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# CHARGING & REMISSIONS POLICY

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## 1. Policy Overview

The Trust is committed to the general principle of state funded education and recognizes the valuable contribution that a wide range of activities, including school visits and residential experiences, can make towards all aspects of students' education. It also believes that all our students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from academy activities and visits (curricular and extracurricular) independent of their parent's financial means.

The 1996 Education Act requires all schools to have policies for charging and for remissions for school activities, which are kept under regular review.

## 2. Charging Policy

### 2.1 Admissions

No charge shall be made in respect of admissions.

### 2.2 Education Provided Within School Hours

Education provided by an Academy for its registered pupils is free of charge if it takes place wholly or mainly during school hours, school hours being those hours when a school is actually in session and not including the break in the middle of the day. This means that neither the pupil nor his or her parents or guardian may be required to pay for, or to supply, any materials, books, instruments or other equipment for use in connection with education provided during school hours except where parents have indicated in advance their willingness to purchase the products for a pupil to own.

An exception applies for tuition in relation to singing or playing a musical instrument (see below)

An exception applies to allow an Academy to charge parents for early years provision in school hours where:

- There is not a legislative duty to provide early years provision free of charge (under s7 of Childcare Act 2007) and
- The pupil is below compulsory school age and
- That the provision is not otherwise funded by the Government.

### 2.3 Education Provided Out of School Hours

Where education is provided out of school hours, charging for education is permitted, except where the education is provided:

- a) to fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus for a prescribed public examination; or
- b) specifically, to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum:
- c) to fulfil duties relating to Religious Education.
- d) to fulfil legislative duty to provide early years provision free of charge (under s7 of Childcare Act 2007)

In these cases, the only charge that may be made is for board and lodging on a residential trip. (see below).

### 2.4 Is an activity in or out of school time?

If the time spent on education sessions in an activity that falls in school hours is equal to or greater than 50% then the whole activity will be treated as within school time.

For residential trips, if the number of education sessions is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on a trip it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some of the activities take place 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' for this calculation is defined as any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

## 2.5 Board and Lodging on Residential Visits

Board & lodging on residential visits may be charged for whether or not the visit takes place within school time and whether or not the activity is provided to fulfil the requirements of the syllabus of a prescribed public examination; or of the National Curriculum; or to fulfil statutory duties relating to religious education.

Charges for board and lodging must not exceed the actual cost to the pupil.

## 2.6 Music Tuition

The main exception under The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 to the principle of all education during school hours is free, is that a charge may be made in respect of musical instrument and vocal tuition, either individually or in groups provided this is at the request of the parent before a pupil is given that tuition.

The tuition must not be an essential part of the National Curriculum nor provided under the first access to the key stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme.

No charge may be made for pupils looked after by a local authority.

## 2.7 Public Examination Entries

The governing body of each Academy is required to enter a pupil for each examination in a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the pupil has been prepared and pay the examination entry fee.

A pupil is regarded as having been prepared for the syllabus at the school if the school has provided any part of the necessary preparation. The requirement to enter a pupil may only be lifted where, in the opinion of the governing body, there are educational reasons for not entering the pupil.

The school may charge a fee to parents for examination entries only where:

- a The school has not prepared students for the examination or resit in the year for which the entry is made and the parent's agreement for examination entry has been received; or
- b The student has failed, for no good reason, to complete the requirements of the examination or to attend for it.

## 2.8 Transport

Any transport provided in school hours by the Trust to carry particular pupils between parts of the school's premises or between the school and any other place where education is to be provided by the Trust must be provided free of charge. However, if 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, through parental agreement to this use, then parents may be asked to meet the cost of such travel. An example of this would be travel direct from home to work shadowing and vice versa.

## 2.9 'Optional extra' Activities and charging policy

Activities above where charges may be made are referred to as 'Optional extras'

Participation will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet such charges as are made. Any charge made in respect of individual pupils may include an appropriate element for the following: a pupil's travel costs; a pupil's board and lodging; materials, books, instruments and other equipment; provision of buildings and accommodation used in connection with the provision of the optional extra: non-teaching staff costs; entrance fees to museums, music exam fees, theatres etc; insurance costs.

It should be noted that any charge for an 'optional extra' activity, as distinct from a request for a voluntary contribution, should not exceed the actual cost of providing that activity, divided equally by the number of

pupils willing to participate. It may not, therefore, include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

The costs (or appropriate proportion of costs) of teaching staff involved in optional extra activities may only be passed on through charges if:-

- they are engaged specifically for the purpose of providing the activity;
- they are employed by the Trust to provide instrumental music tuition; or
- they are teachers (or supply teachers) already employed by the Trust, who have been engaged on a separate contract for services to provide the optional extra.
- they are employed by the Trust for the purpose of providing early years provision

## 2.10 Other Charges

### **Breakages and Fines**

There is nothing to prevent Academies within the Trust from asking parents to pay for the cost of replacing damaged school property where this is the result of a pupil's behaviour.

## 2.11 Voluntary Contributions

The Trust may seek from time to time voluntary contributions to benefit an Academy or support an Academy activity including inviting parents to contribute to materials or ingredients for particular curriculum projects. There may also be requests for annual donations to general funds to benefit the Academy. However, all requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that pupils of parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have. If the activity cannot be funded or go ahead without voluntary contributions this will be made clear to parents at the outset and if insufficient funds are raised by the contributions and the activity cannot be funded from another source then the activity will have to be cancelled.

There is no limit to the level of voluntary contributions which parents or others can make to school activities, the contributions must be used for the purpose specified in the request for them.

## 3. Remissions Policy

### 3.1 What are remissions?

Remissions are circumstances where, either statutorily or through the direction of the Trust Board/ Local Governing Bodies, Academies will meet (in whole or in part) any charge payable under the above charging policy for a registered pupil at the Trust.

### 3.2 Remissions through Trust Board direction – Hardship funding

It is the Trust's policy to charge for all board and lodging on residential activities. However, Academies within the Trust can operate Disadvantage Funding Policies indicating where Governors have agreed to meet charges to assist with the inclusion of students suffering financial hardship. The policy can include the criteria and process for claims for the following funding:

- an annual allocation of funding approved by Governors (a Hardship fund) available to all students
- fixed vulnerable bursaries and discretionary bursaries available to students aged 16-19.

Details of any such policies are available on each Academy's website or upon request direct from each Academy.

### 3.3 Recovery of charges

As directed in the Education Act 1996, any sums payable as optional extras by a parent of a registered pupil of the Trust shall be recoverable summarily as a civil debt which could involve the processing of a claim through the Small Claims Court.

### 3.4 Disputes

The Headteacher in each Academy will be responsible in determining any individual cases arising from the implementation of this policy.