UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

LEVELLING THE SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC ARENA

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Mission Statement

The Levels School exists to provide a nurturing environment in which students with specific learning difficulties and co-occurring diagnoses can develop their self-esteem and aspire to be independent young adults who value the rights, responsibilities and rules that exist to promote and support their future welfare. Our approach toward establishing this ideology is predicated on trauma-informed practice and an obligation to develop the social skills required to build their future aspirational communities. We exist to help them find their level.

This policy covers all premises known as The Levels School.

The Board of Governors acknowledge their responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective and follows regulatory requirements. Governors undertake a review to satisfy themselves that the implementation of this policy is effective.

The Board of Governors ensures the establishment of familiarity with and the effective operation through monitoring, of school policies, approving those requiring GB sign-off in line with a regular cycle of school policy reviews. This occurs through a cycle of governor committee meetings and full board meetings.

Date of policy	May 2026
Next review date	May 2027
Frequency of policy review (annually, every two years)	Annually
Policy owner	Caroline Cook – Head teacher Gian Floris – Finance Director
Published policy	Yes ☐ No ☒
List of connected policies	Fee Structure, Admissions, Equal Opportunities and Dignity at work policy, Complaints policy
Approved / date	Approved b Governors

Contents

Mission Statement....1
Statement of intent....3
1. Legal framework....3
2. Charging for education....4
3. Optional extras....4
4. Examination fees....5
5. Examination re-sits....6
6. Voluntary contributions....6
7. Music tuition....6
8. Transport....6
9. Residential visits....7
10. Education partly during school hours....7
11. Damaged or lost items....8
12. Remissions....8
13. School trip refunds....8
14. Monitoring and review....9

Statement of intent

The Levels School is an Independent Specialist School and as such fees are paid with respect of education and therapeutic provision provided. This policy sets out the intent and arrangements for charging and remissions that may occur over and above the published annual fee structure.

Local Authority funding – Many students at The Levels School will have an Education and Health Care plan (EHCP) and will be placed at The Levels School by their Local Authority. The Levels School has consults for school places from Bath and North East Somerset, Dorset, North Somerset, Cornwall, Devon, Sth Glous, Wiltshire and Somerset. Parents are directed to enquire with their Local Education Authority if they are unable to fund a place at The Levels School.

In respect of pupils funded by the local authority, the difference, if any, between the LA funding and the stated fee, including extras will be payable by the parents.

The Levels School is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of financial circumstances, and has established the following policy and procedures to ensure that no child is discriminated against by our offering of school trips, activities and educational extras.

Any extra charges are kept to a minimum but include fees for individual music tuition, social outings, any before and after school care and some co-curricular activities.

In addition, we are committed to adhering to legal requirements regarding charging for school activities, and meeting all statutory guidance provided by the DfE.

We promise:

- Not to charge for education provided during school hours which lies beyond the normal fees for being educated at The Levels School.
- To inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of relevant benefits of the support available to them when asking for contributions.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy will have consideration for, and be compliant with, the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Education Act 1996.
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007.
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010.
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'.

- DfE (2019) 'Governance handbook'.

2. Charging for education

The Levels School charges parents, guardians or LEAs of pupils a yearly fee split into three termly instalments for the specialist educational provision that the child receives. There is an additional charge if the child receives therapy as well as additional therapy needed as stipulated in their Education Health Care Plan or identified through professional Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy assessments. These fees are outlined within The Levels School fee structure. They are communicated to parents through the admissions process and to the Local Authority through the consultation process. The fee structure is also available from the school upon request.

2.1. We will not charge parents for:

- Education provided during school hours which lies beyond the normal fees for being educated at The Levels School.
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school. This is included within the fees already paid.

2.2. We may charge parents for the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment, where they desire their child to own them.
- Optional extras.
- Music and vocal tuition that lies outside the scope/is additional to the music education within the Curriculum. For example: Individual vocal or instrumental lessons.
- Use of community facilities.

3. Optional extras

3.1. We may charge parents for the following optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time (including during enrichment time or agreed as optional extra) that is not:
    - Part of the national curriculum.
- Examination fees where the student has sat the exam early (at the parents request) or has retaken an exam (at parent request and/or on agreement with the school)

- Examination entry fees where the pupil has not been prepared for the examinations at The Levels School.
- Transport, other than that arranged by the LA for the pupil to be provided with education.
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.
- Extended day services offered to pupils.

3.2. When calculating the cost of optional extras, The Levels School will only take into account the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in relation to the optional extra.
- The cost of buildings and accommodation.
- The employment of non-teaching staff.
- The cost of teaching staff (including teaching assistants) under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra.
- The cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide vocal tuition or tuition in playing a musical instrument.

3.3. The Levels School will not charge in excess of the actual cost of providing the optional extra divided by the number of participating pupils. We will not charge a subsidy for any pupils wishing to participate but whose parents are unable to pay the full charge. If a proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, we will not charge for the cost of alternative provision for those not participating.

3.4. Participation in any optional activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Therefore, parental agreement is a pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra.

