

Thwaites School

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY
2026 - 2027

THWAITES SCHOOL

Charging and Remissions Policy

2026/2027

At the time of publishing the following roles were held:

Headteacher	Mark Redhead
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mark Redhead
Behaviour Lead	Mark Redhead
Designated Teacher for cared for or previously cared for children	Mark Redhead
Designated Mental Health Lead (not statutory)	Mark Redhead
Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCO)	Sarah Morton

Approved by

Name:	Mark Redhead
Position:	Headteacher
Signed:	M. Redhead
Date:	23/09/2026
Review date:	23/09/2027

Approved by

Name:	Vikki Pogrel
Position:	Finance Link Governor
Signed:	<i>V. Pogrel</i>

Review Table				
Version	Description of Change	Date	Approved By	Next Review
1.0	Full review and rewrite of the Charging and Remissions Policy to reflect current school provision, fees, voluntary contributions, remissions and relevant legal requirements.	23/09/2026	Finance Link Governor	23/09/2027

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where legislation, guidance, school provision or charging arrangements change.

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Admissions	4
3. Activities Wholly During the School Day	4
4. Activities Wholly Outside the School Day	4
5. Non-Residential Activities Partly During and Partly Outside the School Day	5
6. Residential Activities	5
7. Optional Extras	6
8. Music Tuition	6
9. School Meals	7
9.1 Booking and Payment	7
9.2 Free School Meals	7
9.3 Unpaid Meals and Financial Difficulties	7
10. School Milk Scheme	8
11. Before- and After-School Care	8
11.1 Breakfast Club	8
11.2 After-School Care	8
11.3 Booking, Charges and Support	8
12. Nursery Provision	9
12.1 Sessions and Charges	9
12.2 Funded Places	9
12.3 Meals and Other Costs	9
12.4 Information and Support	10
13. Minibus	10
14. Damage to Property and Breakages	10
15. Calculating Charges and Remissions	11
15.1 Remissions and Financial Support	11

16. Debt Recovery	11
17. Monitoring and Evaluation	12
18. References and Related Policies	12

1. Introduction

Thwaites School recognises the valuable contribution that visits, clubs, residential experiences and other activities make to pupils' education and personal development. We aim to ensure that family finances do not prevent pupils from benefiting from the education and opportunities we provide.

This policy explains when charges may be made, when contributions are voluntary and how the school supports families with costs. It reflects the charging provisions of the Education Act 1996 and relevant Department for Education guidance.

For charging purposes, the school day runs from **8:45am to 3:30pm**, excluding the lunchtime period of **12 noon to 1:00pm**. Supervision on the playground from **8:30am to 8:45am is free**. Nursery sessions and wraparound childcare arrangements are explained separately in this policy.

Throughout this policy:

- **A charge** is a payment required for a service or activity for which charging is legally permitted, such as paid childcare or a school meal where no free entitlement applies.
- **A voluntary contribution** is an optional payment towards an activity. There is no obligation to contribute, and no pupil will be excluded or treated differently because their parent or carer cannot or chooses not to pay. An activity may be cancelled for everyone if insufficient funding is available.
- **Remission** means reducing or waiving a charge. The school will provide any remission required by law and may offer additional support according to individual circumstances and available resources.
- **Parents and carers** means those responsible for the child's care with whom the school makes the relevant arrangements.

At Thwaites, contributions requested towards school visits, swimming transport, outdoor adventurous activities and residential visits are voluntary. For residential visits, this includes contributions towards accommodation and meals.

We communicate costs and payment arrangements clearly and give families as much notice as reasonably possible. We offer payment plans and encourage parents and carers experiencing financial difficulties to speak confidentially to the Headteacher or school office.

Where appropriate and permitted by the conditions of the funding, the school uses pupil premium, PE and sport premium, fundraising or other available resources to help meet activity costs. Places will not be allocated on a "first pay, first served" basis.

This policy covers services and activities provided by the school, including its nursery, breakfast club, after-school club and minibus. Charges made directly by independent providers are governed by their own arrangements, which will be made clear to families where applicable.

2. Admissions

No charge will be made for any part of the school admissions process.

