

CHARGING & REMISSIONS POLICY

Charging and Remissions Policy for Pupils

Introduction

In accordance with Section 33 of the Schools Funding Agreement, the Academy Trust is required to determine the charging and remissions policies required to address Section 457 of the Education Act 1996 and for these to be approved by the Secretary of State for Education.

The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of activities including clubs, trips, and residential experiences can make towards a pupils' personal and social education.

The Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the Academy and as additional optional activities.

1 Charges

The Governing Body reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances for activities organised by the Academy.

1.1 School Journeys in School Hours

The board and lodging element of residential activities deemed to take place within Academy hours for the following activities:-

- a) Trips and visits organised by the school

1.2 Activities outside Academy Hours

The full cost to each pupil of activities deemed to be optional extras taking place outside school hours for the following activities:-

- a) Visits to performances including theatre, dance, music, drama:
- b) Visits abroad including residential activities such as French/German exchanges and during trips, day visits;
- c) Residential activities including camping;
- d) Visits to sporting activities such as professional football matches;
- e) Entrance to activities organised by PTA or the school such as quiz evenings, dances, concerts, drama productions, clubs, leisure activities.

1.3 Music Tuition

The cost to the pupil for providing instrumental tuition:-

Current legislation allows pupils to be charged for instrumental music tuition. A charge may not be levied where the tuition is provided as part of a recognised external examination course within the school's curriculum.

1.4 Materials & Equipment

The cost of purchase or hire of instruments, materials, equipment or clothing (or the provision of them by parents) for the following activities:-

- a) Specialist clothing for sports activities (see uniform list);
- b) Optional protective clothing for, e.g., CDT, Food Technology, (aprons).
- c) Specialist materials required by pupils e.g. Art (Art Pack), technology (wood or other materials) 39

The Governing Body may charge for materials or require them to be provided if parents have indicated in advance that they wish to own any finished product produced in Academy.

1.5 Examination Fees (secondary education only)

- a) Where a pupil has not been prepared for a public examination by the school or where the Academy has provided no further preparation for a re-sit, the Governing Body may make a charge for the cost of entering the pupil for the examination if previously agreed by the parents.
- b) If a pupil fails without good reason to complete the examination requirements for a public examination for which the Academy has paid (or is liable to pay), an entry fee then the Governing Body may recover the fee from the parent.
- c) Instrumental graded examinations are to be paid by parents.

1.6 General

- a) The cost of repairing damage and replacing equipment (lost, defaced or damaged) remains the responsibility of the parents when this damage or loss is the result of their child's behaviour or negligence.
- b) The Governing Body may from time to time amend the categories of activity which a charge may be made.
- c) Nothing in this policy precludes the Governing Body from inviting parents to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of providing education for pupils.

2 Remissions

2.1 The Governing Body will remit in full the cost of board and lodgings for any residential activity that it organises for the pupil if the activity is deemed to take place within the school hours or where it forms part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or the National Curriculum.

2.2 Charges will not be made where a pupil is in receipt of (or registered for) Pupil Premium. The nationally agreed criteria for which the family is in receipt of:-

- Income Support.
- Income based Job Seeker's Allowance.
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance.
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit.
- Child Tax Credit as long as the individual is not in receipt of Working Tax Credit.
- If supported by Part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Working Tax Credit during the four-week period immediately after employment finishes or after starting work less than 16 hours per week.

- Incapacity Benefit or Widowed Parent's Allowance.
- Other exceptional circumstances not falling within the criteria above.

In other circumstances, there may be cases of family hardship which make it difficult for pupils to take part in particular activities for which a charge is made. When arranging a chargeable activity the Governing Body will invite parents to apply in confidence for the remission of charges in part or in full. Authorisation of the remission will be made by Headteacher in consultation with Chair of Governors.

