



Girls' Learning Trust

# **CHARGES AND REMISSIONS POLICY**

Approved By: Trust Board  
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## CONTENTS

1.	POLICY PURPOSE .....	3
2.	LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE .....	3
3.	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	3
4.	ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES .....	3
5.	EXAMINATION FEES.....	4
6.	MUSIC TUITION .....	5
7.	CURRICULUM RESOURCES AND MATERIALS.....	6
8.	PRINTING AND PHOTOCOPYING .....	6
9.	COMPUTERS AND TABLETS .....	6
10.	LOSS OR DAMAGE TO PROPERTY.....	7
11.	TRANSPORT .....	7
12.	SCHOOL FUND.....	7
13.	REMISSION OF CHARGES .....	8

## **1. POLICY PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Trust's approach to charges and remissions in compliance with legal requirements, ensuring transparency and fairness in the application of fees and financial support.

The policy reinforces the principle of free education provided during school hours, while clearly outlining the circumstances under which charges may be applied or voluntary contributions requested, and the scenarios where charges may be remitted.

This policy applies to all schools within the Trust. In instances where specific arrangements are in place at a particular school, additional procedures and guidance will be published by that school and made available on its website. The Trust has also implemented measures to support parents/carers with low incomes.

## **2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE**

This Charges and Remissions Policy is written in line with the requirements of the Education Act 1996, which outlines the statutory obligations regarding charging for school activities and the circumstances under which charges can be remitted.

The policy also adheres to the Academy Trust Handbook issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), ensuring compliance with financial management and governance requirements.

Additionally, the policy is informed by guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) on charging for school activities, ensuring fairness and transparency in the application of charges and the provision of free or reduced-cost participation for eligible students.

## **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Trust Board:** The Trust Board holds the ultimate responsibility for approving the Charges and Remissions Policy and ensuring its consistent implementation across all schools within the Trust. The Board is also responsible for reviewing the policy annually and ensuring it aligns with legal requirements and the Trust's financial strategy.

**Chief Executive Officer (CEO):** The CEO is responsible for the overall strategic oversight of the policy's implementation and for ensuring that the Trust's schools adhere to the policy. The CEO also ensures that the policy supports the Trust's educational objectives and that it is communicated effectively to all stakeholders.

**Chief Financial Officer (CFO):** The CFO is responsible for the financial management of the policy, ensuring that any charges levied are fair, transparent, and in line with the Trust's financial regulations. The CFO oversees the financial processes related to the collection of charges and the remission of fees, ensuring that these processes are robust and comply with legal and audit requirements.

**Headteachers:** Headteachers are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the policy within their respective schools. They ensure that staff, students, and parents are aware of the policy and its implications. Headteachers also have the authority to decide on individual cases where charges may be waived, particularly in cases involving students from low-income families.

## **4. ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES**

Enrichment activities are designed to enhance students' learning experiences beyond the core curriculum. These activities, often termed 'optional extras,' include certain school trips, workshops, and extracurricular clubs. While these activities enrich the educational experience, they are not mandatory.

#### Voluntary Contributions

Schools may request voluntary contributions to fund these activities. The request for contributions will be communicated clearly to parents/carers, including details about the costs involved. It is important to note that no student will be excluded from an activity or treated differently if they do not contribute. The Trust will ensure that any shortfall in funding from voluntary contributions will not impact the participation of students.

#### Activity Cancellation

If voluntary contributions are insufficient to cover the costs of an activity, the school may need to cancel the event. The decision to cancel will be communicated to parents/carers as soon as possible, and the school will make efforts to provide alternative opportunities where feasible.

#### Charges for Optional Activities

Charges may apply for activities that occur outside of normal school hours or are not part of the compulsory curriculum. The cost will reflect the expenses incurred, including staffing, resources, and transport. Schools will provide advance notice of these charges and ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate, regardless of their financial situation.

### **5. EXAMINATION FEES**

Examination fees can represent a considerable financial burden for students and their families. To manage these costs effectively and transparently, the Trust has established the following guidelines on when charges may be applied:

#### First Entry

The Trust ensures that there is no charge for a student's first entry to a prescribed public examination, provided that the examination is part of the National Curriculum, and the student has been adequately prepared during school hours.

