



CHARGES AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Approved By: Trust Board
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1. POLICY PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and transparent framework for the application of charges and remissions across the Trust, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements while supporting fairness, inclusion and accessibility for all students.

The Trust is committed to the principle that education provided during the school day should be free of charge. At the same time, there are certain circumstances where charges may be applied or voluntary contributions may be requested to enhance the educational experience provided.

In all cases, care will be taken to ensure that no student is disadvantaged, excluded, or treated differently due to their family's financial circumstances.

This policy applies to all schools within the Trust. Individual schools may publish additional operational guidance where appropriate.

2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy has been developed in accordance with the following:

- The Education Act 1996
- Department for Education (DfE) guidance on charging for school activities
- The Academy Trust Handbook (DfE)

The Trust will keep this policy under review to ensure that it reflects current legislation and guidance.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Trust Board: The Trust Board is responsible for approving this policy and ensuring that it is implemented consistently and in accordance with statutory requirements.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO): The CEO provides strategic oversight and ensures that this policy supports the Trust's wider educational aims and values.

Chief Financial Officer (CFO): The CFO is responsible for ensuring that all charges are applied fairly, transparently and in line with financial regulations and audit expectations.

Headteachers: Headteachers are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy within their schools, including communication with parents/carers and consideration of remission requests.

4. ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

The Trust places significant value on enrichment activities, which play an important role in broadening students' educational experiences and supporting their personal development.

Voluntary Contributions

Schools may invite parents/carers to make voluntary contributions towards the cost of enrichment activities.

- Contributions are entirely voluntary
- No student will be excluded or treated differently if contributions are not made

- Requests for contributions will be communicated clearly and sensitively

Cancellation of Activities

Where an activity relies on voluntary contributions, it may be necessary to cancel the activity if insufficient funds are received. This decision will be communicated as early as possible, with sensitivity to those affected.

Charges for Optional Activities

Charges may be made for optional activities where permitted by law, such as activities that take place outside normal school hours or are not part of the National Curriculum.

Any such charges will reflect the actual cost of providing the activity.

Behaviour and Associated Costs

The Trust expects all students to meet the required standards of behaviour, as set out in the school's Behaviour Policy, when participating in enrichment activities, including school trips and visits.

Where a student's behaviour falls significantly below expected standards, the school reserves the right to withdraw the student from the activity. In such circumstances, parents/carers may be required to meet any additional costs reasonably incurred as a result.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- costs associated with early return travel
- additional supervision or staffing costs
- costs arising from disruption to accommodation or arrangements
- the cost of repair or replacement of damaged property (including that of third parties)

Any charges will reflect the actual costs incurred by the school and will be applied reasonably and proportionately.

5. EXAMINATION FEES

The Trust recognises that examination fees can represent a significant cost and seeks to apply charges only where permitted and appropriate.

No Charge

No charge will be made for a student's first entry to a prescribed public examination where the school has prepared the student for that examination.

Charges May Apply

Charges may be made in the following circumstances:

- Where a student is entered for a re-sit that is not part of the school's provision
- Where a student chooses to enter an examination for which they have not been prepared by the school
- Where a student or parent/carer requests a re-mark, script, or clerical check
- For university admission tests
- Where a student fails to attend an examination without a valid reason

Any charges will reflect the direct costs incurred by the school, which may include the examination entry fee and reasonable administrative costs associated with processing the entry.

6. MUSIC TUITION

The Trust recognises the importance of music education as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and is committed to enabling access for all students.

Free Provision

No charge will be made for:

- Class-based music education provided as part of the curriculum
- Tuition required as part of the National Curriculum or a prescribed examination syllabus

Optional Tuition

Additional individual or group music tuition may be arranged at the request of a parent or carer.

Where such tuition is provided by a third-party instructor, this arrangement is private and voluntary. The contractual and financial relationship is solely between the parent/carers and the instructor. The Trust and its schools are not a party to this arrangement and do not employ, engage or manage the instructor in relation to this provision.

Any fees for such tuition will be agreed between the parent/carers and the instructor and will be invoiced directly to the parent/carers by the instructor.

Where tuition takes place on school premises, appropriate safeguarding arrangements will be in place in line with Trust policies.

In certain circumstances, the Trust or school may contribute towards the cost of such tuition, for example through Pupil Premium funding or other forms of financial support. Where this applies, any contribution will be made to support access to provision, and does not alter the contractual relationship, which remains between the parent/carers and the instructor.

