



Charging and Remissions Policy

Date: November 2023

Due for review: Autumn Term 2024

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that educational opportunities provided by Trust schools during school hours are available to all pupils regardless of ability to pay and that other activities are charged for in a fair and transparent way.

The purpose of the Policy is to ensure that there is clarity over those items which schools will provide free of charge and for those items where there may be a charge.

This Policy describes the circumstances when the parents/carers of children at a Trust school will be asked to pay for school activities and when they will be asked to make a voluntary contribution to costs.

2. School Hours Definition

The school day varies between schools however, the midday break does not form part of the school day. The day starts at the commencement of the first timetabled teaching or registration period and finishes at the end of the final timetabled teaching period.

- If 50% or more of the time spent on an 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.

3. Responsibilities

The Headteacher will ensure that staff are familiar with and correctly apply the policy.

4. Policy Statement

This policy is based on the following principles and applies to pupils of school age including those in a school's Sixth Form:

- The education that is provided for pupils of the Trust is provided free of charge. All activities that are a part of the curriculum for compulsory school age children, when necessary, as part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at school, or part of religious education will be provided free of charge.
- Activities offered wholly or mainly during School hours are available to all pupils regardless of their ability to pay. No student will be excluded from curriculum activities because of their parents/carers' inability to pay. The school will invite voluntary contributions for these activities from parents/carers.
- Music Tuition provided at the request of parents/carers during the school day is an exception to this rule and will be charged for.
- The school will charge for some optional activities which take place wholly or mainly outside School hours.
- Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to cover the cost of an activity, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, for example through fundraising activities or school funds, then an activity will be cancelled. The possibility of the activity/visit being cancelled due to a shortfall in contributions should be made clear in information

- sent to parents/carers.
- Parents/carers who wish to discuss financial matters are able to discuss them in confidence with the Headteacher.
- In all cases, where a charge is made it will not exceed the costs of the provision, taking into account an allowance for contingencies which shall be proportionate to the likely need.

5. Admissions

The Trust does not make requests for financial contributions (either in the form of voluntary contributions, donations, or deposits (even if refundable) as any part its admissions process.

6. Education provided during school hours

Subject to the limited exceptions outlined in this policy, Schools do not charge for education provided during school hours, including the supply of materials, books, instruments or equipment.

Day visits and activities

There will be no compulsory charge for visits and activities during School hours. We will ask parents/carers to make a voluntary contribution towards costs for activities during the school day which entail additional costs (for example school trips). If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions it will be made clear when parents/carers are initially informed about the planned activity that this is the case. The Headteacher or Trip Leader will also make it clear to parents/carers that there is no obligation to make any contribution. No student will be prevented from participating because his/her parents/carers cannot or will not make a contribution. However, if insufficient funds are available, it may be necessary to curtail or cancel activities or trips.

Residential visits mainly or wholly during School hours

Parents/carers will not be required to pay transport and tuition charges, but they will be asked to make voluntary contributions toward the total of the residential visit. The school's arrangements for residential visits mainly or wholly during school hours will be subject to sufficient funds being available from voluntary contributions to cover their costs. Without these funds the planned visits will not take place.

Parents/carers will be charged for their child's board and lodging unless they are receiving one of the following benefits which are aligned with Free School Meal eligibility:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's 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 you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

This also applies to children who get paid these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or guardian.

Parents/carers who are in receipt of eligible benefits may apply in writing for remission of the charges detailed above.

Music, instrumental or vocal tuition

Schools may charge for tuition in singing or in playing a musical instrument during school hours if it is provided at the request of the pupil's parent/carer. This applies to individual and group tuition (but, in the case of tuition in playing a musical instrument, the group will not exceed four pupils).

The charges will not exceed the cost of the provision and may include the cost of the staff to provide the tuition, instruments, music books and exam fees.

No charge will be made if the tuition is:

- provided to a pupil who is looked after by a local authority; or
- provided as part of the national curriculum during school hours or required as part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the pupil is being prepared by the school.

7. Education provided outside of school hours

No charge will be made for education provided outside of school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the school or part of religious education.

Day and Residential Visits mainly outside School hours

Where a visit is 50% or more outside School hours, including travelling time, it counts as outside School hours. Parents/carers are liable for the whole costs of such visits and journeys including transport, board and lodging, and any other costs incurred. Where an activity takes place wholly or mainly outside school hours the charge made to

parents/carers will not exceed the cost of providing the activity, taking into account an allowance for contingencies which shall be proportionate to the likely need.

