



# **PolyMAT**

## **CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY**

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The Trust aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for its pupils and enhance learning experiences by additional educational visits where possible.

This document sets out the Trust's policy on charging for certain activities to enhance the learning of its students. In that case, due consideration will be given to balancing the cost against the benefit.

This policy does is not intended to have contractual effect and can be amended by the Trust from time to time at its absolute discretion.

### **Activities in School hours**

Schools in the Trust provide free education for their pupils during School hours. This includes materials, books, instruments and other equipment. 'School hours' are those when the Schools are in session and do not include the break in the middle of the school day.

### **Education out of School hours**

The Trust will not charge for education outside of School hours where it forms part of the national curriculum, syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the Schools, or forms part of the Trust's basic curriculum for religious education. Where less than 50% of the time spent on the activity falls within School hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside School hours.

### **Optional extras**

Charges may be made by the Trust for "optional extras". These are:

- Education outside School hours and which do not fall within the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the Schools or part of religious education;
- Exam entrance fee where the pupil not has not been prepared for it at the Schools;
- Certain transport (see below);
- Board and lodging for a residential visit; and
- Extended day services (e.g. breakfast/after School club, tea and supervised homework sessions).

Further details are set out below.

### **Transport**

Transport is free of charge where there is a statutory obligation to take the pupil to or from School or other premises where the local authority or Trust has arranged for the pupil to be educated or to enable a pupil to meet an examination requirement where he/she has been prepared for that examination at the Schools or transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

Transport in School hours will be provided free of charge though the Trust may ask for a voluntary contribution charge towards the cost of transport from time to time.

Travel charges may apply when a residential activity takes place outside of School hours. The amount charged will be calculated to cover the unit cost per pupil. These charges may not apply to those pupils entitled to remissions, but no other pupils will be charged extra to cover those costs.

## **Residential Activities**

The Trust will not charge for education on a visit taking place in School hours or that takes place outside of School hours if (a) it is part of the national curriculum; or (b) it is part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination where the pupil is being prepared for it at the Trust; or (c) part of religious education.

Charges will be made in advance for pupils taking part in a residential to cover the board and lodging costs, but the charge will not exceed the actual cost, as well as any specialist tuition and other associated costs. This is a voluntary contribution. However, residential trips cannot go ahead if a significant number of pupils do not contribute.

Parents/carers in receipt of certain benefits may be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging. The Trust will require evidence to demonstrate the parent/carer is in receipt of such benefit.

## **Musical Instrument Tuition**

Whilst generally education in School hours are free, charges can be made for tuition in playing a musical instrument, including vocal tuition, either to an individual pupil or groups of any size where the tuition is at the request of the pupils' parent/carer.

No charge will be made if the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum or for a pupil looked after by a local authority.

## **Public Examinations**

No charge is made for entering children for public examinations where the pupil has been prepared for that examination at the Schools (including re-sits). However, in the case of a re-sit if the pupil fails without good reason to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the Trust may charge the pupil's parents/carers for the fee.

Charges will be made for examination entry fees for pupils where the pupil has not been prepared for the examination at a school in the Trust.

## **Extended day services**

Extended day services enable the Schools to provide high quality learning opportunities either side of the School day, increase pupil engagement, improve outcomes and narrow gaps in outcomes between different groups of pupils. This can include offering pupils from time to time: breakfast club; after-School clubs; tea and supervised homework sessions which may be charged at the cost of providing the activity. No parent/carer will be asked to subsidise another.

## **Voluntary contributions**

The Trust may ask for voluntary contributions from time to time for the benefit of the Trust or any Trust activities. All requests for voluntary contributions (in cash or in kind) will make it clear that any contribution is voluntary. Children whose parents/carers do not contribute will not be treated any differently and will still be given an equal chance to attend the visit.

If a particular activity cannot take place without some help the Schools will endeavour to explain this at the planning stage.

If there are not enough voluntary contributions to make an activity viable the activity will regretfully be cancelled.

## **Damaged or lost items**

Academies may charge parents for the cost of replacing items broken, damaged or lost due to their child's behaviour. Parents will not be taken to court for failure to pay such costs.

## **Calculating Charges**

Parents/carers will be informed in advance of any charges applicable to a particular activity, how the charge is calculated and who may qualify for help or get the activity for free.

When charges are made for any activities, the total charges made for any activity will not exceed the actual cost of the activity. The cost will be based on the actual costs incurred divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who can't pay or are unwilling to pay the full charge.

When 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 accommodation, board and lodgings;
- Non-teaching staff;
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra including 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.
- Transportation costs
- Activity costs and entrance fees

If further funds are needed, e.g. to help with hardship cases, this must be by fundraising or voluntary contribution.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to pay the charges. The Trust will need to have the agreement of parents/carers before organising the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

## **Income Generation**

In line with the ESFA's 'Academy trust handbook' the Trust will set fees for chargeable services at full cost, and reserves the right to apply an additional rate of return when in a commercial environment.

## **School trip refunds**

All initial deposits for school trips will be non-refundable. Parents will be informed of this when they are provided with initial information about the trip.

In the event that the school has to cancel a trip due to foreseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded. In the event that a school trip is cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The Headteacher will consult the CFO on the matter, taking into account the cost to the school, including alternative provision cost.

In the event that a school 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 CFO, 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 their place on a trip, it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The Headteacher will consult the CFO on the matter, taking into account the reason for cancellation, whether the school 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 full refund, the school has the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future trips and visits.

If a child's behaviour is cause for concern (eg. Risk of exclusion, aggressive or violent behaviour) following the school booking and committing expenditure on the trip, then no refund can be given.

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 to parents. The Headteacher will consult the CFO on the matter, taking into account whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

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 £1 or over per pupil. If the excess is less than £1 per pupil, this will be paid into the school's account.

Academies 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 Complaints Procedures Policy.

## **Remissions**

### **Trips**

Families that are in receipt of free school meals may be offered assistance in paying for a trip or a longer period of instalments will be made available to enable their child to access the activity.

### **Wrap around care and extra curriculum**

The Headteacher may remit in full or part charges in respect of a pupil, if he/she feels it is reasonable in the circumstances. Should there be outstanding debt on a parent account, this debt will need to be settled prior to being able to offer a space in any wrap around care or extra curriculum. If parents have difficulty in paying they should not hesitate to discuss their circumstances in confidence with someone at the school and they will be advised as to what help might be available. All remissions will be authorised by the Headteacher.

The Headteacher may decide not to levy charges in respect of a particular activity, if he/she feels it is reasonable in the circumstances.