

Charges and Remissions Policy

Policy:	Charges and Remissions Policy
MAT board:	Finance Audit and Personnel
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1.0 Purpose

The Trust is required by law to adopt a policy on charging and remission arrangements for each school's activities. The Trust wishes to provide the best possible educational opportunities available for all students from the funds allocated by the Education Funding Authority. The law states very clearly that education during normal school hours is to be free of any compulsory charge to parents/carers and the trust is committed to upholding these legal requirements. However, some educationally valuable activities have been, and will continue to be, dependent on financial contributions in whole or in part from parents/carers. The Trust's concern is to keep financial contributions to a reasonable minimum, and to ensure as far as possible that all children are able to take part, irrespective of their circumstances. The law recognises that charges may be made to parents/carers in certain defined circumstances, provided that each school in the trust has identified the activities for which charges will be made, and has explained the basis on which charges may be reduced or waived for certain students.

2.0 Admissions

There is no charge for admissions.

3.0 School meals

There is no charge for meals for students who are entitled to free school meals. Students who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged as per the displayed prices.

4.0 Public examinations

There is no charge for examinations that are part of the curriculum and on the school's set examinations list, where students have been prepared for the examinations by the school. However, if the student fails without good reason to meet an examination requirement, the school may recover the fee incurred from that student's parents. There is no charge for examinations that are not on the set list, but have been arranged by the school. There is a charge of the examination entry fee(s) if the registered student has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school. See section 6.0.

5.0 Activities that take place during school hours (this does not include the break in the middle of the school day)

There is no charge for activities during school hours with the exception of music tuition (section 9.4). There is no charge for transport during school hours to school-organised activities. The school may charge for:

- books and materials that the parent wishes the child to keep (the cost will be made clear to the parents before charge)
- optional extras (section 6.0)

- music or vocal tuition (section 9.4).

5.1 Activities that take place outside of school hours (non-residential)

There is no charge for activities that take place outside of school hours when they are:

- part of the set curriculum, including sports matches against other schools
- part of the syllabus for a public examination that the student is being prepared for by the school
- part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education.

6.0 Optional extras

The school will charge for optional extras. Optional extras are:

- examination entry fee(s) if the registered student has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school
- transport that is not taking the student to a school or to other premises where the trust or local school board has arranged for the student to be provided with education
- board and lodging for a student on a residential visit
- education provided outside of school time that is **not**:
 1. part of the national curriculum
 2. part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school

6.1 The cost of optional extras

The headteacher will decide when it is necessary to charge for optional activities, and the levels of charge will be set annually subject to approval by the local school board. Any charge made in respect of individual students will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of students participating. In no circumstances will there be an element of subsidy required for any students wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge (section 12). 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
- support staff
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra
- the cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to pay the charges. The school will need to have the agreement of parents before organising the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

7.0 Activities that take place partly during school hours either on or off site

Where the majority of a non-residential activity takes place during school hours the charging of the activity will be the same as is outlined in section 5.1. Travelling time is included in time spent on activity.

In cases where the majority of a non-residential activity takes place outside of school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those students who do not wish to participate. So no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from the school accompanying students on a visit.

In this case the charging of the activity will be the same as is outlined in section 5.0.

8.0 Residential activities

The school will not 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 student is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from the school accompanying students on a residential visit
- travel costs where the residential activity is classed as being within school hours
- residential activities that take place during school hours.

9.0 The school will charge for:

9.1 Board and lodging

When any visit has been organised by the school where there may be a cost for board and lodging, parents will be informed of this before the visit takes place. We will charge anything up to the full cost of board and lodging on residential visits, whether it is classified as taking place during school hours or not. The charge will not exceed the actual cost. Parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits may be exempt from paying this cost (see section 10 for more guidance on remissions).

9.2 Travel

Travel charges may apply when the residential activity takes place outside of school hours. The amount charged will be calculated to cover the unit cost per student. These charges may not apply to those students entitled to remissions, but no other students will be charged extra to cover those costs.

9.3 Activities

The school may charge for residential activities that fall outside of school hours (see section 5.1).

9.4 Music tuition within school hours

The trust follows government legislation that states that all education provided during school hours must be free; however, music lessons are an exception to this rule. Charges will be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the national curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the student(s).

The school may charge for teaching requested by parents and delivered by specialist tutors given to either an individual student or groups of any appropriate size, provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles, to play a musical instrument or to sing. The cost of these lessons may depend on the size and duration of the class as well as the type of instrument.

The school will not charge if the music tuition is part of the national curriculum or public examination syllabus being followed by the student. This includes instruments, music books and exam fees.

The trust is dedicated to ensuring equal opportunities for all students including access to specialised music tuition, therefore charges made for music tuition within school hours will be remitted for students on free school meals.

There is no charge for vocal or instrumental tuition for children in care. This includes instruments, music books and exam fees.

9.5 Damage to property and breakages

Where school property has been wilfully damaged by a student or parent the school may charge those responsible for some or all of the cost of repair or replacement.

Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a student, and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible.

Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the headteacher and dependent on the situation.

10.0 Remissions and concessions

The school will give consideration to the remission of charges to parents or carers who receive universal credit or other qualifying benefits. Students of families who receive these payments are also entitled to free school meals. Parents who are eligible for the remission of charges will be dealt with confidentiality. The headteacher and chair of the local school board will authorise the remission of charges. The school may choose to subsidise part or all of the payment of some charges for certain activities and students, and this will be determined by the headteacher and local school board.

11.0 Voluntary contributions

The Trust may ask for voluntary contributions to the school for general funds and/or to fund activities that will enrich our students' education. In any case where an activity cannot be afforded without voluntary funding, this will be made clear to the parents by the school. If the activity is cancelled all monies paid will be returned to parents. There is no obligation for a parent or carer to make any contribution and the school will in no way pressure parents to make a contribution.

12.0 Inability or unwillingness to pay

The Trust is committed to ensuring fair access and treatment of all students, and this means ensuring that no child is excluded from an activity because the parents or carers of that child are unwilling or unable to pay. If there is insufficient funding for an activity, then it will be cancelled. The identity of the child or parents of the child who did not want to make the payment, or could not make the payment, will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

Links with other policies:

- The Finance Policy