Optional activities outside of the school day - Optional extras

Schools do charge for 'optional extras' provided outside of the school day. Examples may include sporting activities, theatre visits, trips during holiday periods and extended day services. Charges will be based on the cost incurred.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement will be required before an optional extra for which a charge is made is provided.

Optional extras include:

- education provided outside of school hours that is not part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the Trust or part of religious education
- extended day services offered to pupils (for example breakfast club, after-school clubs, tea, and supervised homework sessions)

In calculating the cost of an optional extra an amount will 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, which includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra
- 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 for an optional extra will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parent/carer is unwilling or unable to pay the full charge. It may however include a small sum to cover contingencies.

Activities not arranged by the School

When an activity is organised by a third party and is approved by the school, is educational or is supervised by someone authorised by the School, then the same guidance outlined above applies as to how charges apply.

8. Pre-school / Nursery Provisions

Schools do charge for the provision of education and childcare to pre-school age children.

Attendance at the pre-school is on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. In calculating the fees all reasonable costs will be included:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment
- the cost of buildings and accommodation
- staffing

Fees will be calculated to be broadly in line with the costs incurred in operating the provision over the entire year. It may include a small sum to cover contingencies.

9. School meals

Schools do not charge for school meals where the pupil is eligible for free school meals or infant free school meals.

Pupils who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged at each school for the meals they take.

10. Prescribed public examinations

No entry fee for a public examination is charged by Schools except in the following circumstances:

- the examination is on the set list, but the student was not prepared for it at the school;
- the examination is not on the set list, but the school arranges for the pupil to take it;
- a pupil fails without good reason to complete the requirements of any public examination where the school originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.
- If a student fails without good reason to complete the requirements of the relevant examination course or does not complete controlled assessments
- the Headteacher has discretion to decide whether examination entry fees should be charged for public examinations for which a student was not prepared by the school.

11. Materials, books, instruments or equipment

Schools may charge for materials, books, instruments or equipment that the parent/carer wishes their child to keep or own. Such charges will not exceed the cost of the item and the parent/carer will be made aware at the outset that a charge will be made.

12. Transport

Schools do not charge for:

- transporting pupils to or from the school's premises where the local authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- transporting pupils to other premises where the Trust or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated
- transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for that examination by the school

Schools may charge for travel to activities or events outside of the school day, but charges made will only cover the actual costs incurred.

13. Voluntary contributions

Schools may ask parents/carers for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any of its activities.

Where it is intended that an activity is to be funded by voluntary contributions, the Headteacher will ensure that parents/carers are made aware at the outset that:

- the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions
- there is no obligation to make any contribution
- if insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund the activity, and the school is unable to fund it from some other source, then the activity will be cancelled

14. Community Facilities

Schools do charge for the use of their facilities by the community, for example sporting facilities, as provided for by s.27(1) of the Education Act. Charges will be set with the intention of generating a small surplus to contribute towards the cost of maintaining and developing these facilities.

15. Refunds

Request for refunds for activities will be considered on an individual basis and may be rejected if the school is unable to recoup the costs incurred.

In all cases of withdrawal, either voluntarily or otherwise, applications should be made in writing to the Headteacher. If approved, refunds will be processed via the original method of payment.

Schools reserve the right not to refund costs where a pupil is withdrawn from an activity by the school on the basis of a pupil's breach of the behaviour policy.

16. Damage to property and breakages

Where the school's property has been wilfully or recklessly damaged by a pupil or parent/carer, 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 pupil, and the school has been charged, the school may charge those responsible for some or all the cost.

17. Remissions

Parents/carers who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits may be exempt from paying certain costs (including the cost of board and lodging related to residential visits):

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's 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 you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)
- Children who get paid these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or guardian.

Parents/carers of children for whom the school receives Pupil Premium funding may be eligible for additional financial support towards the cost of out of school activities.

Schools will usually publicise the eligibility in advance but if Parents/carers are in any doubt they should contact the school for more information.

18. Calculating Charges

When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of students participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who can't or won't. The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the school and/or charges to parents.

19. Complaints

Complaints regarding this policy or its application should be raised under the school's usual complaints procedure.