Voluntary contributions

The Trust will seek voluntary contributions for any activity in order to benefit the Trust or support a Trust activity whether during or outside school hours, residential or non-residential and including inviting parents to pay for materials or ingredients where they wish to own the finished product. 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 contributed. Such contributions will be genuinely voluntary. There is no limit to the level of voluntary contributions which parents or others can make to school activities, nor is there any restriction placed on the use which can be made of such contributions, provided they are used for the purpose specified in the request for them. They could, for example, be used to subsidise pupils from low-income families, or the cost of travel for accompanying teachers.

The Law says that:

- If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the parents will be notified of this from the outset.
- No child will be excluded from an activity because the parents are unable to pay.
- If insufficient contributions are raised the trip or activity may have to be cancelled.
- If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay their child will be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

Music Tuition

The main exception to the principle of free education, which the law allows is that a charge may be made in respect of individual tuition in playing any musical instrument, even if such tuition takes place during school hours. Parental agreement must be obtained before a pupil is given that tuition. In some cases, the school can meet the cost of individual music tuition, in part or in full where hardship exists. Application for support will be made on a discretionary basis, supported by documentary evidence (see criteria in financial support).

Activities run by a Third Party

The Act permits an organisation other than the governing body to levy a charge directly on parents for activities organised in school hours by a non-school organisation. The school will not be involved in collection of charges on behalf of the third party organisation.

Where pupils are granted leave of absence to attend these activities it would be for parents and any staff members similarly released to satisfy themselves about the adequacy of the arrangements made by the third party to secure the safety and welfare of the children.

Charging Policy

a) If a charge is made for each pupil it should not exceed the actual cost. If further funds are needed for additional costs, this must be by voluntary contributions or general fund raising. In some cases, the school can meet the cost of the charge, in part or in full where hardship exists. Application for support will be made on a discretionary basis, supported by relevant documentary evidence (see criteria in financial support).

b) The permitted charge may include an allowance for the costs of teachers from the school who supervise the activity and resources to run the activity.

'Optional extra' Activities

'Optional extra' activities are those which take place wholly or mainly outside school hours, but which are not provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination and are not required in order to fulfil statutory duties relating to the national curriculum or to religious education.

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; non-teaching staff costs; entrance fees to museums, 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 of teaching staff involved in optional extra activities may only be passed on through charges if:-

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

VAT and School Journeys

To enable Academy to reclaim VAT on school journeys the visit should be part of the curriculum and the school should have purchased all elements, apart from accommodation directly.

Public Examination Entries

The 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. 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 Governors, there are educational reasons for not entering the pupil, or where the pupil's parents request in writing that the pupil should not be entered or the pupil has been involved in plagiarism or exam malpractice.

If a pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the examination requirements for any public examination for which the Governors have paid or is liable to pay an entry fee, that fee can be recovered from parents.

School Minibuses or transport provided by the LA

Any transport provided in school hours by the Academy to carry particular pupils between the school and any other place where education is to be provided the Academy will provide free of charge. However, if a pupil makes use of transport not provided by the Academy to travel direct from home to an activity sanctioned, and then parents may be asked to meet the cost of such travel. An example of this would be travel direct from home to work experience and vice versa. Hardship cases will be considered on merit.

Charging in Kind

The cost of ingredients, materials, equipment etc. needed for practical subjects such as craft or food technology, must be budgeted for and borne by the Academy. Parents who are willing to contribute in kind can however be encouraged to do so, on a voluntary basis.

The school may charge for, or require the supply of, ingredients and materials if parents have indicated in advance a wish to own the finished product, if there is one. Schools should obtain written confirmation from parents that they wish to supply or pay for materials on this basis. Pupils must not be treated differently according to whether or not materials are being provided by their parents. The Governors will make their policy on this clear. It should be recognised that much of the practical work in craft or food technology is of an investigative nature and will not necessarily result in a "finished product" however this is an essential part of the learning process.

Breakages and Vandalism

There is nothing to prevent the Academy from asking parents to pay for the cost of replacing a broken window or defaced, damaged or lost textbook where this is the result of a pupil's behaviour. In the event of non-payment, court action may be taken if it is economically viable.