



CHARGING & REMISSIONS

POLICY

Review period: Triennial

Person Responsible: Leanne Chase

Reviewed by Finance & Audit Committee: June 2020

Approved by Governing Board: July 2020

1. Purpose

We believe that all our students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extracurricular) independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions 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 eliminate the financial barriers which may prevent some students taking full advantage of the opportunities.

The policy has been informed by *A Guide to the Law for School Governors* and "*Charging for School Activities*" (May 2018).

2. Relationship to other school policies

The policy complements the school's equality policy, curriculum policy, educational visits policy and the teaching and learning policy.

3. Principles

The Academy recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances and will therefore endeavour to comply with the following principles:

- The Academy will minimise charges for educational and enrichment activities.
- Charges will not normally be made for academic resources although this may be necessary in exceptional circumstances e.g. resources for food or technology or design.
- The Academy will not seek to make profit, but will only seek to cover the costs of activities and resources which cannot be funded elsewhere from Academy funds.
- The Academy will publish a list of visits/trips (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the school year so that parents can plan ahead in terms of the financial burden.
- The Academy will make it possible for parents to pay in instalments before the date of the trip/activity.
- The Academy acknowledges that offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis may discriminate against pupils from families on lower incomes and will avoid this method of selection wherever possible.

4. No charges will be made for

- Education provided during school hours, including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment (except in circumstances when the parent wishes their child to own them).
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education.

- Instrumental or vocal tuition, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the parent.
- Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours.
- Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education.
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying students on a residential trip.
- Transport provided in connection with an educational trip.

5. Activities for which charges may be made

- (a) Non-residential activities (other than those listed in 4 above) which take place outside school hours, but only if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside school hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours).
- (b) Transport, provided that it is not in connection with an educational trip.
- (c) Board and lodging costs of residential trips deemed to take place during school time. However, students whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (see point 9 below) may not be charged for board and lodging costs.

Note: a residential trip is deemed to take place during school time if the number of school sessions taken up by the residential trip is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the trip (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into two sessions. A 'half day' means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

- (d) Costs of residential trips deemed to take place outside school time (other than for those activities listed in 4 above).
- (e) Instrumental or vocal tuition provided at the request of the parent.
- (f) Extended day services offered to pupils

Under the Academy's current policy, no charge is made for breakfast club or homework club. However, other after school clubs may be charged. Formal Enrichment taking place during school hours is compulsory for all students and is therefore free of charge.

6. Administration Charges

The activities listed above are described as 'optional extras'. Charges for optional extras will not exceed the actual cost per student of provision, but will include a charge to cover the administration cost of organising these activities. This will be £2 per student for day trips and £10 per student for residential trips.

7. Breakages and Vandalism

The Academy reserves the right to charge for damage to or loss of books and other school equipment and for wilful damage to school property.

8. Voluntary Contributions

The Academy may seek voluntary contributions for any activity whether during or outside school hours, residential or non-residential and including inviting parents to pay for materials or ingredients where there is a finished product. However all requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that pupils of parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have contributed. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions parents will be notified of this from the outset, and the Academy may have to cancel a trip or activity where voluntary contributions are insufficient to cover costs.

9. Remissions

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the Academy has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at a reduced charge to parents whose children are eligible for Free School Meals, that is parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits:

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- Income support (IS);
- Income based jobseekers allowance (IBJSA);
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, providing that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190 (adjusted annually in line with HMRC figures)
- Working Tax Credit run-on, which is paid for 4 weeks after the family stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Universal Credit, where the family's income is less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits received)

Should there be other cases of family hardship not covered by the above criteria, parents are requested to make a confidential request for assistance to the Finance Director or the Headteacher explaining the specific circumstances relevant to their request for financial support for each activity. Depending on the circumstances, the Headteacher/Finance Director may authorise a discretionary subsidy.

10. Cancellation or withdrawal from trips/activities

If a trip or activity is cancelled by the Academy then any payments (including voluntary contributions) made by parents will be refunded in full.

When a student withdraws from or fails to attend a trip, payments made will not automatically be refunded. Academy trips are invariably paid for in advance and costs already committed cannot be recouped.

In some cases, it may be possible to find a substitute student to attend and in those cases, the Academy may be able to refund the student who has withdrawn. However, there is no guarantee that a refund will be possible.