

# 2023-24 STUDENT CHARGING AND REMISSION POLICY, PROCEDURE & GUIDANCE

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Name of policy writer	Cleo Potterton
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## 1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

The Trustees of SHARE Multi Academy Trust are committed to the principle of free education for all children educated within the Trust. The Trustees also appreciate that without some element of charging a number of educationally important activities would be severely restricted.

Where an issue arises that is not specifically dealt with within this policy, decisions will be made which are in line with the spirit of the policy and of the two documents detailed below.

Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 sets out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England. Academies (including free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges) are required through their funding agreements to comply with the law on charging for school activities.

No charges for academy activities may be made to students or their parents except in accordance with this law.

## 2.0 EDUCATION

Charges **cannot** be made for admission to any academy within SHARE Multi Academy Trust or for activities that take place during academy hours. These activities include:

- An admission application to any state funded school – paragraph 1.9 of the 'School Admissions Code 2012' rules out requests for financial contributions as any part of the admissions process;
- Education provided during academy hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment). However, parents may be asked to contribute voluntarily towards the cost of materials or ingredients where the finished product will be owned by the student;
- Education provided outside academy hours if it is part of the national curriculum or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- Instrumental or vocal tuition (which forms part of the curriculum) for students learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the student's parent;
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school; and
- Examination re-sit(s) if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the academy. However, if a student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the fee can be recovered from the student's parents.

## 3.0 ACTIVITIES FOR WHICH CHARGES CAN BE MADE

Charges can be made for:

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment where the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) wishes him/her to own them;
- Musical and vocal tuition (section 5.4);
- Certain early years provision as outlined in 'The Education (Charges for Early Years Provision) Regulations 2012;

- Education provided outside academy time that is not:
  - Part of the national curriculum;
  - Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the academy: or
  - Part of religious education.
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered student has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the academy (section 5.3);
- Transport (other than transport required to take the student to school or other premises where the academy has arranged for the student to be provided with education);
- Board and lodging for a student on a residential trip (section 5.1);
- Extended day services offered to students (for example breakfast club, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions);
- Private photocopying (section 5.5); and
- Cost of damages (section 5.6).

## 4.0 VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Nothing in legislation prevents academies from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the academy or its activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, then the headteacher should make this clear to parents at the outset. The headteacher must also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no student should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the school cannot fund it from some other source, then it must be cancelled. Headteachers must ensure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, the student must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. Headteachers should make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

When making requests for voluntary contributions, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. Colour coded letters to parents as a reminder to make payments should be avoided, and direct debit or standing order mandates should not be sent to parents when requesting contributions.

Headteachers must ensure that they inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of benefits (listed at 5.2 of this document) of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the costs of school visits or activities.

Where charges are not made but where contributions need to be requested to ensure financial viability of a trip or activity, information sent out to parents will include the following wording:

*'Under the Student Charging and Remission Policy, we request a contribution of £xx towards the cost of this activity. A student will not be excluded from the trip because his/her parents have not contributed. However, where such trips are dependent upon voluntary contributions, parents will be notified that sufficient contributions are necessary for the trip to go ahead.'*

In the event of an enquiry from a parent/carer as to how trip surpluses will be used, they will be directed to this policy (published on each school's website), which sets out:

*'When collecting monies for academy trips, the cost of the trip usually includes a small contingency to cover incidental costs. If, after meeting all the costs of a trip, the individual trip*

*account is in surplus and this amounts to £3 per student or more, then the surplus (net of the cost of administering the refund) will be shared out and a proportion returned to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of those students who originally contributed to the cost of the trip'.*

*Where an individual trip account is in surplus, but the surplus amounts to less than £3 per student, then the surplus will be retained by the academy to be used for the benefit of students in any of the following ways:*

- To provide individual students with financial support for an academy trip where, because of financial hardship, the student would otherwise not be able to attend;*
- To make a general financial contribution to the costs of the same trip in future years;*
- To make a financial contribution to the cost of running other trips in future years; and*
- To contribute towards the purchase of resources or equipment for the school.*

The cost of specified trips (both residential and non-residential) may be met in full or may be subsidised for those students attracting Student Premium funding. Details of any subsidy available will be communicated to parent(s)/guardian(s).

## **5.0 CHARGING FOR OPTIONAL EXTRAS**

Charges can be made for some activities that are known as 'optional extras'. Items that can be charged include materials, books, equipment, personalised uniform, instruments, accommodation, meals, activities and staffing.

### **5.1 RESIDENTIAL TRIPS**

The board and lodging element on trips will always be charged for. This is irrespective of whether the trip has occurred within academy hours or not, or whether the trip has taken place to fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum or as part of a prescribed syllabus.

Additionally, if more than half of the trip takes place outside academy hours, the remaining costs will be charged for in full.

The cost of specified residential trips may be met in full or may be subsidised for those students attracting Student Premium funding.

The cost of each trip automatically includes a charge to cover the cost of insurance whilst students are not on academy premises; this is currently 40p per day during the school day, 65p per day beyond the school day, and £1.30 per day for residential trips.

### **5.2 REMISSION OF CHARGES**

If a residential activity takes place largely during academy time and the parent(s)/guardian(s) is in receipt of the following benefits, an application can be made for some or all of the normal charge for the trip to be waived:

- Income Support (IS)
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- Income related employment and support allowance;
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit;
- Income related employment and support allowance;
- Child Tax Credit (provided there is no entitlement to Working Tax Credit and the family's annual gross income is no more than £16,190;
- Working Tax Credit;
- Universal Credit;

### **5.3 PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS**

As mentioned in section 3 above, all normal costs associated with prescribed public examinations for students who are on the academy register are borne by the academy. This includes any costs associated with re-marks and re-sits where the academy has requested that these take place.

The academy will make a charge for examination fees in the following circumstances:

- Examination re-mark or re-sit (requested by a parent(s)/guardian(s));
- entry to a prescribed public examination for which the academy has not prepared the student;
- where a student, with his / her parents' agreement, is entered for a public examination against the recommendations of the academy; and
- where a student fails without good reason to complete the examination requirements.

The academy **will waive** the recovery of examination fees in certain circumstances. Examples of reasons accepted by the academy are as follows: -

- Illness of the student confirmed by a medical certificate or where there is a valid reason known to the academy;
- Exclusion of the student from the academy where the student was not asked to return for appropriate examinations;
- Administrative error at the academy; and
- Consideration of individual cases on their own merit.

### **5.4 EXTRA-CURRICULAR INSTRUMENTAL AND VOCAL MUSIC TUITION**

The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 set out the circumstances in which charges can be made for tuition in playing a musical instrument, including vocal tuition. Charges can be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either provided on a group or individual basis, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the student's parent/guardian. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff who provide the tuition. Tuition may also be provided by an external provider who may make a charge for the tuition as well as charging for the loan or sale of instruments.

### **5.5 PHOTOCOPYING UNDERTAKEN BY STUDENTS**

All photocopying costs associated with provision of the curriculum are borne by the academy.

### **5.6 DAMAGES**

These include any damages to the fabric of the academy premises (such as a broken window) and the defacing, loss or breakage of books or classroom equipment.

In such cases, especially where the damage is due to an unacceptable behaviour on the part of the student, parents/guardians will be asked to pay the cost of the repair or replacement.

Such charges may be reduced or waived on an individual basis if this is deemed appropriate on educational grounds, for example, in certain circumstances where a student has owned up to a misdemeanor.