Access to a funded nursery place will not depend on parents or carers purchasing additional hours, meals, childcare or other paid services.

3. Activities Wholly During the School Day

No charge will be made for education provided during school hours, including the materials, books, equipment and transport required for that education.

At Thwaites School, this includes school visits, visiting activities, swimming lessons and outdoor adventurous activities delivered during the school day. Using an external provider to deliver an activity does not, in itself, make it chargeable.

We may ask parents and carers for voluntary contributions towards the cost of these activities, including transport. Requests will make clear that:

- Contributions are entirely voluntary.
- No pupil will be excluded or treated differently because their parent or carer cannot or chooses not to contribute.
- The activity may be cancelled for everyone if insufficient funding is available.

A charge may be made for ingredients or materials where a parent or carer has agreed in advance that they wish to own the finished product. Materials required for pupils to participate in the lesson will otherwise be provided without charge.

No charge will be made for entry to a prescribed public examination where the school has prepared the pupil for it.

Separate arrangements for school meals, milk and nursery provision are explained in the relevant sections of this policy.

4. Activities Wholly Outside the School Day

No charge will be made for education provided outside school hours where it forms part of:

- The National Curriculum.
- Religious education.
- A syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the school is preparing the pupil.

We may request voluntary contributions towards these activities. No pupil will be excluded or treated differently because their parent or carer cannot or chooses not to contribute. An activity may be cancelled for everyone if insufficient funding is available.



Activities outside school hours that do not fall within these categories may be provided as chargeable optional extras. Any charge and the arrangements for participation will be explained in advance, and parental agreement will be obtained. Further details are set out in Section 7.

At Thwaites School, contributions towards school visits and outdoor adventurous activities remain voluntary, including where an activity extends beyond school hours.

Breakfast club and after-school childcare are separate chargeable services. Their hours, fees and arrangements are set out in the section on before- and after-school care.

5. Non-Residential Activities Partly During and Partly Outside the School Day

Where **50% or more** of the time spent on a non-residential activity falls within school hours, the activity is treated as taking place during school hours and no charge will be made for the education provided.

Where **more than 50%** falls outside school hours, the activity is treated as taking place outside school hours. It may be chargeable as an optional extra unless it forms part of the National Curriculum, religious education or a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the school is preparing the pupil.

Travel time is included in this calculation only where it falls within school hours. The school hours used for this purpose are set out in Section 1 and exclude the lunchtime break.

At Thwaites School, contributions requested towards school visits, swimming transport and outdoor adventurous activities remain voluntary, including where an activity extends beyond school hours. No pupil will be excluded or treated differently because their parent or carer cannot or chooses not to contribute. An activity may be cancelled for everyone if insufficient funding is available.

6. Residential Activities

As part of its four-year KS2 curriculum, Thwaites School offers an outdoor adventurous residential and a city residential, each lasting two nights and three days.

The school may request voluntary contributions towards these visits, including travel, activities, accommodation and meals. **The whole contribution is voluntary.** No pupil will be excluded or treated differently because their parent or carer cannot or chooses not to contribute.

Parents and carers will receive information about the visit, the suggested contribution and payment arrangements in advance. Payment by instalments will be available, and families are encouraged to discuss any financial concerns confidentially with the Headteacher or school office.

The school will consider available funding and fundraising to support residential experiences. If insufficient funding is available, a visit may be changed or cancelled for everyone.

Although the law permits charges for board and lodging on some residential visits, subject to statutory remissions, **Thwaites School does not currently make compulsory charges for any part of these residentials.** Families therefore do not need to demonstrate entitlement to benefits to decline a voluntary contribution.

7. Optional Extras

Optional extras are activities or services for which the law permits a charge. These may include activities provided outside school hours that are not part of the National Curriculum, religious education or a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the school is preparing the pupil.

Thwaites School does not currently offer separately charged activity clubs. Its school visits and residential contributions remain voluntary, as explained in the preceding sections. Charges for meals, nursery sessions and wraparound childcare are set out separately in this policy.

If the school introduces a chargeable optional activity, parents and carers will receive details of its content, cost and any available financial support before deciding whether their child will participate. Participation will be by parental choice and agreement to the charge.

