



Charging and Remissions Policy

Further advice and guidance on this policy can be obtained from the Governor Services Team or Mike Gee, Head of Governance, mgee@academiesenterprisetrust.org

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1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 “Group” – this refers to the AET Group made up of three academy trusts.
- 1.2 “Trust” – this refers to one of the three academy trusts, which make up the AET Group, namely, Academies Enterprise Trust, London Academies Enterprise Trust and Unity City Academy Trust.
- 1.3 “Board of Trustees” – this refers to the Group’s Board of Trustees, who have ultimate responsibility for governance.
- 1.4 “Local Governing Body” – this refers to the local governing body, which has delegated powers from the Board of Trustees in relation to governance for their academy. The members of the local governing body are the “local governors”.
- 1.5 “Management Board” – this refers to the management board, which also has delegated powers from the Board of Trustees in relation to governance for their academy. Management Boards are imposed for a time-limited period, where a local governing body has failed to support and challenge academy leaders effectively. Management Boards are chaired by a member of the Group’s Executive Board.
- 1.6 “Academy” – this refers to the individual academy.
- 1.7 “We/Us” – this refers to all employees and stakeholders within the AET Group.
- 1.8 “Department for Education” – this refers to the Government’s Department for Education.
- 1.9 “Local Authority” – this refers to the academy’s local authority, based on its location within England. This may be a county, unitary authority, metropolitan borough or London borough.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 The Trust acknowledges the right of every pupil to receive free school education and understands that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching time must be made available to all pupils regardless of their parents’/carers’ ability or willingness to help meet the cost.
- 2.2 The Trust also recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, trips and residential experiences can make towards pupils’ education and aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils in each academy and as additional optional activities.
- 2.3 This Policy allows each academy to charge for defined activities and any other activities beyond the basic provision of education. Where another specific activity is defined, it will be agreed by consultation with the Group finance team. Parents/carers will be made aware of the policy through the academy prospectus and they can make comments on it.
- 2.4 The academy reserves the right to ask parents/carers for a voluntary contribution towards:

- i. the cost of any activity which takes place during academy hours
- ii. the cost of academy equipment
- iii. academy funds generally

2.5 Parents/carers may be advised that the continuance of an activity may depend upon voluntary contributions but once it has been decided to run such an activity, no qualifying pupil will be excluded on the grounds of voluntary contributions.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 It is the responsibility of the Group to establish a policy and core procedures for charging pupils to participate in academy activities and for the academy to monitor the effects of the procedure.

3.2 It is the responsibility of the principal/headteacher to ensure that the policy is implemented consistently and using fair criteria, in particular that the academy's equal opportunities policies are observed. The principal/headteacher (or Finance Officer) is also responsible for ensuring that staff, parents/carers and pupils know the details of the policy as appropriate.

3.3 It is the responsibility of all staff to familiarise themselves, and comply with this Policy and core procedures in accordance with relevant professional standards. Some staff may be responsible for implementing the policy as part of their overall responsibilities (eg heads of department and managers).

4. MONITORING AND REVIEW

4.1 Senior leaders will report on the operation of the policy to the Principal/headteacher as appropriate.

4.2 The Principal/headteacher will report to the Local Governing Body and/or Board of Trustees on any relevant aspects of the working of the policy as appropriate.

4.3 The policy will be reviewed every two years.

5. CORE PROCEDURES – CHARGING AND REMISSIONS

The academy reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances for activities organised by the academy.

5.1 Instrumental music lessons: the academy normally charges for practical instrumental lessons held during the school day.

5.2 Practical subjects: in order that that pupils may experience a wide range of activities and develop essential basic skills, a number of items will be made either to take home and keep or to consume on the premises. Therefore, a letter will be sent to all parents/carers at the beginning of the school year, and to parents/carers of pupils admitted during the school year, asking them to make a voluntary contribution for materials and equipment used in this way. Where parents/carers have indicated in writing that they wish to own a finished product, a charge will be made. The charge shall not exceed the cost of the

materials used by the pupil.

5.3 Private use of facilities: Academies may allow the private use of facilities using the following guidelines for charging:

- a) if facilities are used by groups associated directly with the academy pupils and staff, then it is permissible to waive hire costs
- b) if facilities are hired by local community groups, which may include academy pupils and/or staff, then hire costs should be set to cover any out-of-pocket costs to the academy related to the hire, such as heating, lighting and caretaking costs
- c) If facilities are hired to commercial organisations, then a market rate should be charged for the hire of facilities.

