Diocese of Chelmsford
Vine Schools Trust

Charging Refunds and Remissions Policy 2025-26

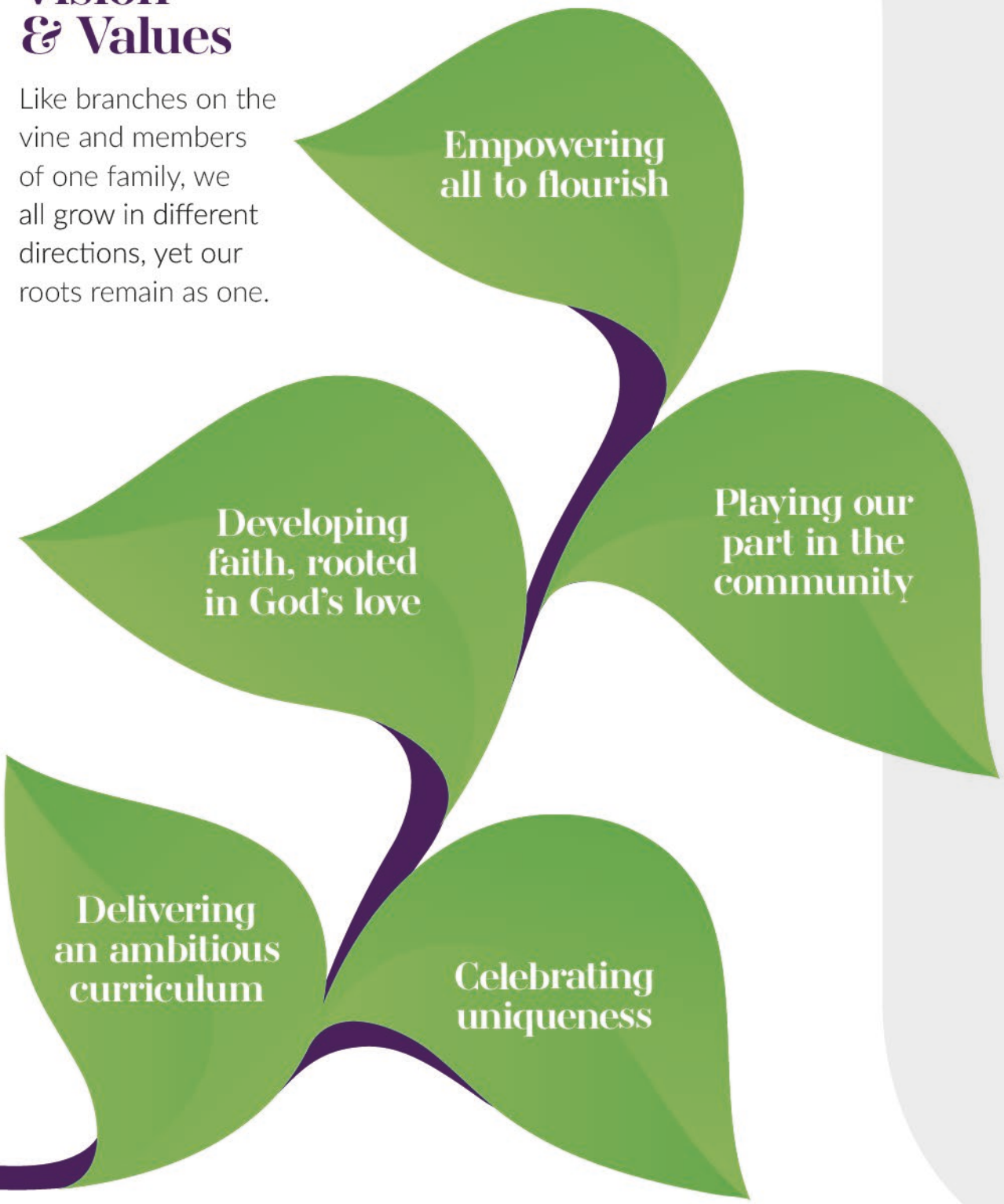
This is a mandatory policy for all Vine schools that has been noted and implemented with no amendments by this school.	
Policy Reference:	F011
Approved by Vine Schools Trust on:	Summer Term 2025
Adopted by this school on:	Summer Term 2025
Next review:	Summer Term 2026

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit

JOHN 15:5

Vision & Values

Like branches on the vine and members of one family, we all grow in different directions, yet our roots remain as one.