Charges will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional activity. Any charge per pupil will be calculated from the costs attributable to participating pupils and will not include an amount to subsidise other pupils whose charges are reduced or waived.

Costs may include relevant materials, equipment, transport, admission fees and staffing costs where charging for those costs is legally permitted. The ordinary cost of teaching staff will not be added unless a specific legal exception applies.

Parents and carers experiencing financial difficulties may discuss support confidentially with the Headteacher. Any discretionary reduction or waiver will be funded separately and will not increase the charge to other families.

8. Music Tuition

Thwaites School does not currently offer separately charged instrumental or vocal tuition. Music taught as part of the school curriculum is provided free of charge.

If additional instrumental or vocal tuition is introduced, charges may be made where the tuition is provided at a parent's or carer's request and charging is legally permitted. Charges will not exceed the cost of providing the tuition.

No charge will be made where the tuition:

- Forms part of the National Curriculum.
- Is provided as part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the school is preparing the pupil.
- Is provided as part of the first-access programme to instrumental and vocal tuition at Key Stage 2.
- Is provided to a pupil who is looked after by a local authority.

Details of any proposed charges and available financial support will be shared with parents and carers before they agree to the tuition.

9. School Meals

School meals cost **£2.70 per day**, or **£1.70 for nursery children**, unless a free school meal entitlement applies. Nursery lunchtime supervision is free.

9.1 Booking and Payment

Meals are booked and paid for through **SchoolMoney**. To help the kitchen plan, parents and carers are asked, wherever possible, to book meals for the week before the start of school on Monday.

There is no requirement to give a week's notice to start or stop having school meals. Parents and carers should contact the school office if they need help with booking, payment or changes to arrangements.

Payment for chargeable meals should be made in advance. Families experiencing financial difficulties are encouraged to contact the Headteacher or school office confidentially so that support or a payment plan can be discussed.

9.2 Free School Meals

All pupils in **Reception, Year 1 and Year 2** are entitled to universal infant free school meals.

From the start of the **2026/27 academic year**, pupils from households receiving Universal Credit are eligible for free school meals regardless of household earnings. Other qualifying circumstances also apply. The school office can help families access the current eligibility criteria and apply through Cumberland Council.

Nursery children may qualify where they meet the eligibility criteria and receive education both before and after the lunchtime period.

Parents and carers are encouraged to complete eligibility checks even where their child already receives universal infant free school meals, as this may identify entitlement to additional funding for the school.

9.3 Unpaid Meals and Financial Difficulties

If a child arrives without a booked meal or packed lunch, staff will contact their parent or carer to establish the arrangements. The school will ensure that the child has an appropriate lunch while the matter is resolved.

Outstanding payments will be discussed directly and sensitively with parents or carers. Children will not be embarrassed, singled out or asked to recover money owed.

The school will seek to prevent debts accumulating through reminders, discussion of free school meal eligibility and appropriate payment arrangements. Any further recovery action will follow the debt recovery section of this policy.

Financial hardship or meal debt alone will not be treated as evidence of neglect. Any separate concern about a child's welfare will be considered under the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

10. School Milk Scheme

Thwaites School provides milk through **Cool Milk**. Milk is available daily, with free provision for eligible pupils and paid provision for others who choose to receive it.

Children under five receive a daily portion of milk free of charge through the Nursery Milk Scheme. From their fifth birthday, a charge applies unless they qualify for free school milk.

The school will provide milk free of charge where a statutory entitlement applies. Parents and carers can contact the school office to check eligibility and arrange provision.

Universal infant free school meal entitlement does not, by itself, provide entitlement to free milk taken separately from lunch. Where milk forms part of a free school lunch, there is no separate charge for it.

Parents and carers can obtain current prices and registration information from **Cool Milk** or the school office. Any charge will be explained before paid provision begins.

Parents and carers should inform the school of any allergy, intolerance or other dietary requirement so that suitable arrangements can be discussed.

11. Before- and After-School Care

Thwaites School runs its own breakfast club and after-school childcare. These are optional services for which charges apply.

