PENK VALLEY ACADEMY TRUST

Charging, Remissions & Debt Recovery

A Statement of Policy

(Effective 1st September 2026)

Adopted by Trustees: Summer 2026	
Signed:	
Date:	Summer 2026
This policy is reviewed annually by the Audit Finance & Risk Committee.	
Next Review date:	Summer 2027

COLLABORATION CHALLENGE CURIOSITY CARE

POLICY INFORMATION

Date of last review:	Summer 2026 in readiness for September 2026	**Review period:**	Annually
Date ratified by Trustees:	Summer 2026 in readiness for September 2026	**Trustee committee responsible:**	Audit Finance and Risk
Policy owner:	Chief Finance Officer	**Executive team member responsible:**	Chief Finance Officer

Reviews/revisions

Review date	Changes made	By whom
2017	SJFS added	TP TP
2018	Updated for PVAT	JLM
2019	Updated re. debt collection	JLM
2021	New transport costings	JA
2022	New transport and meal costings and First School traded information table	JA
2023	MFS – altered B&A Club sessions / prices	JLM
	PMS – altered B&A Club sessions / prices	JLM
2024	10% increase on lunch prices and Transport increased to £950.00. Commercial Debt Recovery agencies added as an option prior to bad debt write off.	JLM
2025	All references to ESFA amended to read DfE	
	Removal of late bus	Headteachers
	Changes to session times & pricing, as per HT	First School Headteachers
2026	Changes to Nursery session prices	First & Middle School Headteachers
	Increase in lunch price	CFO
	Increase in cost of Transport	CFO (as per Staff Handbook)
	10% sibling discount for B&A Club	

Equality and GDPR

All Penk Valley Academy Trust policies should be read in conjunction with our Equal Opportunities and GDPR policies.

<u>Statement of principle – Equality</u>

We will take all possible steps to ensure that this policy does not discriminate, either directly or indirectly against any individual or group of individuals. When compiling, monitoring and reviewing the policy we will consider the likely impact on the promotion of all aspects of equality as described in the Equality Act 2010.

<u>Statement of principle – GDPR</u>

Penk Valley Academy Trust recognises the serious issues that can occur as a consequence in failing to protect an individual adult's or child's personal and sensitive data. These include emotional distress, physical safety, child protection, loss of assets, fraud and other criminal acts.

Penk Valley Academy Trust is therefore committed to the protection of all personal and sensitive data for which it holds responsibility as the Data Controller and the handling of such data in line with the data protection principles and the Data Protection Act (DPA)/GDPR.

Penk Valley Academy Trust will be referred to as **PVAT** for the remainder of the document which includes all schools who are members of PVAT, business operations and centralised services.

CHARGING, REMISSIONS & DEBT RECOVERY

1. Aim

The aim of this policy is to set out:

- what charges will be levied for PVAT activities, external lettings and extended school provision.
- what remissions will be implemented and the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested from parent/carers. Guidance is based on the Education Act 1996: Sections 449-462.
- the debt recovery process in place to enable the PVAT to receive all income to which it is entitled.

2. Responsibilities

The PVAT Board of Trustees has devolved responsibility for this policy to the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee. This committee will determine the content of the policy in order to meet statutory requirements. Any determinations in respect to individual parents will be considered by the Headteacher(s), the Chief Finance Officer and/or the PVAT Board of Trustees.

3. Prohibition of charges

Charges will **not** be made for the following educational provision:

I. Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment).
II. Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of Religious Education.
III. Tuition for students learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at school, or part of religious education.
IV. Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours.
V. Education provided on any trip 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 student is being prepared for at the school, or part of the school's basic curriculum for Religious Education.
VI. Supply teachers to be employed to cover teachers who are absent from lessons as they are accompanying students on a residential visit.
VII. Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school. VIII. GCSE examination re-sits if the student is being prepared for the resits at the school.

4. Transport

Charges will **not** be made in relation to transport costs in the following circumstances:

I. Transporting registered students to or from the school premises, where the Local Education Authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport.
II. Transporting registered students to other premises where the PVAT Board of Trustees or Local Authority has arranged for students to be educated.
III. Transport that enables a student to meet an examination requirement when he/she has been prepared for that examination at the school.