Remissions

No charge will be made for individual music tuition provided during school hours for Looked After Children, in line with legal requirements.

7. CURRICULUM RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

The Trust is committed to ensuring that all students have access to the resources required to participate fully in the curriculum.

Free Provision

No charge will be made for books, materials or equipment required for the delivery of the curriculum, except where parents/carers have indicated in advance that they wish the item to be owned or retained by the student.

Voluntary Contributions

From time to time, schools may invite voluntary contributions towards additional or enhanced materials. Such contributions are optional and will not affect a student's access to learning.

Practical Subjects

In practical subjects, a charge may be made for materials or ingredients where parents/carers have indicated in advance that they wish the finished product to be taken home.

8. PRINTING AND PHOTOCOPYING

The Trust encourages the responsible use of resources, including printing and photocopying.

- Students may be provided with a reasonable allocation of free printing
- Charges may apply where this allocation is exceeded
- Information on charges and arrangements will be made available by each school

9. COMPUTERS AND TABLETS

Access to technology is an important aspect of modern education, and the Trust is committed to supporting equitable access.

- No charge will be made for equipment required for use in school
- Voluntary contributions may be requested for optional schemes
- Students will not be disadvantaged where contributions are not made
- Parents/carers may choose to purchase devices independently to support learning at home

10. LOSS OR DAMAGE TO PROPERTY

The Trust expects students to take reasonable care of school property.

Where loss or damage occurs as a result of wilful or negligent behaviour, a charge may be made for repair or replacement.

This may include:

- School property
- Loaned items such as books or devices
- Third-party property where costs are passed to the school

11. TRANSPORT

Charges may be applied for transport associated with optional activities or opportunities.

No charge will be made where the school has a statutory obligation to provide transport.

12. SCHOOL FUND

Schools within the Trust invite voluntary contributions to a School Fund, which supports the wider life of the school community.

These contributions may be used to:

- Enhance educational experiences
- Provide additional resources and facilities
- Support enrichment and community activities

All contributions are voluntary. Funds will be managed in accordance with the Trust's financial procedures and subject to appropriate oversight.

13. CATERING AND STUDENT ACCOUNTS

The Trust provides catering services across its schools through an external provider. Meals and refreshments are offered on a paid basis, and students may access these services using a pre-payment system.

Payments are made by parents/carers to their child's account via the school's payment system. These balances are used to purchase items from the catering provider. Funds are managed and reconciled in accordance with the Trust's financial procedures and contractual arrangements with the provider.

Where a student leaves the school, any remaining balance may be refunded to the parent/carer. The Trust may set a minimum refund threshold to ensure that administration remains proportionate. Parents/carers may also be invited to donate any remaining balance to the School Fund. Any such donation will be entirely voluntary.

14. REFUNDS

The Trust recognises that, in certain circumstances, parents/carers may be entitled to a refund of payments made.

Refunds will be considered where:

- an activity is cancelled by the school
- a student is unable to participate for reasons beyond their control, subject to any costs already incurred or committed
- an activity or visit has generated a surplus and it is appropriate to return funds to parents/carers
- a credit balance remains on a student's catering account when they leave the school

Refunds will normally be limited to the proportion of costs not already committed or incurred by the school.

Requests for refunds will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the circumstances and any costs already incurred or committed.

In determining whether a refund is appropriate, the Trust will take into account the administrative practicality of processing refunds and the materiality of the amount involved.

In some cases, parents/carers may be invited to donate refunds or remaining balances to the School Fund. Any such donation will be entirely voluntary.

15. REMISSION OF CHARGES

The Trust is committed to ensuring that no student is disadvantaged due to financial hardship and recognises the importance of enabling all students to fully participate in school life regardless of their financial circumstances.

Eligibility

Parents and carers experiencing financial difficulty are encouraged to contact the school in confidence to discuss the support available. Remissions may be considered for students whose families meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Eligibility for Free School Meals
- Eligibility for Pupil Premium
- Other circumstances indicating financial hardship

Scope

Where appropriate, a full or partial remission of charges may be granted. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Enrichment activities, including trips and visits
- Examination-related costs, where permitted
- Music tuition
- Transport associated with school activities

Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account individual circumstances and in line with Trust guidance, to ensure fairness, consistency and sensitivity.

Further information on the support available, including how to apply, can be obtained from individual schools or via the School Office. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.