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2.0 CHARGING POLICY

2.1 School Meals

The charge for a school meal will be set annually following consideration of the Catering Business Plan as part of the annual budget setting process.

All meals taken by pupils who are not eligible for free school meals will be chargeable, parents/carers are expected to make prompt payment. Where payments are not made in advance of the meal being taken, parents/carers will be reminded of their debt by email/ letter.

There is no charge for pupils who are entitled to free school meals or universal infant free school meals.

2.2 Educational visits:

VST schools:

will seek voluntary contributions from parents/carers where applicable

will not exclude a child from participating in an activity during the school day on financial grounds

Where a significant percentage of parents/carers decline to make the requested voluntary contribution (their identity will remain confidential), or the contributions shortfall is significant, then the visit or activity will not take place.

2.3 Residential activities:

The costs of residential activities can be high and such activities may only continue to be available if sufficient costs are recovered.

Charges that apply:

- travel costs – transport to and from the residential activity board and lodging
- full cost of board and lodging on residential trips whether or not it takes place during school hours
- costs of supply staff engaged to cover the staff accompanying pupils on a residential trip where the trip takes place during term time

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- full cost recovery for residential activities that take place outside of school hours The VST school will endeavour to subsidise the cost of any residential trip for children of families in receipt of the Pupil Premium Grant. The amount subsidised is dependent on context of each school and will be considered by each head teacher.

No charge applies:

- where parents / carers in receipt of certain benefits may claim exemption in accordance with the Remissions guidance below
- for education costs incurred on any visit during school hours
- for education costs incurred on any visit outside school hours if it is part of the school's curriculum

2.4 Music Tuition

Instrumental tuition or singing lessons do not form part of the curriculum but may be an additional activity arranged by the VST school and delivered by specialist tutors either on an individual basis or as part of a group, following parental request. The cost of such lessons is dependent on the charges applied by the tutors, the size of the group, the duration and frequency of each lesson.

VST schools operate on full cost recovery basis. However, in order to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils, charges for music tuition within school hours for pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium Grant will be considered for remission in accordance with this policy (see remissions section).

3.0 Extra-curricular activities:

3.1 Curriculum related clubs

Where these activities run outside of normal school hours, (i.e. sports clubs, homework club, art club) a charge may be made to cover costs of equipment, teaching or non-teaching staff, specialist staff /coaches, transport to events such as sports fixtures, or materials used. The total charge will not exceed the actual costs incurred in the provision of the activity and will be set by the Headteacher.

Parents/carers will be advised of any such costs before their child is allowed to undertake any such activity and participation will be on the basis of the parent's willingness to pay the charges.

Parents/carers are able to claim remission from such charges in accordance with the guidance below.

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3.2 Breakfast Club

Charges apply in accordance with the rules laid down in the school's separate Breakfast Club agreement, which should be signed by parents/carers before their child is left in the care of breakfast club staff

3.3 After School Club

Charges apply in accordance with the rules laid down in the school's separate After School Club agreement which should be signed by parents/carers before their child is left in the care of after school club staff

4.0 Other areas Charges may apply for:

- books and materials belonging to the school that a pupil has lost
- books and materials that a parent/carer wishes a pupil to keep after having been advised of the cost
- activities taking place outside school hours that are not part of the school's curriculum
- property damage – each individual case to be decided upon by the Headteacher
- full repair costs incurred as a result of wilful or reckless damage to school property by a pupil or parent/carer
- full recovery of costs incurred by the school as a result of damage caused by a pupil to third party property

No Charge applies;

- for activities taking place during school hours except any of those listed above
- for transport during school hours for school-organised activities except for educational visits as detailed above
- for admissions.

