

Charging Policy



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1. Introduction

This policy relates to all academies in the Arden Forest C of E Multi Academy Trust.

The Arden Forest C of E Multi Academy Trust (MAT) believes that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents'/carers' financial means. The MAT aims to offer a range of activities and visits whilst minimizing the financial barriers that may prevent some pupils from taking advantage of these opportunities.

This policy is in accordance with advice from the Department for Education on charging for school activities and the 1996 Education Act which sets out the law on charging for school activities in England. The Education Act requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities that is kept under regular review. The review date for this policy is recorded at the start of the document.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the MAT processes in place for charging and remissions. The policy ensures clarity over items academies will provide free of charge, those items where voluntary contributions will be sought and those where charges will apply.

2. Charging for Education

Below sets out what the MAT **cannot** charge for

- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- Education provided outside of school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum or 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/carer
- Education provided on any residential visit that takes place during school hours, or outside of school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum or Religious Education

3. Voluntary Contributions

Academies within the MAT may seek voluntary contributions to fund activities that would not otherwise be possible. All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature. 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 if their parent/carer is unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given equal opportunity to take part in the activity. If an academy is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit from voluntary contributions, and the school cannot fund it via another source, the activity will be cancelled. This will be made clear to parents/carers in the letter advising details of the activity.

Parents have a right to know how each trip is funded. The school provides this information on request.

4. School Meals

Meals are available free of charge to:

- All Key stage 1 pupils (Reception, Y1 & Y2) – via Universal Free School Meals funding
- Pupils who meet the free school meals eligibility criteria

Parents can apply for free school meals if they meet one of the following criteria:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers 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, and;
- 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). The Department for Education has announced plans to extend free school meal eligibility to children in households on Universal Credit. Eligibility criteria are subject to national policy
- Households with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)

Parents can apply for benefits-related FSM at any time online through the Parent Portal here:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/education-learning/apply-free-school-meals>

For queries call the Family Information Service (FIS) Freephone 0800 408 1558 or email

freemeals@warwickshire.gov.uk

5. Residential trips

Each academy will charge for board and lodging for those pupils involved in the residential trips, e.g. KS2 PGL (which is not compulsory, though children are encouraged to attend as part of the inclusion policy of the school). Voluntary contributions will be requested to cover the cost of travel.

Where a child meets the eligibility criteria for free school meals, they are exempt from paying for the cost of board and lodging on residential visits. This is stated clearly on letters and is dealt with discretely and in confidence by the Head Teacher. Parents/carers will be given the option of a payment plan to spread the costs of the residential visit.

6. Music Tuition

Each Academy will charge for music tuition for individuals or groups which is not required as part of the National Curriculum but is requested by parents/carers and delivered by specialist tutors within school hours.

Charges will be determined by the Head Teacher and the appropriate member of the local governing body. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff giving the tuition. Charges may vary depending on the size of group, length of lesson and type of instrument.

Parent/carers will be given information about music tuition at the beginning of the summer term ready for the start of the next academic year.

7. Activities we charge for

The school will charge for the following activities:

- Breakfast and After school club
- After school activities

The charges for these activities will be determined by the Head Teacher with oversight from the LGB. Charges will be reviewed annually. Charges will be determined to cover staff costs, any equipment requirements, any food provision, utility costs and administrative costs. Parents will be informed of any changes to prices with at least one month's notice.

8. Loss or Damage to Academy Property

Parents/carers of a pupil who wilfully damages or loses any item of academy property or equipment are liable for the costs of repair or replacement.

Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a pupil and the academy has been charged, the academy may charge some or all of the costs to the parents/carers of those responsible.

Each incident should be dealt with individually and at the Head Teachers discretion.

9. Remissions Policy

In order to remove financial barriers, the Arden Forest C of E MAT Trust Board have agreed to fund some activities and visits, where parents fulfil the eligibility for free school meals, as outlined in section 4 of this policy.

Remission may consist of part or all of the fees according to individual circumstances. All questions of remissions will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. The academy reserves the right to require written proof of entitlement to request remission of fees.

The Head teacher may wish to remit in full or part the cost of provisions covered by this policy in the case of other known circumstances such as severe family hardship. The Headteacher may recommend, and the LGB may review, discretionary remissions in line with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation and Operational Procedures.