



Charging and Remissions Policy

Further advice and guidance on this policy can be obtained from the central Schools Support Services Finance Team or James Nicholson Chief Finance Officer, jnicholson@academiesenterprisetrust.org

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 The Trust acknowledges the right of every pupil to receive free school education and understands that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching time must be made available to all pupils regardless of their parents'/carers' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.

1.2 The Trust also recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, trips and residential experiences can make towards pupils' education and aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils in each academy and as additional optional activities.

1.3 This Policy allows each academy to charge for defined activities and any other activities beyond the basic provision of education. Parents/carers will be made aware of the policy through the academy prospectus and they can make comments on it.

1.4 Parents/carers may be advised that the continuance of an activity may depend upon voluntary contributions but once it has been decided to run such an activity, no Qualifying Pupil will be excluded on the grounds of voluntary contributions.

1.5 Parents/carers of Qualifying Pupils will be eligible for support from the Trust for contributions towards the cost of school visits. They should speak to the headteacher/principal of the academy that the child attends to ensure that the academy is aware of their position so that it can assist as necessary.

1.6 The Trust respects and at all times works within the the guidance set out in the Department for Education's publication "Charging for School Activities".

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 It is the responsibility of the Group to establish a policy and core procedures for charging pupils to participate in academy activities and for the academy to monitor the effects of the procedure.

2.2 It is the responsibility of the principal/headteacher to ensure that the policy is implemented consistently and using fair criteria, in particular that the academy's equal opportunities policies are observed. The principal/headteacher and finance officer are also responsible for ensuring that staff, parents/carers and pupils know the details of the policy as appropriate.

2.3 It is the responsibility of all staff to familiarise themselves, and comply, with this policy and core procedures in accordance with relevant professional standards. Some staff may be responsible for implementing the policy as part of their overall responsibilities.

3. MONITORING AND REVIEW

3.1 Senior leaders will report on the operation of the policy to the principal/headteacher as appropriate.

3.2 The principal/headteacher will report to their phase director and/or Board of Trustees on any relevant aspects of the working of the policy as appropriate.

3.3 The policy will be reviewed every two years.

4. CORE PROCEDURES – CHARGING AND REMISSIONS

The academy reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances for activities organised by it:

4.1 Instrumental music lessons: the academy will charge, at cost, for practical instrumental lessons held during the school day where a parent/carer has requested those lessons. No charge can be made in relation to a pupil who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(l) of the Children Act 1989).

4.2 Practical subjects: in order that that pupils may experience a wide range of activities and develop essential basic skills, a number of items will be made either to take home and keep or to consume on the premises. Therefore, a letter will be sent to all parents/carers in advance of the planned activity taking place, and to parents/carers of pupils admitted during the school year, asking them to make a voluntary contribution for materials and equipment used in this way. Where parents/carers have indicated in writing that they wish to own a finished product, a charge may be made. The charge shall not exceed the cost of the materials used by the pupil.

4.3 Private use of facilities: Academies may allow the private use of facilities using the following guidelines for charging:

4.3.1 If facilities are used by groups associated directly with the academy pupils and staff, then it is permissible to waive hire costs

4.3.2 If facilities are hired by local community groups, which include the Trusts' beneficiaries as set out in the governing documents, then hire costs should be set to cover any out-of-pocket costs to the academy related to the hire, such as heating, lighting and caretaking costs

4.3.3 If facilities are hired to commercial organisations, then a market rate should be charged for the hire of facilities.

4.3.4 Private use of the telephone and photocopying facilities by pupils is not generally permitted. However, in the rare case that a private telephone call has to be made it is deemed to be an emergency and no charge should be made.

4.4 Trips and Visits

4.4.1 General matters:

i. The academy is permitted to charge for the provision of educational services by a third party. The academy will ensure that the monies are paid to the third party organisation.

ii. If the activity is in school time, the academy will formally grant leave of absence to the pupils taking part, as the activity would no longer technically be part of the academy's official programme. It is likely, too, that any staff taking part in the activity would also have to be granted leave of absence.

The principal/headteacher must consider carefully the position of accompanying staff, depending on the precise nature and duration of the trip.

4.4.2 Trips and visits during the school day:

Schools should make it clear to parents at the outset that parents/carers cannot be asked for a compulsory payment for any trip or visit that is taking place during a normal school day. Voluntary payments (including full staff costs) can be requested but if the trip or visit proceeds, pupils wishing to go but whose parents/carers are not prepared to pay, must be allowed to attend. This will probably mean that insufficient funds will be available and the member of staff involved will seek additional funding from the principal/headteacher. If this is not possible, the trip or visit must be cancelled.

4.4.3 Optional extra trips and visits out of school time:

These are trips and visits where at least half of the time for the trip is out of normal school hours. Here the parents/carers can be asked to meet the full cost of the trip or visit.

4.4.4 Residential trips and visits including study visits abroad:

Where at least half of the time away from home is not normal school time or where the work undertaken is not an integral part of the examination course, the trip or visit can be classified as optional. As an optional trip or visit, the cost of board and lodging for the pupils can be passed on to parents/carers. This cost will not exceed the actual cost of the provision and the parent/carer is required to pay the charge before the start of the trip.

4.4.5 It is normal practice to expect that parents/carers will pay agreed amounts due in advance of trips or activities taking place but recovery of sums payable by parents/carers e.g. for wasted examination fees, optional extras to which they have agreed, or for board and lodging, are recoverable as a civil debt.

4.4.6 Breakages and fines: parents/carers will be charged for the cost of replacing damaged or lost equipment where appropriate.

4.4.7 Transport: where a pupil makes use of transport not provided by the Trust to travel direct from home to an activity sanctioned, though not provided by the Trust, then parents/carers will be expected to meet the costs of such travel.

4.4.8 School Uniform: where an academy organises a service to provide school uniform parents/carers will be charged at cost (including VAT if applicable) for the uniform that is sold to them.

4.4.9 Stationery and Equipment: Pupils are usually expected to provide their own basic stationery and equipment, but where academies provide items of stationery and equipment for sale as an additional service, then parents/carers and pupils may be charged at cost for such items.

4.4.10 Books: Academies will not charge for compulsory textbooks and workbooks etc..but may

charge at cost for additional non-compulsory items, which may further support pupils' learning. If a parent/carer wants a pupil to own their textbooks or workbooks these will be charged at cost by the academy.

4.4.11 Food and Drink: Academies will charge pupils for food and drink provided by academy refectories, unless they qualify for free school meals. Food and drink for staff will be charged, unless they are involved in the supervision or support of pupils where individual academies may decide to provide refreshment.. Food and drink for visitors and for academy organised meetings, events etc... will be charged at the discretion of the academy. Members of the public and organisers of external public events will be expected to pay for any food and drink that is purchased from the academy refectory.

5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

5.1 Parents/carers of pupils who are in receipt of the following support payments will, in addition to having free school meals entitlement, also be entitled to request the remission of charges in full or part:

- Universal Credit with an annual earned income of £7,400 or less (after tax and not including any benefits received), or
- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on

When arranging a chargeable activity such parents/carers will be eligible in confidence for the remission of charges in full or in part. The principal/headteacher in consultation with the chair of governors will make authorisation for such remission.

5.2 The Trust is sympathetic to those parents/carers who are unable to afford the cost of additional activities and/or extra-curricular activities, and have limited funds available to assist parents/carers in particularly difficult financial circumstances. When a school informs parents about a forthcoming visit, they should make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits will be exempt from paying board and lodging costs.

Glossary

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