



Charging and Remissions Policy

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy shows the circumstances under which schools within the Community Inclusive Trust may seek voluntary contributions or charge for activities.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all school within the Community Inclusive Trust and to any activities in which pupils of the Trust participate.

3. The Law

- 3.1 The law states that education provided during Academy hours must be free of charge. This definition includes materials, equipment and transport (including public transport, where necessary, to work placements or other offsite education provision) provided in Academy hours by each Academy. No pupil may be left out of an activity because their parents/carers cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind.
- 3.2 In accordance with the above, the Trust will make no compulsory charge for any books, materials, instruments, equipment or transport for use in connection with education if the education is:
- within school hours.
 - for the National Curriculum programme out of school hours.
 - for statutory religious education; and
 - for a prescribed public examination prepared for by the school.

4. Community Inclusive Trust's Principles

- 4.1 No charge can be made for education (see definition – section 3) during school hours. Activities that extend beyond the school day may incur a charge. 'School hours' are those when the academy is actually in session, and do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Trips, visits and practical activities enhance the pupils' learning and broaden their knowledge and experience. These are undertaken with the voluntary contributions of parents.

No pupil will be excluded from an activity during school hours because his or her parents cannot or will not make a voluntary contribution. The opportunity to pay in instalments will be offered to parents who wish to pay in this way.

5. Examinations

- 5.1 No charge can be made for entry to a public examination on the Secretary of State's prescribed list except where the student, without good reason, fails to attend or meet the requirements of the examination. In the case of pupils in schools which are members of the Trust this includes failing to submit coursework or attend sessions for good reason. Pupils will be charged for re-sitting examinations at GCSE and A Level and also for any re-marking requests. Should an improvement in grade be achieved, the re-marking fee will be returned to the student.

6. School Meals

- 6.1 The Trust does not charge for school meals where the student is eligible for free school meals. Students who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged.

7. Board and Lodging

- 7.1 A charge will be made for board and lodging on residential educational visits/activities, but parents and carers will be advised of this beforehand and those who qualify for prescribed benefits and allowances are entitled to a remission of the charges. The charge will not exceed the actual cost. Consideration of remission will be made for categories outlined in the remissions section of the policy.

8. Transport

- 8.1 Transport to and from home to any activity not provided by, but permitted by schools, can be charged for (for example travel to a residential activity out of school hours). The Trust will not charge for:
- Transporting pupils to or from the school premises, where the Local Authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport.
 - Transporting pupils to other premises where the school/Trust has arranged for students to be educated.
 - Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he/she has been prepared for that examination at a school in the Trust.
 - In the case of a Trust/School-owned Minibus or other vehicle, only students on the roll of the Trust/School, their parents/guardians or staff may be charged for this form of transport. Funds will not be raised by the Trust/School to create a profit although charges may be made to recover some or all the running costs and depreciation of the vehicle.

9. Voluntary Contributions

- 9.1 Parents and carers may be invited to make voluntary contributions to extend the value of school funds. If a particular activity cannot take place without some help from parents, this will be explained at the planning stage. If a planned activity has to be cancelled any monies received will be returned. Parents will be asked to make voluntary contributions to school trips, visits or for practical activities such as technology. These contributions will not exceed the actual cost. Where an outside provider is used for out of school activities a voluntary contribution will be sought. No pupil will be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parent/carer 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.

10 Refunds

- 10.1 Request for refunds for activities will be considered on an individual basis and may be rejected if the school/Trust is unable to recoup the costs incurred.
- 10.2 In all cases of withdrawal, either voluntarily or otherwise, applications should be made in writing to the Headteacher. If approved, refunds will be processed via the original method of payment.
- 10.3 The Trust reserves the right not to refund costs where a pupil is withdrawn from an activity by the school on the basis of a pupil's breach of the school's behaviour policy.

