

Charging and remissions policy

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1 Policy statement

Vision, mission and values

We are passionate about empowering our children and young people to go beyond their aspirations and the Trust and its academies recognise that participation in a wide range of visits, experiences and activities forms a valuable part of learning and development and we are committed to making activities accessible to all pupils, regardless of family income.

Purpose and intent

This policy aims to ensure that charges made to parents and pupils in respect of visits, experiences and activities are clearly defined and compliant with current legislation, under the terms of the Education Act 1996, which restricts the types of activity that are deemed chargeable.

Scope and Remit

In law, pupils may not be charged for activities that form part of the normal academy day, but the Trust may invite parents and others to make a voluntary contribution from time-to-time which allows us to offer activities or experiences which otherwise might not be possible. This may include a voluntary contribution to activities taking place in academy time or activities which form part of the curriculum or an examination syllabus. However, the child of any parent who is unable to contribute will not be prevented from participating in an activity, which takes place during academy time, if the activity goes ahead.

With any request for voluntary payments, it must be clear from the terms in which it is made that:

- There is no obligation to make a contribution.
- Pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have contributed to the planned activity.
- If there are insufficient contributions received to cover the cost of the activity and including all pupils who wish to participate, the activity will not go ahead.
- Where an activity takes place outside of academy hours and does not form part of the curriculum or examination syllabus, which is classed as an optional extra the Trust retains the right to request that parents meet the full cost of these activities.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust Board and will be adjusted in accordance with any subsequent guidance issued by DfE, ESFA or the local authority.

2 Admissions

The Trust does not make requests for financial contributions, either in the form of voluntary contributions, donations or deposits (even if refundable), as any part its admissions process.

3 Education provided during school hours

Subject to the limited exceptions outlined in this policy, the Trust does not charge for education provided during school hours, including the supply of any materials, books, instruments, or equipment.

4 Education provided outside of school hours

No charge will be made for education provided outside of 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 by the academy or part of religious education.

5 School meals

5.1 The Trust and it's academies do not charge for school meals where the pupil is eligible for free school meals or universal infant free school meals.

5.2 Pupils who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged.

6 Prescribed public examinations

6.1 The Trust does not charge for entry fees for a prescribed public examination (including re-sits) if the pupil has been prepared for it by the academy.

6.2 However, if a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the academy may seek to recover the fee from the pupil's parent/carer.

6.3 Charges will be applied for the entry of a pupil for an examination for which they have not been prepared by the Trust or it's academies, or for entry to an examination against the advice of the Trust.

7 Materials, books, instruments or equipment

7.1 The Trust may charge for materials/ingredients, books, instruments or equipment that the parent/carer wishes their child to keep or own.

7.2 Such charges will not exceed the cost of the item and parent/carer will be made aware at the outset that a charge will be made and the amount payable.

8 Music, instrumental or vocal tuition

8.1 The Trust may charge for tuition in singing or in playing a musical instrument during school hours if it is provided at the request of the pupil's parent/carer. This applies to individual and group tuition.

8.2 The charges will not exceed the cost of the provision and may include the cost of the staff to provide the tuition, instruments, music books and exam fees.

8.3 No charge will be made if the tuition is:

- provided to a pupil who is looked after by a local authority; or
- provided as part of the national curriculum during school hours or required as part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the pupil is being prepared by the academy.

9 Transport

The Trust does not charge for:

- transporting pupils to or from its premises **where** the local authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport.
- transporting pupils to other premises where the Trust or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated.
- transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for that examination by the Trust and its academies.
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit 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 by the Trust or is part of religious education.

10 Residential visits

10.1 The Trust does 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, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the Trust or is part of religious education.
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

10.2 The Trust and its academies will charge for board and lodging relating to residential visits (see section 11).

11 Optional extras

11.1 The Trust does charge for 'optional extras'.

11.2 Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement will be required before an optional extra for which a charge is made is provided.

11.3 Optional extras include:

- education provided outside of school hours that is not part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the Trust or part of religious education.
- examination entry fee(s) if the pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) by the Trust.
- other transport (outside of that outlined in section 9).
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.
- extended day services offered to pupils (for example breakfast club, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions).

11.4 In calculating the cost of an optional extra an amount will be included in relation to:

- any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra.
- the cost of buildings and accommodation.
- non-teaching staff.
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, which includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra.
- the cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra.

11.5 Any charge for an optional extra will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It will not include an element of subsidy

for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parent/carer is unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

12 Voluntary contributions

12.1 The Trust may ask parents/carers for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the Trust or academy or any of its activities.

12.2 Where it is intended that an activity is to be funded by voluntary contributions, the academy Principal will ensure that parents/carers are made aware at the outset that:

- the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions.
- there is no obligation to make any contribution.
- if insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund the activity, and the Trust is unable to fund it from some other source, then the activity will be cancelled.

12.3 No pupil will be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parent/carer is unwilling or unable to pay. Pupils whose parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay will still be given an equal chance to participate in the activity.

13 Refunds

13.1 Request for refunds for activities will be considered on an individual basis and may be rejected if the academy is unable to recoup the costs incurred.

13.2 In all cases of withdrawal, either voluntarily or otherwise, applications should be made in writing to the academy Principal. If approved, refunds will be processed via the original method of payment.

13.3 The Trust reserves the right not to refund costs where a pupil is withdrawn from an activity by the academy on the basis of a pupil's breach of the academy's behaviour policy.

14 Damage to property and breakages

14.1 Where Trust property has been wilfully or recklessly damaged by a pupil or parent/carer, the Trust reserves the right to charge those responsible for some or all of the cost of repair or replacement.

14.2 Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a pupil, and the Trust has been charged, the Trust reserves the right to charge those responsible for some or all of the cost.

15 Remissions

15.1 Parents/carers who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits may be exempt from paying certain costs (including the cost of board and lodging related to residential visits):

- Income Support
- Income based Job-seekers Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (where the person is not receiving Working Tax Credit as well and has an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Universal Credit

15.2 Requests for remission should be authorised using the Trust Parental Request form. In the case of pupil premium pupils this can be requested by a member of staff leading the visit, experience or activity. All requests should be authorised by the academy Principal.

15.3 The following percentage contribution for visits should be used when offering financial support to pupil premium and disadvantaged pupils.

Visit Category	Percentage of Support towards full cost of visit	Recommended maximum number of visits per year per child that financial support can be applied for or offered
Category A	Up to 100%	2
Category B	Up to 75%	2
Category C	Up to 50%	1

16 Refunds

16.1 Charges and contributions are set to cover the anticipated cost of the trip, experience or activity. If the income from the activity exceeds the actual cost any surplus of £15 or more per pupil will be refunded. Any amount below this will be transferred into a general trips fund and used to support access to optional activities for pupils.

16.2 Refunds will be made via the academy cashless facility.

16.3 However, in cases:

- Where parental payments were not made via the academy's cashless facility a suitable alternative refund method will be arranged with the named contact or contacts held on the academy's management information system and refunds made either by BACS transfer or by cheque. Cash refunds will only be considered when all other refund methods have been confirmed as not viable.
- Where the bank account or credit/debit card used to make payment via the academy's cashless system is closed or no longer active, alternative bank account details will be sought from the named contact or contacts held on the academy's management information system.

17 Complaints

Complaints regarding this policy or its application should be raised under the Trust's usual complaints procedure.

Policy lead	Simon Lowe
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