11.1 Breakfast Club

Breakfast club operates from **8:00am to 8:30am**. Charges per child, per day are:

- **£3 without breakfast.**
- **£4 including breakfast.**

From **8:30am**, children are supervised on the playground free of charge until the school day begins at **8:45am**.

11.2 After-School Care

After-school childcare operates from **3:30pm to 5:00pm**. Charges per child, per session are:

- **3:30pm–4:30pm: £5.**
- **3:30pm–5:00pm: £7.50.**

11.3 Booking, Charges and Support

Booking and payment arrangements are available from the school office. Parents and carers will be informed of any changes to fees before they take effect.

The governing body will review charges regularly, taking account of operating costs and affordability.

Families experiencing financial difficulties are encouraged to contact the Headteacher confidentially to discuss payment arrangements or any available discretionary support. Entitlement to free school meals does not automatically make these optional childcare services free.

12. Nursery Provision

12.1 Sessions and Charges

Thwaites School offers the following nursery sessions:

Session	Times	Charge where the session is not covered by funded hours
Morning	8:45am–11:45am: three hours	£10
Afternoon	11:45am–3:30pm, excluding the supervised break from 12:15pm–1:00pm: three hours of nursery provision	£10

Supervision during the **12:15pm–1:00pm break is free** and is not deducted from the child's funded hours.

12.2 Funded Places

Eligible children can access funded early education hours through the school's arrangements with Cumberland Council. The school office will explain eligibility, available sessions and the information required to claim funding.

Funded hours are provided free of charge. The school will not charge a top-up fee to cover any difference between the funding received and its normal session price.

Access to funded provision will not depend on purchasing additional sessions, meals, childcare or other extras. Children will receive the same quality of provision regardless of whether their family purchases additional services.

Any charge for provision outside a child's funded entitlement will be explained and agreed with parents or carers in advance. Invoices will clearly distinguish funded hours, charged at £0, from paid provision and any separately agreed extras.

12.3 Meals and Other Costs

Nursery meals cost **£1.70 each**, unless the child qualifies for a free meal. Parents and carers may provide a suitable packed lunch instead. Choosing not to purchase a school meal will not affect access to funded hours or free lunchtime supervision.

Free school meal eligibility and payment arrangements are explained in Section 9.

Any optional additional costs will be explained in advance. Parents and carers will be able to decline chargeable extras without losing their child's funded place, with a suitable alternative agreed where needed.

12.4 Information and Support

Current session times, fees and any optional additional charges will be published on the school website and available from the school office.

Parents and carers experiencing financial difficulties are encouraged to speak confidentially with the Headteacher about payment arrangements or available support.

13. Minibus

Thwaites School operates its own minibus. **The school-run minibus service is currently provided free of charge.** Information about routes, availability and arrangements for using the service is available from the school office.

The minibus may also be used for school visits, swimming and other educational activities. The school may request a voluntary contribution towards travel costs, but no pupil will be excluded or treated differently because their parent or carer cannot or chooses not to contribute.

Any proposed change to charging arrangements will be considered against the relevant legal requirements and communicated to parents and carers before it takes effect.

14. Damage to Property and Breakages

Where school property, or property for which the school is responsible, is deliberately damaged or damaged through culpably negligent behaviour, the school may ask parents or carers to contribute towards the reasonable cost of repair or replacement.

The Headteacher will consider each case individually, including the circumstances, the pupil's age and understanding, any relevant special educational needs or disability, and the family's circumstances. Ordinary wear and tear and genuine accidents will not normally result in a request for payment.

Any amount requested will reflect the actual loss or reasonable repair cost and will not be used as a financial penalty. Parents and carers will be told what happened, how the amount was calculated and how to raise any concerns.

Parents and carers are not automatically legally liable for damage caused by their child. A request for payment will not be treated as an enforceable debt without an appropriate legal basis.

Behaviour will be addressed separately under the Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures. A pupil will not be denied education because their parent or carer has not paid towards damage.

15. Calculating Charges and Remissions

The school will apply the principles of best value when arranging activities and services. Charges will be clear, lawful and explained to parents and carers before they agree to purchase a service or their child participates in a chargeable activity.

