Charging and Remissions Policy

Ermine Street Church Academy

First approved by Governors	30th August 2016
Policy to be reviewed annually	
Reviewed by Governors	21st June 2017
	14th November 2018
	26th February 2020
Reviewed by Governors	18th October 2023

Philosophy
DEMAT and Ermine Street Church Academy recognise the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including trips, clubs and residential experiences can make towards pupils' education. We aim to promote and provide such activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

We believe 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. This 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 the opportunities.

1. Aim

Our school aims to:

- Have robust, clear processes in place for charging and remissions
- Clearly set out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will and will not be made
- Offer a range of activities and visits whilst minimising the financial barriers that may prevent some pupils from taking full advantage of these opportunities

We aim to provide a broad, balanced curriculum for pupils within our care. However, it is recognised that many educationally valuable activities have been, and will continue to be, dependent on financial contributions from parents. Without that financial support the school would find it impossible to maintain the quality and breadth of educational experiences provided for pupils.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on charging for school activities and the Education Act 1996, sections 449 to 462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England. Academies are required to comply with this Act through their funding agreements.
It's also based on guidance from the DfE on statutory policies for schools and academy trusts. This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

- Charge: a fee payable for specifically defined activities
- Remission: the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The governing board

The governing body has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy and the determination of any individual case arising from the implementation of this policy; but can delegate this to a committee, an individual governor or the headteacher.
The governing board also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

4.2 Headteachers

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the charging and remissions policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

4.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently
- Notifying the headteacher of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies

The school will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

4.4 Parents

Parents are expected to notify staff or the headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding the charging and remissions policy.

5. Where charges cannot be made

Below we set out what we cannot charge for:

5.1 Education

- Admission applications
- 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 (charge for education that is part of the National Curriculum)
- A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
- 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

5.2 Transport

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local 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 or she has been prepared for that examination at the school
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit

5.3 Residential visits

- 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
  - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
- Religious education
- Supply teachers, covering for teachers who are absent from school, accompanying pupils on a residential visit

6. Where charges can be made

Below we set out what we can charge for:

6.1 Education

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him or her to own them
- Optional extras (see section 6.2)
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see section 6.3)
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities

6.2 Optional extras

We are able to charge for activities known as 'optional extras'. In these cases, schools can charge for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. The following are optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not part of:
  - The National Curriculum
  - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
  - Religious education
- Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority or governing board has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education)
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
- Extended day services offered to pupils (such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions)

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
- The cost of buildings and accommodation
- Non-teaching 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 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 will not be greater than the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating.

Any charge will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils who wish to take part in the activity but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

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.

Parental agreement is necessary for the provision of an optional extra which is to be charged for.

6.3 Music tuition

Schools can charge for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of pupils, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent.
Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff giving the tuition.
Charges cannot be made:

- If the teaching is an essential part of the National Curriculum
- If the teaching is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 instrumental and vocal tuition programme

- For a pupil who is looked after by a local authority

6.4 Residential visits
We can charge for board and lodging on residential visits, but the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

7. Voluntary contributions
As an exception to the requirements set out in section 5 of this policy, the school is able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents to fund activities which would not otherwise be possible.
Some activities for which the school may ask parents for voluntary contributions include:
school trips, sports activities, residential visits and music tuition. (See section 8 of this policy)
There is no obligation for parents to make any contribution, and no child will be excluded from an activity if their parents are unwilling or unable to pay.
If the school is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit then it will be cancelled.

8. We will make a charge for:
Day and part day educational visits. For visits during school time the Headteacher will invite voluntary contributions from parents/carers to meet the cost of the visit. Every effort will be made to keep these costs reasonable. However, where voluntary contributions are insufficient to cover the costs involved, the visit or activity may be cancelled. This should happen when the contributions are £50 or more below the cost of the trip/activity. However, this may not always be possible due to the terms and conditions implemented by the provider/coach company. Contributions must therefore be requested as far in advance as possible in order to allow time for decisions to be made. Pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution.
Trips and activities must be carefully considered so that those selected engage the children and parents as well as meet curriculum requirements. This should mean that contributions are more likely to be forthcoming.
Residential visits. Parents will be charged for the full cost of the visit including travel, board and lodging, materials, equipment, tuition, entrance fees and insurance. A payment plan will be offered to parents who prefer/need to pay small amounts on a regular basis. This may be personalised to the individual parent if necessary.
Instrumental music tuition. The school levies charges in respect of individual music tuition, and group music tuition, if the teaching is not an essential part of the National Curriculum.
Materials and equipment. No charge is made for materials and equipment used in curriculum time. However, where parents would like to possess the finished article, the school reserves the right to make a small charge for the materials used.
Breakages and damages. The school will require parents to pay for the cost of damage caused by a pupil's behaviour (eg breakage of a window, damage to furniture). This also applies to lost, damaged or defaced textbooks.
Lettings. The school will make its facilities available to outside users at a charge of at least the cost of providing the facilities (refer to **Lettings Policy).**
Other charges. The Headteacher or The Local Governing Body may levy charges for miscellaneous services up to the cost of providing such services, eg for providing a copy of an OFSTED report.

9. Calculating Charges

When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who cannot.

10. Remissions

In circumstances of family hardship that makes it difficult for pupils to take part in particular activities for which a charge is made the school will invite parents to apply in confidence for the remission of charges in part. Authorisation of remissions will be made by the Headteacher and will be at his/ her complete discretion. This may involve the school applying for financial support for such activities for any one of a number of local trusts.

Parents who can prove they are in receipt of any of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging for 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)

The parents of children who are in receipt of Free School Meals will be offered a small fund in each applicable academic year. This they will be able to use against the cost of activities/trips. The value of this fund will be set on an annual basis as part of the Pupil Premium Spending Plan.

11. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the The Local Governing Body and may be amended as appropriate. Any eventuality not covered by this policy will be considered by the Headteacher and The Local Governing Body and a decision made in line with the LA Policy of Charging.