11. Breakages

- 11.1 In cases of wilful or malicious damage to equipment or breakages, or loss of books on loan to children, the Senior Leader in Charge of School in consultation with the Chair of the Local School Board may decide it right to make a charge. Each incident will be dealt with on its own merit and at their discretion.

In case of financial difficulty parents should contact the Senior Leader in Charge of School.

12. Permitted Charges/Optional Extras

- 12.1 Schools within the Trust use the parent payment systems, (e.g. ParentPay or BromCom Pay), which do incur costs for the Trust and there will be a small charge of approximately 2% added to the cost of each trip to cover this.

The following are also permitted charges:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not part of the National Curriculum.
- Charges for board and lodging on trips – exceptions detailed in Board and Lodging section above.
- Costs of lost and destroyed Trust/school property and breakages.
- Any costs associated with individual tuition in the playing of musical instruments whether in or out of school hours (UNLESS it is provided as part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination or is required by the National Curriculum).
- Finished Products - where parents and carers have expressed a wish in advance to have a finished product made at school, a charge will be made at cost price. Parents and carers will be informed of the likely charge for the product in advance.
- The cost of optional extras provided outside school hours (or mainly outside school hours), but the charge will not exceed the cost of the provision, and parents and carers must agree to their child receiving the optional extra.
- The cost of entering a pupil for a public examination not prescribed in regulations, and the cost for preparing the pupil for such an examination out of school hours; and
- Re-sits of prescribed public examinations where no further preparation has been provided by the Trust.

- 12.2 In calculating the cost of the above, an amount may be included in relation to:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra.
- Support staff.
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide that optional extra; and
- The cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where tuition is an optional extra.

In all cases where a permitted charge is likely to be made parents and carers will be told the amount in advance.

13. Education/Activities partly during School Hours

- 13.1 Where an activity takes place partly during school hours and partly outside normal school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. However, a charge will only be made for the activity outside school hours if it is not part of the National Curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the students is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education.

To determine whether an activity that is undertaken partly during school hours and partly out of school hours the 50% rule is applied:

- Non-Residential Activities: if 50% or more is spent on an activity in school time (including travelling time, but excluding midday breaks) the whole activity is deemed to be inside school time, and will not be charged for; and
- Residential Activities: the number of half-days is counted (a half-day being any 12-hour period ending noon or midnight). If the number of days and half-days spent on the activity is greater than the number of school sessions (morning and afternoon sessions) that a student would spend on a normal school day, the activity is deemed to take place outside school hours, and vice-versa. Travelling time is included in the time spent on the activity.

When a departure or return time splits a half-day then all the half-day counts if more than 50% of the half-day is used for the activity.

14. Third Parties

- 14.1 On occasion, the School/Trust uses third parties to provide some educational activities (especially educational visits). We will ensure that the monies are paid directly to the third-party organisation.

In such cases if the activity is in school time the school formally grants leave of absence to the pupils taking part, as the activity would no longer technically be part of the school's official programme.

15. Remissions

- 15.1 To remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the Trust has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents and carers in particular circumstances.

This remissions section of the policy sets out the circumstances in which such charges will be waived.

Families qualifying for remission or help with charges will be those the school receives a pupil premium (PP) allocation for or those students in receipt of 16-19 Bursary funding.

16 16-19 Bursary Fund

- 16.1 Where applicable, schools within the Trust can access the 16-19 Bursary fund which is designed to help and support any student over the age of 16 who faces financial barriers to participation in education, such as costs of transport, food or equipment. Further information can be found in the respective Bursary Policy for each school.

17 Additional Considerations

17.1 The Trust recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible schools will publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the school year so that parents can plan ahead;
- A system will be established for parents and carers to pay in instalments;
- When an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip, provided that arrangements for payment are discussed and agreed by the school/Trust prior to the date of the trip.

18. External References

18.1 Department for Education – ‘Charging for School Activities’ – used as a guide.

19 Monitoring and Review

19.1 The Chief Finance and Operations Officer will review the working of this policy with the Finance & Estates Committee of the Trust Board annually.