

Academies for Character and Excellence

Charging & Remissions Policy

Reference: TMB/01/Community Partnerships

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines the Trust's approach to charging for activities which can be made under the Education Act of 1996 and also for activities for which no charge can be made. The policy details how we will minimise financial barriers enabling all students to gain the greatest possible benefit from available opportunities and activities.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has been informed by DFE guidance in 'Charging for school activities' May 2018.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/706830/Charging_for_school_activities.pdf

3. Charging Guidelines

- 3.1 The Trust cannot charge for:

- a. an admission application to the school
- b. education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment).
- c. 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 pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.
- d. instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent.

- 3.2 The Trust may charge for:

- a. any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent/carer wishes him/her to own them.
- b. optional extras.
- c. music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances.
- d. certain early years provision.
- e. community facilities.

4. Charging Voluntary contributions

- 4.1 Parents/Carers may be invited to make voluntary contributions to cover the cost of activities which are deemed educationally desirable. This may include activities such as:

- a. Visiting performers who levy a direct charge on the school (theatre/dance/music groups).
- b. School educational visits (the proportionate costs for an individual child to meet the costs for travel, materials and equipment, entrance fees, insurance costs).
- c. An 'end product that may be taken home' e.g., cookery ingredients.

4.2 Requests for voluntary contributions will make it clear that:

- a. There will be no obligation to contribute.
- b. No child will be excluded from an activity or treated differently should a contribution not be made on their behalf.
- c. No parent/carers will be asked to subsidise another child in any activity where contributions are requested.
- d. The activity might not take place or may be cancelled if voluntary contributions are not made.

4.3 When making requests for voluntary contributions, parents/carers will not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. The Trust will avoid sending colour coded letters to parents/carers as a reminder to make payments and direct debit or standing order mandates will not be sent to parents when requesting contributions.

5. Partly during school hours

5.1 Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. The midday break does not form part of the school day.

5.2 If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

5.3 Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity that falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require children to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

5.4 When such activities are arranged parents/carers will be told how the charges were calculated.

6. Residential activities

6.1 If the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A 'half day' means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

6.2 Charges will be made for board and lodging, except for pupils whose parents/carers are in receipt of eligible benefits.

6.3 Other charges will be made to cover costs when the number of school sessions missed by the pupils totals half or more of the number of half-days taken up by the activity. In such cases parents/carers will be told how the charges were calculated.

7. Music tuition

7.1 Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music

lessons are an exception to this rule.

- 7.2 Charges will be made for teaching either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size to play a musical instrument or to sing. Charges will only be made if the teaching is not an essential part of the National Curriculum.
- 7.3 In cases of hardship the Trust will consider in their absolute discretion the remission of fees (either in full or in part) for those pupils who they consider will benefit from such tuition.

8. Remissions

- 8.1 Where parents/carers of a child would like their child to participate in an additional or optional activity, for which a charge is being made or a voluntary contribution requested, and feel their financial circumstances are insufficient to meet the cost of the activity, they invite parents to discuss the matter in confidence with the Headteacher, with a view to remitting all or part of the cost.
- 8.2 The Trust is concerned that the Charging Remissions Policy holds no child at a disadvantage. If any parent/carer applies for a remission of charge for any activity the Headteacher in consultation with the Trust CEO will make decisions regarding the remissions and a subsidy may be provided.

9. Calculating charges

- 9.1 Charges for activities will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of children participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who can't. Support for cases of hardship will come through voluntary contributions and fundraising. Parents/carers who would qualify for support are those who are in receipt of eligible benefits, which are:
 - a. Income Support.
 - b. Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.
 - c. Income-related Employment and Support Allowance.
 - d. Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
 - e. The guaranteed element of Pension Credit.
 - f. Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190).
 - g. Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
 - h. Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get).
- 9.2 The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the school and/or charges to parents/carers. A proportion of costs incurred as a result of vandalism or other malicious actions by students, parents or carers whilst onsite will be recouped.