

Charging & Remissions Policy

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Document Change History

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Oct 2022	1.1	Annual Review

Mission Statement

“To nurture and develop all people in our Trust so that they reach their full potential academically, vocationally, and personally, including being positive role models for future generations in the community. We will achieve this by providing high quality values-based education that cultivates employability and life skills making our schools the first choice for young people, parents, carers, staff and employers.”

Values

The values of Respect, Excellence, Collaboration, Independence, Perseverance, Enjoyment, Leadership, Integrity and Care are central to everything we do at the Skills for Life Trust.

The Skills for Life Trust is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of financial circumstances, and has established the following policy and procedures to ensure that no child is discriminated against by our offering of academy trips, activities and educational extras.

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

We promise:

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

Please note that whilst this policy may be more or less generous than the local authority areas the Trust operates within, we have ensured it meets the requirements of the law.

Statement of Equality

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to set out what charges will be levied for activities; what remissions will be implemented and the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested from parents.

Legal framework

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](#)
- [DfE \(2018\) 'Charging for academy activities'](#)
- [DfE \(2020\) 'Governance handbook'](#)
- [The Skills for Life Trust's Funding Agreement](#)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following academy policies:

- Complaints Policy
- Debt Recovery Policy

Charging for education

Parents will not be charged for:

- Admission applications;
- Education provided during academy hours;
- Education provided outside academy 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;
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, unless provided at the request of the pupil's parent;
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the academy.;
- Examination re-sits, if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sits at the academy.

We may charge parents for the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment, where they desire their child to own them;
- Optional extras;
- Music tuition (in certain circumstances);
- Vocational tuition (in certain circumstances);
- Certain early years provision;
- Use of community facilities.

We will make it clear that, in the following circumstances, we will propose to remit (wholly or partly) any charge which would otherwise be payable to the academy:

- Provision of extra-curricular activities outside of academy hours where costs are borne by the academy.

Optional extras

We may charge parents for the following optional extras:

- Education provided outside of academy time that is not:
 - Part of the national curriculum;
 - Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the academy;
 - Religious education.
- Examination entry fees where the pupil has not been prepared for the examinations at the academy;
- Transport, other than that arranged by the local authority for the pupil to be provided with education;
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit;
- Extended day services offered to pupils (see specific section).

When calculating the cost of optional extras, the academy will only take into account the cost, or an appropriate proportion of the cost, of the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in relation to the optional extra;
- Buildings and accommodation;
- Employment of non-teaching staff;
- Teaching staff (including TAs) under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra;
- Teaching staff employed to provide vocal tuition or tuition in playing a musical instrument.

The academy will not charge in excess of the actual cost of providing the optional extra divided by the number of participating pupils. If a proportion of the activity takes place during academy hours, the academy will not charge for the cost of alternative provision for those not participating.

The academy will not charge for supply teachers to cover for teachers who are absent from academy accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges; therefore, parental agreement is a prerequisite for the provision of an optional extra.

If a charge is to be made for a particular activity, such as optional extras, parents will be informed of how the charge will be calculated.

Examination fees and re-sits

All exam entry fees are paid for by the academy. Pupils and parents will not be charged for changes of tier, withdrawals made by the proper procedures or alterations arising from administrative processes, provided these are made within the time allowed by the awarding bodies.

The academy will also pay late fees for candidates who are new admissions to the academy after the examination entry deadline.

The academy may charge for examination fees if:

- The examination is on the prescribed list (which includes SATs, GCSEs and A-levels), but the pupil was not prepared for it at the academy;
- The examination is not on the prescribed list, but the academy arranged for the pupil to take it;
- A pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the requirements of any public examination where the Trust Board, Local Governing Body (LGB) or Local Authority originally paid or agreed to pay the fee.

Where a pupil is entered for a second or subsequent attempt at an examination, the academy will pay the fee. Once pupils have left the academy, re-sits must be taken at the academy for the fee to be paid.

If the academy chooses to request a re-mark or clerical check of an examination, any fees involved will be covered by the academy. If a pupil or their parent consider it to be in the best interests of the pupil to request that an examination is re-marked, any fees involved must be covered by the pupil or their parent. If the awarding body changes the overall grade of the result, the academy will not be charged by the awarding body and the parent or pupil will have their fees refunded.

Extended services

Constituent academies within the trust are committed to providing a well-rounded and extensive Skills for Life education. This includes access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Extended services enable our academies to provide:

- High-quality learning opportunities either side of the academy day;
- Ways of intervening early when children are at risk of poor outcomes, e.g. by providing to study support, parenting support or to more specialist services (such as health, social care or special educational needs services);
- Ways of increasing pupil engagement;
- Ways of improving outcomes and narrowing gaps in outcomes between different groups of pupils;
- Breakfast and homework / extended hours clubs which sometimes include providing meals.

