



**SYNERGY
EDUCATION
TRUST**

Charging and Remissions Policy

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Statement of intent

Synergy Education Trust are committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all students, regardless of financial circumstances, and have established the following policy and procedures to ensure that no child is discriminated against by our offering of school trips, activities and educational extras.

In addition, we are committed to adhering to legal requirements regarding charging for school activities, and meeting all statutory guidance provided by the DfE.

We promise:

- Not to charge for education provided during school hours.
- To inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of relevant benefits of the support available to them when asking for contributions.

Legislation and Statutory Requirements

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.

Charging

We will **not charge** parents for:

- Admission applications.
- Education provided during school hours.
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for by the school, or part of religious education.
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, unless provided at the request of the student's parents.

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- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school.
- Examination re-sits, if the student is being prepared for the re-sits at the school.
- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local authority (LA) has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the Trust Board or LA 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 at the school
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit
- Supply teachers, covering for teachers who are absent from school, accompanying pupils on a residential visit

We may **charge** parents for the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment, where they desire their child to own them.
- Materials and ingredients for items to be made by students in the school e.g. food technology.
- Optional extras (i.e for education provided outside of school time that is not part of the National Curriculum).
- Music and vocational tuition (in certain circumstances).
- Transport
- 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

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- 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/carers 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 that is to be charged for.

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/carer.

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

Residential Trips

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

Damaged or lost items

The school may charge parents for the cost of replacing items broken, damaged or lost due to their child's behaviour. They may also fine parents for breaking school behaviour rules e.g. smoking on school site. Parents will not be taken to court for failure to pay such costs.

Voluntary contributions

We may, from time-to-time, ask for voluntary contributions towards the benefit of the school or school activities. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, we will make this clear to parents at the outset. We will also make it clear that there is no obligation for parents to make a contribution, and notify parents whether assistance is available.

No child will be excluded from an activity simply because their parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal opportunity to take part in the activity. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity, and the school cannot fund it via another source, the activity will be cancelled. We will strive to ensure that parents do not feel pressured into making voluntary contributions.

Remissions

In some circumstances, the school may not charge for items or activities set out in this policy. This will be at the discretion of the local governing board and will depend on the activity in question.

Parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits may be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging for residential visits:

- Income Support

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- 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 that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's annual gross income does not exceed £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (this is paid for 4 weeks after an individual stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit (if the application was made on or after 1 April 2018, the family's income must be less than £7,400 per year – after tax and not including any benefits)

Charges for other "chargeable activities" may also be fully or partly remitted. Details of any remission arrangements will be made clear when parents are informed of charges for individual activities.