#### Additional Charges

A charge will be levied if a student needs to re-sit an examination. However, this fee will be waived if the re-sit is part of the school's educational provision or if specific government guidance applies. Other cases where charges apply include:

- Re-marks and Clerical Checks: If students or their parents/carers request a re-mark, clerical check, or detailed feedback on admissions test papers, associated costs will be charged to the requesting party.
- Requests for Scripts: A fee will be charged for obtaining copies of examination scripts at the request of the student or their parents/carers.
- Unprepared Examinations: If a student opts to take an examination in a subject for which the school has not provided preparatory instruction (for example, an additional language), a charge will be applied.

- University Entrance Tests: Charges will also apply for examinations required for university entrance, such as the BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT) or the UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCAT).
- Non-Attendance: Should a student fail to attend an examination without a valid reason, a charge will be made to cover the entry fee initially paid by the school. The school reserves the right to determine what constitutes a valid reason.
- Low Attendance: In cases where a student's overall attendance falls below 90% without a valid reason, the student may be charged if their low attendance impacts their examination entry or preparation.
- Each of these charges will consist of the fee levied by the relevant examination board, in addition to an administration fee to cover the school's processing costs. These guidelines ensure that the financial implications of examination-related activities are clear and fair for all parties involved.

The charge will comprise the fee levied by the Examinations Board, plus an administration fee to be retained by the school.

## **6. MUSIC TUITION**

Music education is an integral part of the curriculum, and the Trust is committed to ensuring that all students have access to musical tuition without financial barriers, particularly when it forms part of their formal education.

### Free Tuition During School Hours

No charges will be imposed for class-based musical tuition during school hours or out-of-school hours when the tuition is part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or is required by the National Curriculum. In cases where a student requires additional tuition to prepare for a public examination offered by the school, these lessons will be provided by a school-appointed music teacher at the required standard, at no cost to the student.

### Promotion of Additional Musical Tuition

Beyond the curriculum, the Trust actively promotes musical education by offering practice rooms in each school, enabling students to engage in individual or group musical tuition. This policy is designed to foster a love of music and to support the development of students' musical talents.

### Optional Music Lessons by Third-Party Instructors

At the request of a student's parent or carer, a student may receive additional tuition in a musical instrument or vocal training, either individually or in groups. In these cases, tuition is provided by third-party peripatetic music instructors, and charges will apply. It is important to note that this arrangement is entirely voluntary and is governed by a contract between the parents/carers and the music instructor. The Trust and the individual schools do not provide supervision or quality assurance for these lessons.

Where charges are applicable for these optional music lessons, the parent/carers will be invoiced directly by the third-party instructor. The financial and contractual relationship exists solely between

the parent/carer and the peripatetic music instructor, with the Trust playing no role in the administration or oversight of these arrangements.

This approach ensures that essential music education remains accessible to all students, while also providing opportunities for those who wish to pursue additional musical instruction beyond the standard curriculum.

## **7. CURRICULUM RESOURCES AND MATERIALS**

Education provided during school hours is free of charge, ensuring that every student has equal access to the resources necessary for their learning.

### Free Provision of Essential Resources

There will be no charges for books, materials, or equipment deemed essential to meet the requirements of the school curriculum. This includes textbooks, revision guides, test papers, and other similar resources that support the teaching of subjects. In addition, some materials may be provided electronically via the school's virtual learning environment, further enhancing accessibility.

### Voluntary Contributions for Optional Extras

While the core educational resources are provided free of charge, the Trust may occasionally request voluntary contributions for optional extras, such as printed photocopies or other supplementary materials. It is important to note that these contributions are entirely voluntary. All students will be provided with the necessary resources to meet the requirements of the school curriculum, regardless of whether their parents or carers choose to contribute.

### Charges for Specific Materials in Practical Subjects

In subjects like design or food technology, where students have the opportunity to create physical products, the Trust may charge for the cost of materials or ingredients, but only when parents have indicated in advance that they would like their child to bring the finished product home. This ensures that practical learning experiences are supported while providing flexibility for parents regarding any additional costs.

## **8. PRINTING AND PHOTOCOPYING**

Given the environmental and financial impact of unrestricted access to printing and photocopying facilities, the Trust has implemented a policy to manage these resources responsibly.

