

Charging and Remissions Policy

History of document: To be reviewed annually and re-approved every three years, or sooner if deemed necessary.

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1. CHARGING POLICY

The Trust is committed to the general principle of education that is free of charge at the point of use and recognises 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/carer's financial circumstances.

The Trust recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end the following guidelines will be used in Trust schools:

- where possible a list of visits (and their approximate cost) will be published at the beginning of the school year so that parents/carers can plan ahead.
- we have established a system for parents/carers to pay in instalments.
- when an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip.
- we acknowledge that offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

The 1996 Education Act requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities, which will be kept under regular review.

The policy identifies activities for which:

- voluntary contributions may be requested.
- charges will be made.
- charges will not be made.
- charges may be waived.

1.1 VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Separately from the matter of charging, schools may seek voluntary contributions in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to pupils. All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that pupils of parents/carers who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have. This will include contributions for practical activities during the school year.

The Law states:

- if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the Governing Body or Headteacher will make this clear to parents from the outset
- no child will be excluded from an activity because his or her parents/carers are unable or unwilling to pay
- if insufficient contributions are received, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled
- if a parent/carer is unwilling or unable to pay their child will still be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

Swimming

The schools in the Trust organise swimming lessons for all children in Key Stage 2. These take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum. We make no charge for this activity. However, we do ask for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of transport and tuition. We inform parents/carers when these lessons are to take place and we ask parents/carers for their written permission for their child to take part in swimming lessons.

1.2 CHARGES WILL BE MADE

The Trust reserves the right to make a charge for the following activities which may from time to time be organised by the school:

Activities outside school hours - the school will endeavour to provide a range of such activities from time to time. These will sometimes include day and residential experiences, and are known generally as 'optional extras'. Charges may be made for these activities EXCEPT where they are provided to fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus of a prescribed public examination or are required in order to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to religious education in which case they are not regarded as optional extras as such and charges cannot be made. Board and lodging charges may still however be made for any residential activities subject to the remission arrangements described below (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours). Where a charge is not made a voluntary contribution will be sought.

Residential activities held during school hours - charges may be made for the board and lodging element of those residential activities during school hours. Parents/carers will be notified in advance of any such activities which the school proposes to organise and the estimated cost. Parent/carer consent will be obtained for their children's participation in any such activities for which a charge may be made. However pupils whose parents/carers are in receipt of certain benefits (see remissions policy below) may not be charged for board and lodging costs

Music tuition - music tuition for individuals or groups of up to 4 pupils

Home to school student transport - costs incurred by the school in providing home to school transport for students who live outside the school's designated catchment area.

Planners – these are essential for organisation for students in Years 12 & 13. Whilst the academy subsidises the cost of these, we ask that, at enrolment, all students pay a pre-agreed sum towards the two-year cost of the Associated Sixth Form Student Planners.

Breakages – in cases of wilful or malicious damage to equipment, breakages or loss of school books or equipment on loan to pupils the Trust, through its Head Teachers, may decide to make a charge. Each incident will be dealt with on its own merit and at their discretion.

Parents/carers will be notified in advance of any 'optional extras' which the school proposes to organise and the estimated cost. Parent/carer consent will be obtained if their children are to participate in any activities for which a charge may be made.

Any charge for a particular activity will be dependent upon the type of activity and its cost and the number of participants. This charge will not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity, divided equally by the number of pupils willing to participate. The cost of other pupils participating in the visit will not be included in the charge. The charge may however include an appropriate element for such things as:

- . the pupil's travel costs
- . the pupil's board and lodging costs
- . materials, books, instruments and other equipment
- . non-teaching staff costs
- . entrance fees to museums, castles, theatres, etc.
- . insurance costs
- . the expenses only of participating teachers engaged on a separate contract for services to provide the 'optional extra'

If the number of school sessions on a residential trip is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the trip it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late 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” means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

1.3 CHARGES WILL NOT BE MADE

Charges will not be made for the following:

-An admission application.

-Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment).

-Education provided 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 at the school, or part of the school’s basic curriculum for religious education.

-Tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.

-Examinations – No charge shall be made in respect of the first entry of a registered pupil for a prescribed public exam for which the pupil has been prepared at the school, unless the pupil fails without good reason to meet any examination requirement for that syllabus. If a student has not regularly attended the lessons for a particular examination subject, the examination fee may be requested, refundable if the student attends for examination. There may be a charge for examination entry where there is a request from the parent for additional subject entries to be made which are not supported by the school. Should a student not turn up for an examination the school may apply a charge up to the cost of the examination fee.

-Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours.

-Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours, that is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of the school’s basic curriculum for religious education.

-Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip.

-Transport provided in connection with an educational trip.

1.4 FACILITIES

Schools may enter into agreements for the supply of goods and services to other public bodies and as an educational establishment it is acceptable to sell a small range of goods to pupils to enable them to undertake their studies.

Additionally there are a number of fees and charges that a school may levy at its own discretion, with the Local Governing Body setting the scale of charges. These are largely, but not exclusively:

- Hire of Equipment.
- Sale of produce.
- Sale of surplus equipment. (See the Trust's Finance Policy).
- Charging for personal use of telephones.
- Charging for personal use of photocopying.

Any charges will be at the discretion of the individual school Headteachers and would be at no more than cost.

1.5 LETTINGS

The Trust has established its own, separate, Lettings Policy.

1.6 REMISSIONS

The Trust is mindful of the need to remove financial barriers wherever possible and is therefore prepared to give consideration to requests for financial assistance from parents/carers in receipt of state benefits.

Without any commitment on behalf of the Trust, consideration will be given to requests for help towards any event for which a charge is required, and appropriate, and will be viewed on the individual merits of the request at that time.

Additional categories of parents may claim help with some costs in the following circumstances:

- specific individual circumstances that have caused temporary hardship.
- recently moved into hardship but not yet receiving the benefits mentioned above.
- made a specific request to the Headteacher for any other justifiable reason. The remission is at the Headteacher's discretion in these circumstances based on any evidence provided.
- For pupils at Richard Taylor Primary School written applications for financial support may be made to the Richard Taylor Trust.