Private use of the telephone and photocopying facilities by pupils is not permitted. In the rare case that a private telephone call is made it is deemed to be an emergency and no charge is made.

5.4 Trips and Visits

a) General matters:

- i. the academy is permitted to charge for the provision of educational services by a third party; the academy will ensure that the monies are paid to the third party organisation.
- ii. if the activity is in school time, the academy will formally grant leave of absence to the pupils taking part, as the activity would no longer technically be part of the academy's official programme. It is likely, too, that any staff taking part in the activity would also have to be granted leave of absence.

The principal/headteacher must consider carefully the position of accompanying staff, depending on the precise nature and duration of the trip.

b) Trips and visits during the school day:

Parents/carers cannot be asked for a compulsory payment for any trip or visit that is taking place during a normal school day. Voluntary payments (including full staff costs) can be requested but if the trip or visit proceeds, pupils wishing to go but whose parents/carers are not prepared to pay, must be allowed to attend. They cannot be subsidised by other parents/carers. This will probably mean that insufficient funds will be available and the member of staff involved will seek additional funding from the principal/headteacher. If this is not possible, the trip or visit must be cancelled.

c) Optional extra trips and visits out of school time:

These are trips and visits where at least half of the time for the trip is out of normal school hours. Here the parents/carers can be asked to meet the full cost of the trip or visit. This compulsory payment cannot include subsidising pupils unable to pay and staff costs. Staff costs are to be met on a voluntary basis but the trip or visit will not proceed unless these costs are met in full.

d) Residential trips and visits including study visits abroad:

Where at least half of the time away from home is not normal school time or where the work undertaken is not an integral part of the examination course, the trip or visit can be classified as optional. As an optional trip or visit, the cost of board and lodging for the pupils can be passed on to parents/carers. This cost will not exceed the actual cost of the provision and prior written confirmation from the parent/carer is required that she/he is willing to pay the charge. The cost of staff accommodation, insurance and transport must be obtained by voluntary payments if the trip or visit is to go ahead.

- e) Recovery of sums payable by parents/carers: any sums payable by parents/carers e.g. for wasted examination fees, optional extras to which they have agreed, or for board and lodging, are recoverable as a civil debt.
- f) Breakages and fines: parents/carers will be charged for the cost of replacing damaged or lost equipment where appropriate.
- g) Transport: where a pupil makes use of transport not provided by the academy to travel direct from home to an activity sanctioned, though not provided by the local authority or the academy, then parents/carers will be expected to meet the costs of such travel.

5.5 School Uniform: where an academy organises a service to provide school uniform parents/carers will be charged at cost for the uniform that is sold to parents/carers.

5.6 Stationery and Equipment: Pupils are usually expected to provide their own basic stationery and equipment, but where academies provide items of stationery and equipment for sale as an additional service, then parents/carers and pupils may be charged at cost for such items.

5.7 Books: Academies will not charge for compulsory textbooks and workbooks etc., but may charge at cost for additional non-compulsory items, which may further support pupils' learning.

5.8 Food and Drink: Academies will charge pupils for food and drink provided by academy canteens, unless they qualify for free school meals. Food and drink for staff will be charged, unless they are involved in the supervision or support of pupils. Food and drink for visitors and for academy organised meetings, events etc... will be charged at the discretion of the academy. Members of the public or external public events will be expected to pay for any food and drink that is purchased from the academy canteen.

6. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

6.1 Parents/carers of pupils who are in receipt of the following support payments will, in addition to having free school meals entitlement, also be entitled to request the remission of charges in full or part:

- i. Income Support
- ii. Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- iii. Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- iv. Child Tax Credit (not Working Tax Credit)

When arranging a chargeable activity such parents/carers will be invited in confidence for the remission of charges in full or in part. The principal/headteacher in consultation with the chair of governors will make authorisation for such remission.

- 6.2 The academy is sympathetic to those parents/carers that are unable to afford the cost of additional activities and/or extra-curricular activities, and has limited funds available to assist parents/carers in particularly difficult financial circumstances. Approaches for such assistance may be made to a member of staff, who will then consult the principal/headteacher.