

Charging & Remissions Policy

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Responsibility: Finance Committee

Charging and Remission Policy for Educational Activities

Introduction

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

Charges made will be subject to this policy taken from the EFA guide on charging.

Main points

The Academy, subject to the limited exceptions referred to in EFA guidance, cannot charge for education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment).

The Academy will ensure that it informs parents on low incomes and in receipt of the benefits listed later in this document of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to set out what charges will be made for activities, what remissions will be implemented and the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested from parents. We follow government regulations on charging as set out in Sections 449-462 of the Education Act.

What is not chargeable

The academy cannot charge for:

- an admission application - paragraph 1.9 (n) of the 'School Admissions Code 2012' rules out requests for financial contributions as any part of the admissions process;
- 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 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 school; and
- examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school.
- transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated;

- transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school; and
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

Voluntary Contributions

No child will be excluded from an activity simply because his/her parents are unwilling or unable to make a contribution. However, if insufficient voluntary contributions are received to fund a visit or activity or the school cannot fund it from some other source then there is the likelihood that it will be cancelled. When making requests for voluntary contributions no parent will be made to feel pressurised into paying as payments are voluntary and not compulsory.

School Trips and Visits

If a trip or activity takes part during school time no charge will be made. However a voluntary contribution will be requested to cover the full cost of providing the trip or activity.

If the school organises a residential visit in school time, or 50% of the visit (including travel) is within school hours, no charge will be made for activities or travel but the actual cost of board and lodging will be charged to parents. Except for those families in receipt of benefits (see 'Exception of Charges')

Materials, Textbooks and Music Tuition

What Activities are Chargeable?

Government regulations say that schools can charge for:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them;
- Music and vocal tuition that is requested by a pupil's parent as set out in 'Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007';
- Residential Visits – Board and lodging costs associated with the visit (See exceptions to charging)
- Damages or Breakages
- Optional extras;

Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as 'optional extras'. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge **can** be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment. **Optional extras are:**

Education provided outside of school time that is not:

- a) Part of the national curriculum;
 - b) Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupils is being prepared for at the school; or
 - c) Part of religious education
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;

- Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school, where entitled to free transport, or to other premises where the local authority/governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education);
- A contribution towards transport to school where there is no free entitlement.
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.

In 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
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
- The cost or an appropriate proportion of the costs for teaching 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 must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It must 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.

Furthermore 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. Therefore no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary prerequisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Residential Visits

The school cannot charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours;
- education provided on any visit that takes place 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;
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

The school can charge for:

- board and lodging and the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

When a school informs parents about a forthcoming visit, they will make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging:

- Universal Credit in prescribed circumstances;
- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190 (financial year 2013/14);
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
- an income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.

Education partly during school hours

The school will communicate in advance where it intends to charge under the following circumstances.

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. However, a charge can only be made for the activity outside school hours if it is not part of the national curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education.

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require pupils to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

Non-residential activities

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require pupils to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

Residential visits

If the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, 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.

Example 1

Pupils are away from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 9 half days including 5 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place during school hours.

Example 2

Pupils are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.

Damage and Loss of Property

In cases of wilful or malicious damage to equipment or breakages, or loss of school books or equipment on loan to pupils the Executive Head teacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors may decide to make a charge. Each incident will be dealt with on its own merit and at their discretion.

It is important that all children see that they are treated equally and fairly and that they are expected to take some level of responsibility for their actions.

Students are not allowed to bring personal items of value to the school such as mobile phones. The school does not accept responsibility for lost or damaged articles of clothing or any personal belongings.

After School Clubs

After school clubs organised directly by the school and run by school staff are offered free of charge to children. However, the school may on occasion request a small charge for some clubs i.e. clubs requiring the purchase of equipment or materials where a parent requests the finished product to be brought home with the child. Please refer to '*What Activities are Chargeable*' '*Optional Extras*'

Any afterschool clubs organised by external organisers may be chargeable.

Remission of Payments

No charges will be made unless Academy has specifically identified its charging policy as set out in this document and a remissions policy. If a charge is to be made for a particular type of activity, for example optional extras, parents will be advised how the charge will be worked out and who might qualify for help with the cost (or even get it free).

The remission of charges which would otherwise be payable in accordance with this policy are set out below.

Exception of Charges

Pupils whose parents who are in receipt of the following benefits are exempt from paying:

Universal Credit; Income Support; Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; or Child Tax Credit (providing that they do not also receive Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, assessed by the Inland Revenue that does not exceed £16,190 for the year 2013/14) and an income related employment and support allowance. Since 2003 the eligibility criteria that entitle families to an exemption from paying for the cost of board and lodging on residential visits have been aligned with free school meals eligibility criteria. The school must be notified that a family is in receipt of these benefits to ensure that parents are aware of the right to claim free board and lodging. For those families who currently receive Free School Meals, the Headteacher will inform you of your right to claim free board and lodging.