CHARGES

1. Education provision

Charges will be made in certain circumstances relating to education:

I. Any materials, books, instruments or equipment where a student's parent or carer wishes him/her to own them.
II. A charge may be made for examination fees if the school has not prepared the registered student for the examination as part of the normal educational provision.
III. A charge may be made for an enquiry about an examination result should the school not support the enquiry and the candidate wishes to proceed.

2. Charges relating to optional extras

Charges **will** be made in certain circumstances where there are optional extras:

I. Extended school activities, including Nursery and Before and After School sessions.
II. Catering service will be charged at a rate of £3.00 for all First School and Middle School set meal plans.
III. Charges relating to catering service at High schools will be in accordance with daily menu choices.
IV. Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and willingness to accept a charge for the costs. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary prerequisite for the provision of optional extra activities.
V. Any charge made in respect of individual students will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional activity. The individual charge will comprise of the actual cost of the activity divided equally by the number of students participating.
VI. In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge will not include the cost of alternative provision for those students who do not wish to participate.
VII. A charge will be made in respect of materials, books, instruments, equipment and tuition fees for educational provision that is not part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed examination that a student is being prepared for at the school or part of religious education. A charge will be made for any transport or journeys that are undertaken in relation to optional extras.
VIII. Where applicable, a charge will be made for the cost, or proportion of the cost, for teaching staff employed specifically to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument where the tuition is an optional extra and not part of the National Curriculum.
IX. Re-sits for public examinations where no further preparation has been provided by the school. Full costs will be charged.
X. Any other education, transport or examination fees unless charges are specifically prohibited.
XI. Breakages and replacements as a result of damages caused wilfully or negligently by students. XII. Extra-curricular activities and school clubs.
XIII. External letting of the school premises or grounds. This is covered within the Lettings Policy.
XIV. Charges for materials or ingredients where the students wish to have the finished product. Full costs will be charged.
XV. Cost of transport to take part in work experience. Full costs will be charged.
XVI. Cost of bus fares at a rate of £1,200 per annum. These costs apply to all out of catchment main school students and sixth form students. An initial £120 non-refundable deposit will be paid in the Summer Term prior, to secure the seat. All future payments will be made via Shuttle ID in accordance with the ticket options available and the full £1,200 charge will be paid by June.

XVII. A Sibling Discount of 10% will be applied to the older sibling's annual transport charge, commencing September 2021.

XVIII. PVAT reserves the right to recharge back to parents any bank charges which arise due to default on payment – e.g. returned payments etc.

3. Charges relating to voluntary contributions

Charges will be made in certain circumstances relating to voluntary contributions. The law allows schools to seek voluntary contributions from parents to benefit the school or any school activities. The PVAT board has determined that certain conditions should be applied when seeking voluntary contributions when planning an additional activity.

I. It will be made clear at the outset that there is no obligation on parents to make voluntary contributions.

II. Where a trip or activity is planned on the basis of voluntary contributions and insufficient funds are raised then the trip or activity will be cancelled.

III. No students would be excluded from a trip or activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay.

IV. The Headteacher or Chief Finance Officer can seek support from PVAT with a view to discretely subsidising families who are genuinely unable to pay voluntary contributions.

4. Education partly during school hours

Charges will only be applied to activities which are not part of the National Curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed examination that the student is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education.

Where the activity is mostly within school hours the Headteacher(s) may remit, wholly or partly any charge which would otherwise be payable under the term of this charging policy. Where an activity takes place partly within and partly outside of school hours the following is the basis on which it will be determined whether it is an optional extra activity that can be subject to a charge.

<u>Non-Residential Activities and Remissions</u>

In the following circumstances relating to non-residential activities, charges may be remitted.

I. If 50% or more of the time spent on an optional extra activity occurs during school hours, including time spent travelling, it is deemed to have taken place within school hours.

II. Conversely where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours it is deemed to take place outside school hours. For example, students may leave on a theatre trip two hours before the end of the school day but at the trip continues until late evening it is deemed to be outside of school hours.