4. Examination fees

4.1. We may charge for examination fees if:

- The examination is on the prescribed list (which includes SATs, GCSEs and A levels), but the pupil was not prepared for it at the school.
- The examination is not on the prescribed list, but the school arranged for the pupil to take it.
- A pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the requirements of any public examination where the Board of governors or LA originally paid or agreed to pay the fee.

5. Examination re-sits

5.1. Where a pupil is entered for a second or subsequent attempt at an examination, we will pay the fee if this has been recommended by The Levels School staff.

5.2. If a pupil or their parents consider it to be in the best interests of the pupil to request that an examination is re-marked, any fees involved must be covered by the pupil or their parents. If the awarding body changes the overall grade of the result, the school will not be charged by the awarding body and the parent/pupil will have their fees refunded.

6. Voluntary contributions

6.1. We may, from time-to-time, ask for voluntary contributions towards the benefit of the school or school activities. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, we will make this clear to parents at the outset. We will also make it clear that there is no obligation for parents to make a contribution, and notify parents whether assistance is available.

6.2. No child will be excluded from an activity simply because their parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal opportunity to take part in the activity. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity, and the school cannot fund it via another source, the activity will be cancelled.

6.3. We will strive to ensure that parents do not feel pressurised into making voluntary contributions.

7. Music tuition

7.1. Music tuition is the only exception to the rule that all education provided during school hours must be covered by the day fees. The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 allow for charges to be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of any size – provided that the tuition is at the request of the pupil's parents.

7.2. The charges will not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff providing the tuition.

8. Transport

8.1. We will not charge Parents or Guardians for:

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the LA has a statutory obligation to provide the transport.
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the Board of governors or LA has arranged for pupils to be educated.
- Transporting pupils to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for the examination at the school.

9. Residential visits

9.1. We 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, 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 teachers accompanying pupils on visits.

9.2. We may charge for board and lodging – but the charge will not exceed the actual cost.

10. Education partly during school hours

10.1. If 50 percent or more of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours (including time spent travelling if the travel occurs during school hours), it is deemed to take place during school hours and no charge will be made.

10.2. If less than 50 percent of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours and we may charge for the activity; however, we will not charge if the activity is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.

10.3. Residential visits: If the number of school sessions covered by the visit is equal to or greater than 50 percent of the number of half days (any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day) spent on the visit, we will not charge for the activity.

10.4. The remission of charges for board and lodging payments is the responsibility of the school. These costs will be borne by our contingency funds.

10.5. We may charge for:

- Extended day services for day pupils.

10.6. Any charges for extended day services will be optional.

11. Damaged or lost items

11.1. The school may charge parents for the cost of replacing items broken, damaged or lost due to their child's behaviour.

12. Remissions

12.1. We have set aside a small fund to enable families in financial difficulty to send their children on visits/activities. The funding is limited and there is no guarantee that all requests can be met. Assistance will be allocated on a needs basis, and if the full cost of the trip/activity cannot be met through assistance funding and voluntary contributions, the trip/activity will be cancelled.

12.2. Parents in receipt of any of the following benefits may request assistance with the costs of activities:

- 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 guaranteed element of State Pension Credit.
- Child Tax Credit, provided that they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and they have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190.
- Working Tax Credit run on – paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit – if they apply on or after 1 April 2018, their household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive).

12.3. To request assistance, parents should contact the Director of finance via office@thelevelsschool.co.uk

13. School trip refunds

13.1. All initial deposits for school trips will be non-refundable. Parents will be informed of this when they are provided with initial information about the trip.

13.2. In the event that the school has to cancel a trip due to foreseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded.

13.3. In the event that a school trip is cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the Head teacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The Head teacher

will consult the Board of governors on the matter, taking into account the cost to the school, including alternative provision cost.

13.4. In the event that a school trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the Head teacher's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The Head teacher will discuss options with the Board of governors, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.

13.5. In the event that a pupil or their parents cancel their place on a trip, it is at the Head teacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The Head teacher will consult the Board of governors on the matter, taking into account the reason for cancellation, whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip, and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

13.6. Where a pupil or their parents have previously cancelled a place on a trip and received a full refund, the school has the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future trips and visits.

13.7. In the event that a pupil cannot attend a trip at the last minute (e.g. due to illness), it is at the Head teacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The Head teacher will consult the Board of governors on the matter, taking into account whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

13.8. Once trip arrangements have been booked and confirmed, if contributions exceed the total cost of the trip, a refund will be given where the excess if greater than £1 per pupil. If the excess is less than £1 per pupil, this will be paid into the school's account.

13.9. Excess expenditure will be subsidised by the school fund.

13.10. The school will deal with cancellations and refunds on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all pupils and their families are treated equally.

13.11. If a parent wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they can do so via the Complaints Procedures Policy.

14. Monitoring and review

14.1. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Governors, an individual governor or the Head teacher.

This policy was reviewed and amended by G .Floris and C. Cook in November 2022

It was reviewed by C. Cook in November 2023 and Nov 2025

It was reviewed by C. Cook in May 2026