The total charge will not exceed the cost of providing the activity and no parent will be asked to subsidise others.

Voluntary contributions

The academy may, from time-to-time, ask for voluntary contributions towards the benefit of the academy or academy activities. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the academy will make this clear to parents at the outset. There is no obligation for parents to make a contribution and parents will be notified regarding whether assistance is available.

No pupil will be excluded from an activity simply because their parents are unwilling or unable to pay a voluntary contribution. 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 academy cannot fund it via another source, the activity will be cancelled.

The trust and each of its constituent academies will strive to ensure that parents do not feel pressurised into making voluntary contributions. Further to this, the identity of the pupil or parents/guardian of the pupil who did not want to make the payment, or could not make the payment, will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

Music tuition

Music tuition is the only exception to the rule that all education provided during academy hours must be free. The [Charges for Music Tuition \(England\) Regulations 2007](#) (Page 6) allows for charges to be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of any size – provided that the tuition is at the request of the pupil's parents. The charges will not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff providing the tuition.

Transport

The academy will not charge for:

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the academy premises, where the Local Authority has a statutory obligation to provide the transport;
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the Local Governing Body (LGB) or Local Authority has arranged for pupils to be educated;
- Transporting pupils to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for the examination at the academy.

Residential visits

The academy will not charge for:

- Education provided on any visit that takes place during academy hours;

- Education provided on any visit that takes place outside academy 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 at the academy, or part of religious education;
- Supply teachers to cover for teachers accompanying pupils on visits.

The academy may charge for board and lodging, but the charge will not exceed the actual cost. Parents will be exempt from board and lodging costs if they can prove that they are in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support;
- 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 State Pension Credit;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and 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).

To request assistance, parents should contact the academy office. The Headteacher of the academy that the child attends will make the decision on whether to support the request, with support from the Trust's Chief Financial Officer. All requests will be dealt with confidentially.

Education partly during academy hours

If 50 percent or more of the time spent on an activity occurs during academy hours (including time spent travelling if the travel occurs during academy hours), it is deemed to take place during academy hours and no charge will be made.

If less than 50 percent of the time spent on an activity occurs during academy hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside academy hours and the academy may charge for the activity; however, the academy will not charge if the activity is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the academy, or part of religious education.

If the number of academy sessions covered by the visit is equal to or greater than 50 percent of the number of half days (any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day) spent on the visit, the academy will not charge for the activity.

Damaged or lost items

Where academy property has been willfully damaged by a student or parent 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 some or all of the cost to the parent/guardian of the student in question. Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the Headteacher, supported by their Local Governing Body (LGB).

Remissions

The academy has set aside a small fund to enable parents in financial difficulty to send their children on visits and activities. The funding is limited and there is no guarantee that all requests can be met.

Assistance will be allocated on a needs basis, and if the full cost of the trip or activity cannot be met through assistance funding and voluntary contributions, the trip or activity will be cancelled.

Parents in receipt of any of the following benefits may request assistance with the costs of activities:

- Income Support;
- 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 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).

To request assistance, parents should contact the academy office. The Headteacher of the academy that the child attends will make the decision on whether to support the request, with support from the Trust's Chief Financial Officer. All requests will be dealt with confidentially.

Academy trip refunds

Parents will be informed whether any initial deposit for an academy trip will be non-refundable when they are provided with initial information about the trip.

Refunds for any trip that has been cancelled will only be considered if the cost(s) of the trip have not yet been expended, or have been reimbursed to the academy. The maximum amount of any refund will be proportional to the amount paid by the parent in relation to the total unexpended

and reimbursed cost(s) of the trip.

In the event that an academy trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The Headteacher will discuss options with the Chief Financial Officer, 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 Headteacher's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The Headteacher will discuss options with the Chief Financial Officer, 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 a pupil or their parents cancel the pupil's place on a trip, it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The Headteacher will consult the Chief Financial Officer; taking 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 Headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The Headteacher will consult their Local Governing Body (LGB) on the matter; taking 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.

Where a pupil or their parents have previously cancelled a place on a trip and received a refund, the academy has the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future trips and visits.

Once trip arrangements have been booked and confirmed, if contributions exceed the total cost of the trip, a refund will be given where the excess is greater than £1 per pupil. If the excess is less than £1 per pupil, this will be paid into the academy's account.

Excess expenditure, or where the trip leader has not accounted for the true cost of the trip, will be subsidised by the academy. Should there be a scenario where additional activities are sought or further opportunities arise for the enrichment of the academy trip after the initial costing and booking, the constituent academy reserves the right to consult with parents and apply a further charge.

The academy will deal with cancellations and refunds on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all pupils and their families are treated equally.

If a parent wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they can do so via the Trust's Complaints Policy.