<u>Residential Visits and Remissions</u>

If the number of school half day sessions taken up by a school trip is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on a trip it is deemed to be in school hours. (Regulations require that a school day be divided into two sessions with a session meaning any period of 12 hours ending at noon or midnight.) Therefore, a residential trip that starts at noon on a Thursday and ends at 9pm on Sunday counts as seven half days but as only three re school sessions the trip is deemed to be out of school hours.

5. After school clubs

For Clubs organised by the School, School Office staff are responsible for the activity club sign-ups. Payment should be collected at the time of booking the club and all income must be recorded on ParentPay. Where possible parents should be encouraged to make online payment using ParentPay to reduce cash handling in the office.

There is a 10% sibling discount for Before & After School Clubs

6. Nursery and Before and After School Clubs – September 2026

The charge for each session is agreed on a school-by-school basis, with information detailed in the tables below:

Nursery

All PVAT Nurseries charge £6.00 per hour for 3-4 year olds and £8.00 per hour for 2 year olds.

Before & After School Club

School	Service	Price
MFS	Breakfast club	£4.50
MFS	3.15pm – 4.15pm	£6.00
MFS	4.15pm – 5.50pm	£9.00
MFS	3.15pm – 5.50pm	£15.00
PFS	Breakfast club	£4.50
PFS	After school to 4.15pm	£4.50
PFS	After school club till 5.15pm	£9.00
PFS	After school club top up (5.15pm – 5.45pm)	£2.50
SJF	Breakfast club (7.50am – 8.50am)	£5.00
SJF	Breakfast club (7.30am – 8.50am)	£10.00
SJF	3.15pm – 4.15pm	£5.00
SJF	3.15pm – 5.15pm	£10.00
SJF	4.15pm – 5.15pm	£5.00
SJF	4.15pm – 5.30pm	£7.50
SMC	Breakfast club (7.45am – 8.45am)	£5.00
SMC	8:30am drop off (no breakfast) - charged per week	£7.50
SMC	3.15pm – 4.15pm	£5.00
SMC	3.15pm – 5.15pm	£10.00
SMC	3.15pm – 6.00pm	£13.75
SMC	End of school day to 5.15pm (with 1 hour at club, payable separately)	£5.00
SMC	End of school day to 6.00pm (with 1 hour at club, payable separately)	£8.75
PMS	7.30am – 8.45am	£5.00

PMS	3.20pm – 4.29pm	£5.00
PMS	3.20pm – 5.30pm (5pm on Friday)	£10.00

All income must be recorded in ParentPay. Sessions should be paid for as attended and all debt cleared by the end of each week. School Office staff will send text and/or e-mail reminders at the beginning of each week requesting all debt from previous week to be cleared.

If debt is not cleared by the end of the current half term, sessions and services will be revoked and debt collection referred to PVAT debtors' team and recovery action will be pursued. If payment is still not received, the debt will be referred to the CFO of PVAT and discussed at Trustee level for decision on further action.

7. After school clubs – external providers

External providers who run clubs in Schools on their own behalf are responsible for their own administration and collection of income.

8. Music tuition

Where appropriate, the School Office is responsible for collecting music tuition monies each term. Tuition should be set up on the ParentPay system as a payment item. Where possible parents should be encouraged to make online payment using ParentPay to reduce cash handling in the office.

Any parent/carer that has not made payment by the due date will be sent a reminder requesting immediate payment. This will be sent with the child or via text / email.

Lessons will be terminated until the arrears have been cleared and parents will be encouraged to make an advance payment for the following term. Parents/carers can arrange a payment plan to support timely payments.

If no payment is received within the half term, the debt will be referred to PVAT debtors' team and recovery action will be pursued. If payment is still not received, the debt will be referred to the CFO of PVAT and discussed at Trustee level for decision on further action.

9. Board and lodging on residential visits

The board and lodging element of a residential visit can be charged to parent/carers and they are notified of the cost in advance and are given the opportunity to pay in instalments should they wish.

Payment must be made in full before the departure date or the child will not be allowed to attend.

10. Exam fees

The cost of exam re-sits will be sent to parent/carers at the start of term. If payment is not made by the date specified by the school, then the student will not be entered for the exam.