For optional educational activities, charges will not exceed the actual cost of provision, divided appropriately between participating pupils. Only costs that may lawfully be charged will be included. No additional amount will be charged to one family to cover another pupil's reduced or waived charge.

Fees for meals, nursery sessions and wraparound childcare are set out in the relevant sections of this policy. Any changes will be communicated before they take effect.

15.1 Remissions and Financial Support

The school will provide all reductions or waivers required by law. These are not dependent on the availability of discretionary funding.

Additional help may be offered according to a family's circumstances and the resources available. Parents and carers should contact the Headteacher confidentially to discuss reduced charges, payment plans or other support. Decisions will be made fairly within the school's agreed financial arrangements.

Support may be funded through fundraising, the school budget or other appropriate funding. Pupil premium and PE and sport premium will only be used where the expenditure meets the purposes and conditions of those funding streams.

At Thwaites, contributions towards school visits, swimming transport, outdoor adventurous activities and residential are voluntary. Families do not need to apply for remission or demonstrate financial hardship to decline a voluntary contribution.

A voluntary contribution that has not been paid is **not a debt** and will not be pursued through debt recovery procedures.

16. Debt Recovery

The school will manage unpaid charges fairly and sensitively while protecting public funds. This section applies only to charges that are properly due for agreed services. **Unpaid voluntary contributions are not debts.**

Where a payment is overdue, the school will:

- Check that the charge and account balance are correct, including any entitlement to free provision or agreed remission.
- Contact the parent or carer privately, explaining the amount owed and requesting payment.
- Offer an opportunity to discuss financial difficulties, a manageable payment plan or available support.
- Confirm any agreed payment arrangements and review progress.

If payment remains outstanding and no arrangement has been agreed, the school will issue a written reminder setting out the balance, a reasonable payment deadline and the proposed next steps.

Further recovery action will be proportionate to the amount and circumstances of the debt and will follow Cumberland Council's financial requirements and the school's delegated authority. Appropriate advice will be obtained before legal recovery action is considered.

Any decision to suspend future access to an optional paid service will be communicated in advance, taking account of the child's welfare, individual circumstances and the applicable terms. It will not remove access to statutory education, funded nursery entitlements or provision that must be supplied free of charge. School meal difficulties will be managed as set out in Section 9.

Children will not be asked to recover money, embarrassed or penalised for their parent's or carer's debt. Account information will be handled confidentially.

Debts will only be written off with the appropriate authorisation under the applicable financial rules. A record of recovery action, payment arrangements and any authorised write-off will be retained in accordance with the school's records retention arrangements.

17. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher and governing body will monitor the implementation of this policy to ensure that charges are lawful, clearly communicated and applied fairly.

Monitoring will consider:

- Whether charges reflect the agreed fees and applicable limits.
- Whether families understand which contributions are voluntary.
- Whether financial circumstances are creating barriers to participation.
- The support and remissions provided, while protecting families' confidentiality.
- Outstanding debts, payment arrangements and any authorised write-offs.
- Feedback or complaints from parents and carers.

The policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where legislation, guidance, school provision or charging arrangements change. The governing body will approve the policy and changes to the school's fees through its agreed decision-making arrangements.

The current policy will be published on the school website, with paper copies available free of charge from the school office. Parents and carers will be informed of changes affecting charges before they take effect.

18. References and Related Policies

This policy is informed by the following legislation and guidance, as amended or updated:

- Education Act 1996, particularly the provisions on charging for school activities and school meals.
- Education (Charges for Music Tuition) (England) Regulations 2007.
- Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014.



- Equality Act 2010.
- Department for Education guidance on charging for school activities.
- Department for Education guidance on free school meals and universal infant free school meals.
- Department for Education statutory guidance on early education and childcare.
- Applicable Cumberland Council funding agreements and financial requirements.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Equality Policy and Objectives.
- SEN and Disability Policy.
- Accessibility Plan.
- Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures.
- Complaints Procedure.
- Relevant financial procedures, educational visit arrangements and terms for nursery and wraparound childcare.

Concerns about charges, voluntary contributions or financial support should be raised with the Headteacher. Formal complaints will be handled through the school's Complaints Procedure.