

SHERBORNE AREA SCHOOLS' TRUST



Charging and Remissions Policy

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1. Introduction

Legislation restricts the types of activity schools are allowed to charge parents for. Sherborne Area Schools' Trust policy applies to charges made to parents / students, for facilities used by private individuals and third party organisations that rent Trust premises (excluding The Gryphon Sports Centre, for which separate arrangements apply and can be provided on request).

As a Trust we try:

- To make activities accessible to all students regardless of family income.
- To encourage and promote external activities which give added value to the curriculum.
- To respond to the wide variations in family income while not placing additional unexpected burdens on an Academy's budget.

For the purposes of this document, 'Parent' is taken to include any parent, carer or person with parental responsibility for a student.

2. Legislation

Under the terms of the Education Act 1996, Sherborne Area Schools' Trust must have a policy on charging students to participate in Academy activities.

Education provided during Academy hours must be free – the definition of education includes materials, equipment and transport provided in Academy hours by the Trust to carry students between the Academy and an activity. By law, students may not be charged for activities that form part of the normal Academy day, but the Trust may invite parents and others from time-to-time to make a voluntary contribution to the Trust's work, to allow us to offer activities or experiences which otherwise might not be possible. This might include a voluntary contribution to activities taking place in Academy time, activities which form part of the curriculum or an examination syllabus, or those which form part of each Academy's religious education curriculum. However, the child of any parent who is unable to contribute will not be prevented from participating in an activity which takes place during Academy time if the activity goes ahead.

In any request for voluntary payments it must be clear from the terms in which it is made that:

- There is no obligation to make a contribution.
- That students will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have contributed to the planned activity.
- The activity may not go ahead if there are insufficient contributions received to cover the cost of including all students who wish to participate.
- Where an activity takes place outside of Academy hours and does not form part of the curriculum of examination syllabus, this is classed as an optional extra and parents can be asked to meet the full cost of these activities.

3. Details of Charges

3.1 Admissions

No charge shall be made in respect of admission to the Academy unless it is for the purpose of:

- Part time education for persons over compulsory school age.
- Full time education for persons over compulsory school age.
- Teacher training.

3.2 Provision of Education

No charge shall be made in relation to the education of registered students where education is provided during Academy hours. Where education is provided outside of Academy hours, no charge shall be made provided it is required as part of the syllabus / curriculum. The Trust may charge individuals who are not registered students of one of its Academies for education provided or facilities used by them belonging to the Trust.

3.3 Musical Instrument tuition

The Trust is committed to providing opportunities for students to experience the learning of a musical instrument.

At the discretion of the Headteacher, our Academies may be in a position to facilitate extended music lessons for pupils which is not an essential part of the National Curriculum. The full cost of the extra lessons will be charged to parents who will sign an agreement before the lessons commence.

3.4 Practical subject change

Voluntary contributions may be requested to cover the cost of materials and ingredients provided by an Academy for practical subjects where parents indicate that they wish to receive the finished articles.

3.5 Visits during the Academy day

A request for voluntary donations may be made to cover the cost of educational visits and other activities. However, charges cannot be enforced where this forms part of the curriculum. Where the level of non-payment renders a trip financially unviable, consideration will be given to cancellation.

3.6 Residential Visits

Where at least half of the time away from home is not normal Academy time, where the trip involves an overnight stay or where the work undertaken is not an integral part of the examination course, the trip is classed as optional and parents can be expected to meet the full cost of residential courses in Academy time. If the visit is deemed to have taken place during the Academy day, or is part of the required curriculum, or is preparation for a public examination, then only the cost of board and lodging can be passed onto parents and this cannot exceed the actual cost.

Any charge in respect of an optional extra requires parental agreement and willingness to meet the charges. Parents should be aware that the activity may be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received.

If a student is unable to go on a trip after the initial deposit has been paid (unless this is because of ill-health, for which a doctors' note will be required), parents will still be required to meet the full cost of the trip, unless another student can be found to take up the place.

3.7 Public Examinations

No charge will be made in respect of the entry of a registered student at an Academy for an examination for which the Academy agrees the student should be entered. Charges will be applied for the entry of a student for an examination for which s/he has not been prepared by an Academy, or for entry to an examination against the advice of that Academy.

Entries for re-sits of examinations where the Academy has not provided additional tuition are also subject to charge. Parents seeking to have an examination paper remarked will be required to pay the re-mark fee.

Where a student fails to attend for an examination for which they have been entered (unless this is because of ill-health, for which a doctors' note will be required), parents may be expected to meet the cost of the examination entry.

3.8 Optional extra visits

Visits that take place outside the Academy day or as part of an extracurricular activity can be charged for, and parents are expected to meet the full cost of the trip.

3.9 Loss or damage

Parents will be expected to meet the cost of repairing or replacing any Trust property damaged or destroyed by a student, or any fines to be paid by the Trust as a result of the actions of a student. A charge will also apply for loss or damage of Trust property (including books or equipment) placed under the care of the student.

3.10 Fundraising and sponsorship

General fundraising and sponsorship from a variety of sources may be used to allow additional activities to take place. Any fundraising activity will make the purpose of the fundraising clear to those who may wish to contribute.

3.11 Lettings of the Trust's buildings

Charges will be levied for the use of the Trust's facilities by private individuals or external organisations at a rate to be determined annually. Facilities will only be let where they are

not needed for the purpose of education during that time and under no circumstances will lettings be subsidised from resources provided for the education of students.

Hirers will need to demonstrate that they have adequate insurance or provision for compensating the Trust for any damage they cause. They must also leave the facilities in a clean and tidy state, otherwise an additional fee for cleaning will be charged.

4. Refunding of Charges

4.1 Trips and activities

Charges and contributions are set to cover the anticipated costs. If the income from an activity exceeds the actual costs, the Academy will refund any surplus of £10 or more per student who contributed to the activity.

4.2 Arrangements for surpluses not refunded

Any surpluses not refunded will be used to support access to optional activities for those pupils whose families are experiencing financial hardship.

5. Remission of Charges

The Trust believes that all students should have the opportunity to gain fully from the experiences the Trust has to offer and recognises the real and persistent difficulties faced by families on low incomes in meeting the cost of educational activities for their children.

Parents who find themselves in financial difficulties and who have students at one of our Academies in receipt of Free School Meals may apply in confidence to that Academy for financial support with optional activities. Remission of charges in part or in full will be authorised by the Headteacher in discussion with the Finance Department.

6. Provision for review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust Board and will be adjusted in accordance with any subsequent guidance issued by DfE, ESFA or the Local Authority.