- **Printing Allocation:** Students will receive a limited free allocation of printing each term to ensure fair and sustainable use of resources.
- **Charges for Excess Usage:** If students exceed their allocated printing limit, additional charges will apply. This encourages mindful use of printing resources and helps reduce unnecessary waste.
- **Cost and Arrangement Information:** Detailed information regarding printing costs and the procedures for managing allocations can be found on each school's website or by contacting the School Office.

## **9. COMPUTERS AND TABLETS**

The Trust and schools within it are prohibited from charging for education and the provision of materials, books, instruments, or other equipment, including tablets, during school hours. However, while direct charges cannot be imposed, parents can be asked to make voluntary contributions.

Additionally, legislation allows schools to charge for materials if a parent wishes their child to own the materials.

### Voluntary Contributions

Any requests for contributions related to Trust or school-organised IT schemes (e.g., for laptops or tablets) must clearly state that these contributions are voluntary. It must be explicitly communicated that if a parent is unable or unwilling to contribute, their child will not be treated differently or excluded from any activities or the use of necessary equipment.

### Encouraging Independent Purchases

The Trust or schools may encourage parents to purchase computers or tablets independently to support learning at home. However, it must be ensured that all students have access to the necessary resources for the school curriculum, regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to provide this support.

## **10. LOSS OR DAMAGE TO PROPERTY**

The Trust has established a policy regarding the loss, damage, or breakage of school property. If school property—such as books, windows, furniture, scientific equipment, etc.—is lost, damaged, or broken due to negligence or a deliberate act, the responsible party will be charged for the cost of replacement or repair. The Headteacher will determine the appropriate charge. Similarly, if property belonging to a third party is wilfully damaged, neglected, or lost, and the cost is recharged to the school, a corresponding charge will be levied.

For learning resources provided to individual students (e.g., textbooks, library books, tablet computers, student planners), parents or carers will be required to cover the cost of replacing any items that are lost or not returned by the specified date. The replacement cost will be based on the value of the item as new.

The school will arrange for invoices to be sent to parents or carers, or for payments to be made through the school's payment system (ParentPay).

## **11. TRANSPORT**

Parents/carers may be required to meet the cost of transport from home to an activity sanctioned but not provided by the school (this includes but is not limited to travel to Work Experience).

## **12. SCHOOL FUND**

Each school within the Trust operates a scheme for voluntary donations from parents/carers, alumni and students (known as the 'School Fund'). Funds donated to a school may only be used for the benefit of the individual school to which the donation was made. Parents/carers will be invited to make a financial contribution to the School Fund, which may be used to:

- i. Provide educational experiences for students, including sport/PE, music and drama, as well as wider enrichment activities.
- ii. Acquire educational resources and fixed assets which would otherwise be unaffordable from the school's main budget.
- iii. Support the school community through celebration events and prizegiving, and through activities and events in art, music, sport, school productions and other relevant areas.

From time to time an appeal may be launched by the school in order to help finance a particular project. It will be made clear in correspondence to parents/carers inviting contributions to School Fund, or to individual appeals, that such contributions are wholly voluntary.

### **13. REMISSION OF CHARGES**

#### Parents/Carers on Benefits

Students of parents or carers receiving benefits are typically eligible for Free School Meals and may also qualify for additional fee remissions.

#### General Remissions

Students in receipt of free school meals and those eligible for pupil premium may, at the discretion of the Trust, also be eligible for a full or part remission of charges in relation to:

- Enrichment activities
- Examination / remark fees
- Music tuition
- Curriculum resources and materials
- Printing and photocopying
- Loss or damage to property
- Transport

Full details of the individual school's procedures for supporting parents/carers on low incomes are set out on the school's website and information is also available from the School Office. Further information is set out in the Trust's Free School Meals and Pupil Premium Procedures (also available on the website).

In many cases, the arrangements for financial support exceed the minimum legal requirements (e.g. uniform grants) and reflect the Trust's policy of trying to ensure full participation in school life for all students. Please refer to the individual school's websites or contact the School Office for more information.

#### Music Remissions and Looked After Children

The cost of individual instrumental music tuition will be remitted where the tuition is provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or is required by the National Curriculum (where followed).

No charge may be made for individual music tuition provided in school hours in respect of a Looked after Child (as defined in the Children Act 1989).