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5.0 Voluntary contributions

The VST School may, from time to time, ask parents/carers for voluntary to assist with the provision of resources to enhance their children's education. There will be no pressure exerted and any contribution will be gratefully received.

Where the voluntary contribution applies to an educational visit or extra-curricular activity, if the sufficient level of contributions is not achieved, that activity will be cancelled; any monies already collected will be refunded to the relevant parents/carers.

6.0 DBS checks

The VST school will cover the cost of DBS checks for all employed staff. The school will cover the cost of DBS checks for volunteers.

7.0 REFUNDS POLICY

7.1 School meals

- Where payment for a school meal is received in advance and the pupil is absent due to illness, the funds will be retained to be used for future meals.
- If the school has to cancel meal provision for a short time, the income received in advance will be recorded against each individual pupil to be used to cover future meals; where that amount exceeds £5 for any one pupil, the parent/carer may request a refund.
- When a pupil leaves the school and income has been received but meals not taken, the parent is entitled to request a refund.

7.2 Educational visits

- When a pupil is absent due to illness and does not attend an educational visit, the transport/entrance cost may not be refunded, where already committed. However, where possible, the school will endeavour to recover costs related to that activity and, if successful, will then refund the parent/carer.
- If a trip has to be cancelled by the school, parental contributions will be refunded, less any initial deposits withheld by the venue.

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Where contributions for an activity significantly exceed the final total cost, a refund will be given. Excess income will be retained in school funds. Excess expenditure will be paid from school funds.

5.1 Residential activities

- If a pupil does not attend a residential activity due to illness, the school will endeavour to recover costs, through the trip insurance and, if successful, will then pass this refund onto the parent/carer; please note that initial deposits may be retained by the travel company.

- Where a residential trip is cancelled by the travel company, the school will endeavour to recover full refunds which, upon receipt, will be passed onto the parents/carers.

- Where a residential trip is cancelled by the school, the school will endeavour to refund parental contributions, less any initial deposits withheld by external parties.

5.2 Music Tuition

- Where Instrumental or singing lessons are cancelled by the tutor or the school, and payment has already been received, the school will transfer the funds to cover future lessons taken by the relevant pupil. If lessons are not being continued in the following term, the parent/carer may request a refund.

Where a pupil fails to attend a pre-booked lesson, refunds do not apply.

5.3 Extra-curricular activities

- If a pupil does not attend an activity due to illness, no refund applies.

- Where curriculum related clubs are cancelled by the school, the income received will be held to cover the cost of the next round. Where pupils are not taking part in the future, parents/carers are entitled to request a refund.

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5.4 Outside of school hours activities - not part of the curriculum

- If a pupil does not attend an activity due to illness, no refund applies.
- Where the activity is cancelled by the school, the income received will be held to cover the cost of the next round. Where pupils are not taking part in the future, parents/carers are entitled to request a refund.
- Where the activity is arranged by the school but has been cancelled by external organisers/tutors/sports coaches, the school will endeavour to obtain refunds which, upon receipt, will be passed onto the parents/carers.
- Where an activity arranged by external organisers directly with parents/carers is cancelled, the parents/carers must contact the organisers to obtain a refund in accordance with the separate booking agreement.

5.5 Breakfast and After School Clubs

Refunds are in accordance with the rules laid down in the separate Breakfast / After School Club agreement.

6.0 REMISSIONS POLICY

The Headteacher will authorise the remission of charges in all cases.

The school will consider the remission of charges to parents or carers who receive the relevant support payments (in accordance with the current DfE listing) which make their child/children eligible for free school meals and for children in care.

All claims for remission of charges should be addressed to the Headteacher and will be dealt with confidentially.

The school may decide to subsidise part or all of the payment of some charges for certain activities and pupils; each event or case will be considered individually by the Headteacher and the Local School Board.

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