

Charging & Remissions Policy

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1. Introduction and Policy Aims

The Trust recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities it offers in its academies, including after-school/breakfast clubs, enrichment, out of academy trips, residential and experiences of other environments, can make towards students' all round educational experience and their personal and social development. It aims to provide accessibility and equality of opportunity for all students regarding these activities.

This policy aims to:

- a) ensure that Trust academies have in place clear and robust processes for dealing with charges and remissions
- b) set out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will be made
- c) set out the types of activity which Trust academies will not charge for
- d) outline how parents may access financial support with the cost of trips or other activities as appropriate.

(Throughout this policy, the term "parent/carer" means all those having legal parental responsibility for a child.)

This policy takes account of the Department for Education guidance 'Charging for School Activities' published in May 2018 and the Education Act 1996, sections 449-462, which academies must comply with through their funding agreements.

2. Definitions

Charge: a fee payable for specifically defined activities

Remission: the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

3. Overriding Principles

Subject to limited exceptions referred to in this policy, trust academies cannot charge for education provided during school hours (including the supply of materials, books, instruments and other equipment).

All academies must ensure that they inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of state benefits of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

Trust academies will support low income families and those in receipt of state benefits with subsidies as far as possible to ensure that pupils do not miss out on valuable educational and extra-curricular experiences. Each trust academy will hold a limited fund for this purpose.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors has overall responsibility for approving Trust policies and have

delegated the decision to approve the Charging and Remissions policy to the Finance and Premises Committee, along with the responsibility to monitor the implementation of this policy.

4.2 Director of Finance and Operations

The Director of Finance and Operations is responsible for monitoring academy compliance with this policy and for reporting areas of non-compliance to Directors.

4.3 Academy Principals

The Principal is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the content of the charges and remissions policy and that its terms are applied fairly and consistently in their academy.

4.4 Staff

Staff are responsible for implementing the charges and remissions policy and ensuring that it is applied consistently. Staff must notify the Principal of any circumstances in which they are uncertain whether the policy applies. Advice can also be sought from the Trust finance department.

4.5 Parents

Parents are expected to notify staff or the academy Principal of any concerns or queries regarding the charges and remissions policy.

5. Where charges cannot be made

The Board of Directors recognises that it cannot charge for the following:-

5.1 Education

- an admission application to any academy;
- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment) with the exception of the provisions within 6.1 below;
- 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 religious education;
- instrumental or vocal tuition for pupils learning individually or in groups unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent.
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the academy; and
- examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the academy

5.2 Transport

- Transporting registered pupils to or from academy premises, where the local authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the Governing Board or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated.
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he or she has been prepared for that examination at the academy
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

5.3 Residential Visits

- Education on any visit that takes place during school hours
- Education provided on any visit that takes place outside of school hours if it is part of:
 - a) The national curriculum
 - b) A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the academy
 - c) Religious education
 - d) The cost of supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

6. Where charges can be made

The Board of Directors recognises that it can charge for:

6.1 Education

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes them to own them
- Music and Vocal tuition where this has been requested by the parent (see 6.3 below)
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities
- Activities which are Optional extras (see 6.2 below)

6.2 Optional Extras

We are able to charge for activities known as optional extras. In these cases academies can charge for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. The following are optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not part of the national curriculum, a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the academy or religious education.
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination at the academy.
- Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or other premises that the governing board or local authority has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education).
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
- Extended day services offered to pupils (such as breakfast clubs, after school clubs, and supervised homework sessions)

When calculating the cost of optional extras, an amount may be included in relation to:

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra
- The cost of buildings and accommodation
- Non-teaching staff
- Staff engaged under contracts purely to provide an optional extra (including supply staff engaged specifically to provide the optional extra)
- The cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not be greater than the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating.

Any charge will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils who wish to take part in the activity but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate.

Parental agreement is necessary for the provision of an optional extra which is to be charged for.

6.3 Music Tuition

Academies can charge for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of pupils provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent.

Charges cannot be made in the following circumstances:

- If the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum
- If the teaching is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 instrumental and vocal tuition programme
- For a pupil who is looked after by a local authority

6.4 Residential Visits

Academies can charge for board and lodgings on residential visits, but the charge must not exceed the actual cost per pupil.

7. Voluntary Contributions

As an exception to the requirements set out in section 5 of this policy, academies are able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents to fund activities during school hours which would not otherwise be possible.

Some activities for which academies may ask parents for voluntary contributions include:

- School trips and visits
- Sports activities

There is no obligation for parents to make any contribution, and no child will be excluded from an activity if their parents are unable or unwilling to pay.

However, if academies are unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit then it will be cancelled.

Academies will make the above points clear in any correspondence with parents where voluntary contributions are requested for an activity.

8. Activities that we charge for

Trust academies will charge for the following activities:

- Breakfast club
- After school clubs
- Sports clubs
- Enrichment activities which do not form part of the national curriculum
- Insurance cover for pupils while attending school trips and visits, which do not form part of the national curriculum
- Pre-school provision not funded by the local authority

Academies will publish the relevant charges for these activities and explain how the charge is calculated on request.

9. Remissions

In some circumstances academies may elect not to charge for items or activities set out in sections 5 and 7 of this policy.

9.1 Remissions for residential visits

Parents who can prove they are in receipt of any of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging for residential visits:

- Income support
- Income based Jobseekers 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 (provided that the Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's annual gross income does not exceed £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (this is paid for 4 weeks after an individual stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit (if the application was made on or after 1 April 2018, the family's income must be less than £7,400 per year – after tax and not including any benefits).

9.2 Discretionary Remissions

Families who do not fall within the above criteria but who are experiencing financial hardship may apply to the Principal of their child's Academy for remissions from residential visits and other activities. Each application will be reviewed on a case by case basis and the decision of the Principal whether or not to fund the application will be final.

10. Monitoring Arrangements

Academy Principals will monitor charges and remissions in their academy to ensure compliance with this policy.

The Director of Finance and Operations, supported by the Trust internal auditor will monitor academies use of and compliance with this policy.

Trust leaders will monitor Academies to ensure that their decisions regarding the application of this policy are fair and equitable to all groups.

The Finance & Premises Committee will monitor the performance of this policy at the annual review stage.