



Charging & Remissions Policy

October 2023

Review Date: Autumn 2024

INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Background

The Beyond Schools Trust (the 'Trust') recognises the value of providing a wide range of experiences including trips, visits, residential experiences, instrumental tuition, and activities both in and out-of-school-hours that are accessible to as many students as possible as part of a broad, balanced curriculum to enrich and extend pupils learning experiences and contribute to their personal development.

However, many of these activities have an associated cost and cannot therefore be provided unless voluntary contributions are received.

This policy is intended to maintain a fair and coherent system of charges and remissions within the constraints of the individual schools' budgets. It also defines other circumstances when the Trust Academies may wish to ask for voluntary contributions, how these charges will be worked out and who might qualify for help with the costs.

Responsibilities

The Trustees delegated responsibility for management of this policy to the Local Governing Body (LGB) of the Academy.

The Headteacher is responsible for the operational management of the policy and any determinations in respect to individual parents will be considered by the Headteacher or a nominated member of SLT.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees with reference to any subsequent guidelines issued by the Department of Education (DfE).

The policy is determined in accordance with all relevant information, including:

- The Education Act 1996
- s200 of the Education Act 2002
- The Education (Schools and Further Education) Regulations
- The Education (School Sessions and Charges and Remissions Policies) (Information) (England) Regulations 1999; and
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010

It also references the 'Charging for School Activities' guidance produced by the Department for Education and the charges for music tuition (England) regulations 2007.

Charging

No student should have his/her access to the curriculum limited by charges. However, the Academy reserves the right to levy a charge in any circumstances permissible under statute as detailed in the following pages.

When charges are to be made, the Academy reserves the absolute right to determine whether the activity has to be cancelled if an insufficient number of families are prepared to pay for the activity to take place. Parents may apply to the specific Academy for special consideration regarding financial support.

SUMMARY

What Can and Cannot be Charged for

The Academies within the Trust will not charge for:

- Admission to the Academy.
- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment).
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.
- Tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the Academy, or part of religious education, entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the Academy.
- Entry for public examination for which the Academy has prepared the student, unless the Headteacher thinks there are educational reasons for not entering the student.
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school
- Transporting registered pupils to or from the Academy premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport.
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local education authority has arranged for pupils to be educated.
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the Academy.
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.
- Administration costs in relation to the organisation & management of any event, activity or visit

The Academies within the Trust may charge for:

- Materials and Equipment – any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wish to own them

- Optional Extras (See below)
- Music and Vocal Tuition (See below)
- Community Facilities
- Board and Lodging for a residential visit
- An examination entry fee may be charged to parents if:
 - (i) the examination is on the set list, but the student was not prepared for it at the Academy
 - (ii) the examination is not on the set list, but the Academy arranges for the student to take it
 - (iii) a student fails without good reason to complete the requirements of any public examination where the Academy originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee
- Lockers - students may be given the opportunity, voluntarily, to request the use of a locker to store personal items for which a charge is made for the locker rental. The applicable charge is determined by the Academy from time to time and will be advised to parents in advance. Charges will be based upon a number of factors which will include lockers maintenance and a periodic replacement programme of the lockers. A reduced rental charge is available for those paying in advance to hire a locker for periods of longer than one year.
- Breakages and Replacements - The cost of breakages and replacements as a result of damages caused wilfully or negligently by students will be charged to parents.

Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents the LGB of the Academy from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the Academy or any other Academy activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the Academy will make this clear to parents at the outset. It will also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution, however where there are insufficient voluntary contributions to enable the visit/activity to take place it will be cancelled.

It is important to note that no child will be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal chance to go on the visit and the Academy will make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy is for allocating places on school visits.

CHARGEABLE ACTIVITIES

Materials and Equipment

Parents may be expected to provide materials or be charged for materials where the parents wish to own the end product, for example ingredients and or materials for items produced during food technology, textiles, design technology and art classes.

Also, should a parent wish to own the books or equipment, such as revision guides, textbooks and musical instruments, these items will be chargeable.

Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as “optional extras”. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment.

Optional extras are:

- education provided outside of school time that is not part of:
 - (a) the National Curriculum
 - (b) syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
 - (c) religious education
- examination entry fees and re-sits if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination at the school
- transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the LA/Academy have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education)
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
- Extended day services offered to pupils (for example, breakfast club, after school club and supervised homework sessions)

In calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra
- the cost of buildings and/or accommodation
- non-teaching staff
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services (including agency supply teachers) purely to provide an optional extra

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

No charge will be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a curriculum residential visit.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges.

Music & Vocal Tuition

Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music & vocal lessons are an exception to this rule.

The Academy may charge for teaching either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size to play a musical instrument or to sing in accordance with the charges for music tuition (England) regulations 2007. The cost or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra, may be charged.

Board and Lodging

Where a school activity requires pupils to spend nights away from home, the Academy may make a charge for board and lodging.

School Minibus

Only the Trust's students, staff or parents may travel in the Academy's minibus.

The minibus may occasionally be used by staff out of hours to support activities upon the authorisation of the Headteacher.

The Academy will not raise funds through making a profit by charging for travel in the minibus.

The Academy will not loan their minibuses to any other establishments or third parties who are not direct employees of the Trust. Any loan of vehicles to Trust staff will be at the discretion of the Academy and charges may be levied to cover the cost of insurance and running of the vehicle, but the service will not make a profit.

REMISSIONS

Criteria for Exceptions

No charge will be made for board and lodging in respect of students whose parents are receiving:

- Income Support
- Universal Credit
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (New style)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance

- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit (providing that they do not also receive Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, as assessed by the Inland Revenue that does not exceed limits in the current tax year - presently £18,725 (tax year 2023-24))
- Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on

The eligibility criteria that entitle families to an exemption from paying for the cost of board and lodging on residential visits have been aligned with Free School Meals eligibility criteria.

Charges for other ‘chargeable activities’ may also be fully or partly remitted. Details of any remission arrangements will be made clear when parents are informed of charges for individual activities.

Pupil Premium Fund/Looked After Children

Income from the Pupil Premium fund, together with funds as may be available in respect to Looked After Children, may be applied by the Academy to assist in supporting the student to:

- Counter the impact of deprivation and disadvantage on education; and
- develop teamwork skills and confidence

Application may be made for assistance, on a case-by-case basis, where deprivation and disadvantage can be demonstrated.

It should be noted that ‘part of the National Curriculum’ is not restricted to learning outside the classroom experiences that are specifically subject based (e.g. geography or science fieldwork) and include, for example, activities designed to fulfil requirements under the National Curriculum ‘inclusion statement’ (e.g. developing teamwork skills).

General Statement on Remission

In all cases where a charge is applied, the Headteacher may, upon written request from a parent and at his discretion, remit a part or all the charge where he considers such action to be in the best interest of either the individual or all the students participating in the activity.

Complaints: In the event of any issues arising that cannot be resolved directly with the Headteacher, the matter should be addressed in writing to the Chair of Governors of the Local Governing Body and sent to the address of the Academy.

This Policy will be reviewed by the Finance Audit and Risk Committee on a yearly cycle and a copy provided to the Chair of Governors and Headteacher at each Academy who will be responsible for the application at the respective school level.

Date of Trustee Approval: November 2023

Review arrangements including date of review: Autumn 2024