agreed funded hours. It is not a top-up for funded provision. The previous reference to lunch staffing does not permit a charge for a lunch period delivered within funded hours or an artificial paid gap between funded sessions.

Parents may decline optional extras and access a funded place without buying additional hours. No compulsory staffing, administration, learning-resource or SEND support charge will be attached to the free entitlement. Where optional food, consumables or activities are offered, families will be given reasonable alternatives, including supplying their own suitable items or a waiver; children declining extras will continue to receive suitable EYFS provision.

Charges, available alternatives and the pattern of funded hours will be published clearly. Invoices will distinguish free entitlement hours, additional paid hours, food, non-food consumables and optional activities. Arrangements will comply with the school's Milton Keynes early years provider agreement.

8 Uniform and other services

Families may buy optional logo uniform from Maisies or suitable plain uniform from a high street store or supermarket. Branded purchases from Maisies are not compulsory. Appendix 1 reproduces the existing prices unchanged; they are supplier prices rather than a school guarantee.

The school will have regard to statutory guidance on uniform costs, support affordability and publish information on access to second-hand uniform. The national September 2026 limit on required branded items is met by the school's existing plain-uniform option.

Separate non-educational services, such as optional photocopying, may be charged at no more than the cost of provision where legally permitted. Statutory rights to free information or access will be respected. No new charge is authorised simply by describing it as miscellaneous.

9 Discretionary support and remission

Families experiencing financial difficulty may contact the Headteacher or School Business Manager privately. Support is not restricted to families receiving benefits: individual circumstances and access to the activity will be considered.

The Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher in their absence, School Business Manager, Finance Committee or Governing Board may reduce or waive a lawful charge, or agree instalments, within their delegated authority. Decisions will be recorded confidentially with the reason and funding source. Discretion cannot replace a mandatory statutory remission.

Pupil Premium eligibility may inform discretionary support and the existing Breakfast Club concession. Universal infant free school meals alone do not establish that concession. A family may nevertheless qualify for discretionary help because of hardship.

10 Activities run by external providers

An independent provider sets and collects its own agreed charges for its independent optional activities. Families will be told who provides the activity and who receives payment. Where the provider hires school premises, the Premises Hire and Lettings Policy applies.

The school cannot avoid the prohibition on charging for education by commissioning an external provider or directing it to collect a compulsory fee. School-organised curriculum activities remain subject to this policy.

11 Premises hire and lettings

All premises hire is governed by the separate Falconhurst Premises Hire and Lettings Policy 2026. That policy controls the permitted areas, approval, full direct and indirect cost recovery, fees, deposits, payment deadlines, VAT treatment, cancellation, refunds and liability. A booking exists only when the school issues written confirmation.

The existing indoor rates are £15 per hour during the school day, £30 per hour within Site Manager hours, and £35 per hour outside those hours and at weekends, for the main/sports hall or a classroom. Outdoor rates and included facilities are confirmed in writing. These references do not change the lettings tariff.

Any governing-board-approved reduced or waived hire charge must be recorded and comply with the lettings policy, including its controls on subsidy and delegated school funds. Deposits, deductions, cancellation and refunds are dealt with under that policy and the written licence; pupil remission arrangements do not automatically apply to hirers.

12 Damage, administration and review

Where wilful or malicious damage, breakage or loss occurs, the Headteacher or School Business Manager, consulting the Chair where appropriate, may request a reasonable contribution towards actual repair or replacement. Each case will be considered individually, including the pupil's needs, circumstances and family hardship. No automatic fine or charge for ordinary wear will be imposed.

Families will receive clear information before any lawful charge is incurred. Concerns may be raised with the school and, if unresolved, through its complaints procedure. This policy and school-set charges are reviewed annually and after relevant legal or guidance changes; the policy will be published on the school website.

Appendix 1 | Existing scale of charges

Academic year 2026-27 review: the monetary amounts below are carried forward unchanged from the supplied policy. Breakfast Club and nursery rates require confirmation through the annual governing-board review; this document does not record that approval as already given.

Service	Existing charge / concession
Breakfast Club	£1 per day, 8am-8.45am; free for Pupil Premium-eligible children, subject to section 6.
Additional nursery childcare	£5.73 per hour beyond agreed funded hours, subject to section 7.
Premises hire	Rates and terms under the separate Premises Hire and Lettings Policy 2026; see section 11.

Uniform prices | unchanged

Optional logo uniform from Maisies; suitable plain alternatives may be purchased elsewhere. Prices below are the supplied policy's reference prices, retained at the school's request. Maisies may vary its prices; families should check the supplier before purchasing.

Uniform item	Price
Sweatshirt	£10.99
Cardigan	£13.50-£15.99
Zippered fleece	£16.99-£22.50
Polo shirt	£7.99-£10.99
PE shorts	£2.99-£4.25
PE T-shirt	£7.50
Jogging bottoms	£7.99-£9.99
Book bag	£6.99

No uniform price has been increased or independently re-priced in this review.

Legislation, guidance and related policies

Checked on 6 October 2026. The legislation takes precedence where older departmental advice has not yet reflected later changes.

Education Act 1996, sections 449–462, including charging and remissions under section 457

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/part/VI/chapter/III>

Equality Act 2010

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

DfE: Charging for school activities (current published advice, May 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charging-for-school-activities>

DfE: Early education and childcare (effective from 1 April 2026), especially A1.31–A1.44 and A2.5

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-education-and-childcare--2>

DfE: Cost of school uniforms and current school-uniform guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-school-uniforms>

DfE: Free school meals guidance (updated 5 October 2026)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools-and-local-authorities>

DfE: School-age childcare guidance for schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-age-childcare-guidance-for-schools>

Read alongside: Falconhurst Premises Hire and Lettings Policy 2026; school financial procedures; uniform arrangements; complaints procedure; and the current Milton Keynes early years provider agreement.