



Charging and Remissions Policy

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Policy Reviewed and Adopted by
Governing Board: December 22

Date of Next Review: November 2023
Responsible Officer: Business Manager

Introduction

The academy has policies in place to ensure that the academy maintains and develops systems of financial control that conform to the requirements both of propriety and of good financial management. It is essential that these systems operate properly to meet the requirements of the academy but also ensure that our full community has access to services provided.

Purpose of this policy

The aim of this policy is to set out the circumstances under which the school will;

- levy a charge to Parents/Carers,
- grant a remission of normal charges, and
- ask for voluntary contributions.

Linked Documentation

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Financial Procedures
- Debt Management Policy
- Lettings Policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Complaints Policy.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010
- [New] Freedom of Information Act 2000
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2020) 'Governance handbook'
- The trust's Funding Agreement
- ESFA (2021) 'Academy trust handbook 2022'

Roles and responsibilities

Principal

The Principal will maintain this policy on an annual basis.

Chair of Trustees

It is the responsibility of the Chair of Trustees to ensure that the policy is followed.

Definitions

Remission: the relinquishment of a payment

Related Procedures

The academy will follow the policy below in respect of charging:

Admissions

The academy 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.

Education provided during school hours

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

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 academy or part of religious education.

School meals

- The academy does 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 the published per meal charge.

Prescribed public examinations

- The academy does not charge for entry for a prescribed public examination (including re-sits) if the pupil has been prepared for it by the academy.
- However, if a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the academy may seek to recover the fee from the pupil's parent/carer.

Materials, books, instruments or equipment

- The academy 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 parent/carer will be made aware at the outset that a charge will be made and the amount.

Music, instrumental or vocal tuition

- The academy 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.
- 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 academy.

Use of academy/commercial facilities

- The academy may charge for use of academy facilities in line with the academy lettings policy

Provision of information

- The academy may charge for provision of information within the scope of freedom of information.

Transport

The academy does not charge for:

- transporting pupils to or from the academy's premises where the local authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- transporting pupils to other premises where the governing board 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 academy
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit

Residential visits

The academy does 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 pupil is being prepared for by the academy or is part of religious education
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are accompanying pupils on a residential visit

The academy will charge for board and lodging relating to residential visits (see below).

Optional extras/Services

The academy does charge for 'optional extras'. 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 academy or part of religious education
- examination entry fee(s) if the pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) by the academy
- other transport (outside of that outlined in above)
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
- 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/carers is unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

Voluntary contributions

The academy may ask parents/carers for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the academy or any of its activities. Where it is intended that an activity is to be funded by voluntary contributions, the Principal 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 academy is unable to fund it from some other source, then the activity will be cancelled
- No pupil will be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parent/carers is unwilling or unable to pay. Pupils whose parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay will still be given an equal chance to participate in the activity.

Income generation

In line with the ESFA's 'Academy trust handbook', the trust will set fees for chargeable services at full cost, and reserves the right to apply an additional rate of return when in a commercial environment.

Refunds

- Request for refunds for activities will be considered on an individual basis and may be rejected if the

academy is unable to recoup the costs incurred.

- In all cases of withdrawal, either voluntarily or otherwise, applications should be made in writing to the Principal. If approved, refunds will be processed via the original method of payment.
- The academy reserves the right not to refund costs where a pupil is withdrawn from an activity by the academy on the basis of a pupil's breach of the academy's behaviour policy.

Refunds in relation to School Trips

- All initial deposits for school trips will be non-refundable. Parents will be informed of this when they are provided with initial information about the trip.
- Should the academy cancel a trip due to foreseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded. In the event that a school trip is cancelled by a party other than the academy due to unforeseen circumstances, refunds may not be possible and parents will be duly advised.
- In the event that a pupil or their parents cancel the place on a trip, it is at the discretion of the academy as to whether a refund is given. The academy will take into account the reason for cancellation, whether the academy will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip, and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.
- In the event that a pupil cannot attend a trip at the last minute, e.g. due to illness, it is at the discretion of the academy as to whether a refund can be given. The academy will take into account whether the academy will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.
- In the event that a trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the discretion of the academy as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.
- In the event that the decision is made to postpone a trip due to foreseen circumstances, it is at the school's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.
- If a parent wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they can do so via the academy Complaints Policy.

Damage to property and breakages/ lost items

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

Parents will only be charged the replacement cost to purchase the same or equivalent item. The academy will consider waiving costs in exceptional circumstances, e.g. financial hardship.

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 Job-seekers Allowance
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided that they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and they have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run on – paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit – if they apply on or after 1 April 2018, their household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive)

Complaints

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

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored annually to ensure appropriate organisation and arrangements are in place to control financial risk.

This will be undertaken through internal quality assurance processes by the senior team, the Governing board and/or an external audit team to support the academy and provide feedback to ensure that effective organisation and arrangements are in place.

Appendices

N/A