REMISSIONS

1. Hardship

In the interests of equality of opportunity, where parents are unable to meet the costs of an optional extra activity due to poverty or other special family circumstances, the cost of the activity may be waived at the discretion of the Headteacher and/or the Chief Finance Officer. This cost would be met from the individual school budget. Students in receipt of free school meals may also receive support for extra curriculum activities from the school budget.

A charge will be made for board and lodging on residential trips. When the school informs parents about a forthcoming visit, it must be made clear that parents who can provide evidence that they are in receipt of any of the benefits detailed below, then they would be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging.

- Income Support;
- Universal Credit
- Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit when Working Tax Credit is not being received and the family is below that specified by the Inland Revenue

Special consideration may be made for hardship cases not fulfilling the above criteria. The Headteacher may apply discretion and fund the charges directly from school budget if there are adequate funds available.

2. Examination fees

High Schools will fund any appeals requested by teaching staff.

High Schools will not charge on the first occasion if a student wishes to retake a module of their GCSE examination. However, students will be charged at cost for any subsequent resit.

DEBT RECOVERY PROCESS

1. Introduction

PVAT Board of Trustees has a responsibility to have a debt recovery policy which ensures that appropriate procedures are in place to enable PVAT to receive all income to which it is entitled.

2. Aims and objectives

- To ensure that the Board of Trustees complies with the Academy Trust Handbook
- To protect the delegated school budget;
- To apply this policy consistently to ensure debt is dealt with in a timely manner;
- To ensure further goods or services are not supplied to parent/carers or customers who have not paid for items already received or used.

3. The debt recovery process

PVAT raises official invoices in the PVAT finance system which then leads to PVATs debt recovery procedures as follows:

- Invoice raised with payment terms of 30 days
- A reminder is sent 3 days after the 30 days has expired

- A final notice is issued before PVATs Debtors Team contact the parent/carer/customer at their home/business address
- In the event of non-payment 60 days after invoice date, the matter is referred onto the CFO.

4. Catering income / dinner money

For all Schools except the High Schools, parents are encouraged to pay dinner money weekly in advance using ParentPay to reduce cash handling.

Individual pupil's arrears should not exceed 5 serving days or £15.00 (whichever is the greater) at any one time. Any parent/carer that has not made payment by the end of the week will be sent a reminder requesting immediate payment. This will be sent with the child or via text / email.
Full School Meals will only be reinstated when the arrears have been cleared. Parents will also be encouraged to make payment in advance for the following week.

Students at the High Schools pay the service provider directly or via payment through an electronic payment system for their daily choices. If students forget their dinner money, the school will loan students up to £3.00 per day. No more than a total of £6.00 is ever loaned to a student over a two-day period. If on the 3rd day, the student returns again with no lunch money, a basic sandwich only will be provided and the concern referred to the relevant School staff.

A text is sent to parents advising that money has been lent to their child on the day of loan and request reimbursement the following school day. This is followed up by the School Office via subsequent texts on a weekly basis.

If no payment is received within the half term, the debt will be referred to PVAT debtors' team and recovery action will be pursued.

When referred to PVAT, parents will be contacted verbally and advised that meals will no longer be provided and the opportunity to attend trips or extra-curricular activities may be suspended until payment of debt is received.

If payment is still not received within five days of the conversation the debt will be referred to the CFO of PVAT and discussed at Trustee level for further action

5. School journey / transport costs

Initially, the School Office Managers manage the instalments due. Should an instalment payment be missed, the debt will be referred to the PVAT debtors' team. Parents are encouraged to make online payment using ParentPay to reduce cash handling in the office. All income should be received in full by 31st January. If not received, then a text message will be sent home and either a regular payment plan set up, or the seat allocation will be rescinded. Any debt still outstanding at 31st January will be referred to the PVAT debtors' team.

6. Writing off debts

When all practical and cost-effective methods of debt recovery have been exhausted, PVATs Board of Trustees will be notified of the amount of debt that is considered to be irrecoverable. Commercial Debt Recovery agencies may be utilised in the event of significant value of debt.

No debts should be written off without the express approval of the CEO/Executive Trustee (the DfEs prior approval is also required if debts to be written off are above the value set out in the annual funding letter). The PVAT Debtors Team will provide a monthly debtors report to the CFO for entry into the monthly Management Accounts.