

# Charging & Remissions Policy



## 1. Document Control

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## 2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to, the following:

- ESFA Academy Trust Handbook
- Department for Education statutory guidance 'Charging for school activities' 2018
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- Education Act

This policy operates in conjunction with the following Trust policies:

- Finance Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Lettings Policy
- Acceptable use agreement

## 3. Definitions

- Charge; a fee payable for specifically defined activities.
- Remission; the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable.

## 4. Context

The law states that education provided during school hours must be free, with the exception of instrumental and vocal music tuition. This definition includes materials, equipment and transport provided in school hours by the school or local authority. No student may be left out of an activity because their parents are unable to pay. Students whose parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay will still be given an equal chance to participate in the activity.

The Arthur Terry Learning Partnership is committed to providing quality education, and equity of children's opportunity and access to participate fully in the school curriculum, and contribute to all aspects of school life.

## 5. Admissions

The Trust **does not** make requests for financial contributions (either in the form of voluntary contributions, donations or deposits (even if refundable)) as any part its admissions process.

## 6. Education provided during school hours

Subject to the limited exceptions outlined in this policy, the Trust **does not** charge for education provided during school hours, including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or equipment.

## 7. Education provided outside of school hours

**No charge** will be made for education provided outside of school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for by the Trust or part of religious education.

## 8. School meals

The Trust **does not** charge for school meals where the student is eligible for free school meals or universal infant free school meals.

Students who are not entitled to free school meals **will** be charged in accordance to published meal prices and using the preferred systems adopted by the Trust.

## 9. Prescribed public examinations

The Trust **does not** charge for entry for a prescribed public examination (including re-sits) if the student has been prepared for it by the Trust.

However, if a student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the Trust **may** seek to recover the fee from the student's parent/carer.

## 10. Materials, books, instruments or equipment

The Trust **may** charge for materials, books, instruments or equipment that the parent/carer wishes their child to keep or own. For example, where parents have indicated in writing that they may wish to own a finished product from a practical subject, the school may charge for the materials.

Such charges **will not** exceed the cost of the item and parent/carer will be made aware at the outset that a charge will be made and the amount.

iPad devices & accessories provided to students are on a loan basis to support the delivery of the curriculum and must be returned when the child leaves the school. The devices/accessories are not available for purchase as they are reused by children in later years.

## 11. Music, instrumental or vocal tuition

The Trust **may** charge for tuition in singing or in playing a musical instrument during school hours if it is provided at the request of the student's parent/carer. This applies to individual and group tuition.

The charges **will not** exceed the cost of the provision and may include the cost of the staff to provide the tuition, instruments, music books and exam fees.

**No charge** will be made if the tuition is:

- provided to a student who is looked after by a local authority; or
- provided as part of the national curriculum during school hours or required as part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the student is being prepared by the Trust.

## 12. Transport

The Trust **does not** charge for:

- transporting students to or from any Trust premises where the local authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- transporting students to other premises where the Trust Board or local authority has arranged for students to be educated
- transport that enables a student to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for that examination by the Trust
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit

## 13. Residential visits

The Trust **does not** charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours
- education provided on any visit that takes place outside school 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 by the Trust or is part of religious education
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are accompanying students on a residential visit

The Trust **will** charge for board and lodging relating to residential visits as outlined in this policy.

## 14. Optional extras

The Trust **does** charge for 'optional extras', which may take place both during and outside of school time.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement will be required before an optional extra for which a charge is made is provided.

Optional extras include:

- education provided outside of school hours that is not part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for by the Trust or part of religious education
- examination entry fee(s) if the student has not been prepared for the examination(s) by the Trust
- other transport (outside of that outlined above).
- board and lodging for a student on a residential visit
- extended day services offered to students (for example breakfast club, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions)
- Off-site enrichment trips or visits during school hours that are not formally integrated into the curriculum

In calculating the cost of an optional extra an amount **will** be included in relation to:

- any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra
- the cost of buildings and accommodation
- non-teaching staff
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, which includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra
- the cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra

Any charge for an optional extra **will not** exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra, divided equally by the number of students participating. It **will not** include an element of subsidy for any other students wishing to participate in the activity whose parent/carer is unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

## 15. Voluntary contributions

The Trust and its schools may ask parents/carers for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the Trust and its schools, or any of its activities.

Where it is intended that an activity is to be funded by voluntary contributions, the headteacher/ head of school will ensure that parents/carers are made aware at the outset that:

the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions

- there is no obligation to make any contribution
- if insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund the activity, and the Trust is unable to fund it from some other source, for example, within the budget or by fundraising, then the activity will be cancelled

No student will be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parent/carer is unwilling or unable to pay. Students whose parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay will still be given an equal chance to participate in the activity once an activity has been confirmed to proceed.

The ATLP 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, schools will try to publish a list of planned school visits at the beginning of the school year, so that parents can plan ahead. Where possible such lists will include approximate costs. Schools will also facilitate arrangements for parents to pay in instalments.

## 16. Refunds

Request for refunds for activities will be considered on an individual basis and may be rejected if the Trust is unable to recoup the costs incurred.

In all cases of withdrawal, either voluntarily or otherwise, applications should be made in writing to the headteacher/ head of school. If approved, refunds will be processed via the original method of payment.

The Trust reserves the right not to refund costs where a student is withdrawn from an activity by the Trust on the basis of a student's breach of the Trust's behaviour policy.

## 17. Community Facilities

ATLP schools may, by prior arrangement, allow their facilities to be used by the local community, for example – out of hours/holiday childcare or swimming pool sessions. Such use will require written prior agreement, the conditions of which (including charges) will be governed by the ATLP Lettings Policy and outlined in a subsequent written agreement.

## 18. Damage to property, breakages & non-return of Trust property

When the Trust's property has been wilfully or recklessly damaged by a student or parent/carer, the Trust **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 student, and the Trust has been charged, the Trust **may** charge those responsible for some or all of the cost.

Where property belonging to the Trust has been loaned to students and not returned, the Trust **will** seek recovery for some or all of the cost. The release of exam certificates may be **conditional** upon the return of trust iPad devices for exam-year students.

## 19. Remissions

Since April 2003, the eligibility criteria that entitles families to an exemption from paying the cost of board and lodging on residential visits has been aligned with free school meals eligibility criteria.

Parents/carers who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits **may** be exempt from paying certain costs (including the cost of board and lodging related to residential visits):

- Income Support
- Income based Job-seekers Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (where the person is not receiving Working Tax Credit as well and has an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Universal Credit

The Trust and school will apply the statutory remissions to charges that are made. However no student shall be placed at an educational disadvantage because of a parent's unwillingness or inability to contribute. In the case of particular need and hardship, remission outside these parameters will be at the discretion of the Headteacher. Each incident will be dealt with on its own merit and at their discretion. When arranging a chargeable activity, school leaders will invite parents to apply in confidence for payment plans or remission of charges in part or in full. Costs involved in the remission of optional extras, board and lodgings are borne by the schools funds.

## 20. Complaints

Complaints regarding this policy or its application should be raised under the Trust's complaints policy.

## 21. Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed on a biennial basis, or when the need arises, with any necessary recommendations for improvement made to the Board.