

Charging and Remissions Policy

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Reviewed Spring 2022
Ratified by FGB 31/03/2022
To be reviewed Spring 2025
Finance, Audit and Risk Committee to Oversee

Why does this policy exist?

All our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extracurricular) independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of opportunities.

The Charging and Remissions Policy ensures that statutory requirements are met and is intended to reflect the general principles of the Education Act which identifies activities for which:

- 1) Charges will not be made
- 2) Charges will be made
- 3) Charges may be waived

Who does this policy apply to?

All key stakeholders to the academy.

Accountabilities

The Finance and Business Manager for:

Ensuring compliance with statutory procedures.

The Principal as:

Accounting Officer.

The Governing Body is responsible for:

Overseeing the process of charging and remissions.

Voluntary contributions

The academy will seek voluntary contributions for any activity in order to benefit the academy or support an academy activity whether during or outside academy 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. Such contributions will be genuinely voluntary. There is no limit to the level of voluntary contributions which parents or others can make to academy 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 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.

Education Provided Within Academy Hours

Education provided by the academy for its registered pupils should be free of charge if it takes place wholly or mainly during academy hours, academy hours being those hours when the academy is actually in session and not including the break in the middle of the day. This means that neither the pupil nor his or her parents or guardian may be required to pay for, or to supply, any materials, books, instruments or other equipment for use in connection with education provided during academy hours.

Education Provided Out of Academy Hours

Where education is provided out of academy hours, charging is permitted, except where the education is provided:

- a) to fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus for a prescribed Public examination; or
- b) specifically to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum;
- c) to fulfil duties relating to Religious Education.

In these cases the only charge that may be made is for board and lodging or for residential trips.

Is an activity in or out of academy time?

If the number of academy sessions on a residential trip is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on a trip it is deemed to have taken place during academy hours (even if some of the activities take place in the evening). Whatever the length of the academy day, regulations require that the academy day is divided into 2 sessions. A 'half day' in this context means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

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.

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 academy hours by a non-academy organisation. The academy 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 e.g. to help hardship cases this must be by voluntary contributions or general fund raising.

b) The permitted charge may include an allowance for the costs of teachers from the academy who supervise the activity.

Board and Lodging on Residential Visits

Board & lodging on residential visits may be charged for whether or not the visit takes place within academy time and whether or not the activity is provided to fulfil the requirements of

- the syllabus of a prescribed public examination; or
- of the National Curriculum; or
- to fulfil statutory duties relating to religious education.

Charges for board and lodging must not exceed the actual cost to the pupil. They must not, for example, include any element representing a share of the costs of staff accompanying the visit. (This may, however, be covered by voluntary contributions.)

A statutory minimum is the complete remission of board and lodging charges to pupils whose parents receive:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- 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 the Inland Revenue) does not exceed £16,190

- Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run- on eligibility
- Universal Credit
- Children for whom the school received Pupil Premium Funding

'Optional extra' Activities

'Optional extra' activities are those which take place wholly or mainly outside academy 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 Academy Journeys

To enable academies to reclaim VAT on academy journeys the visit should be part of the curriculum and the academy should have purchased all elements, apart from accommodation directly and not via a travel/tour operator.

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 cash or kind can however be encouraged to do so on a voluntary basis.

The academy 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. Academies 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. 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 Fines

There is nothing to prevent academies 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. Parents cannot, however, be taken to court for this money.

Any change in policy requires the approval of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.