



62 – CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Agreed May 2021

Signed by Chair of Trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Jones", is written over a horizontal line.

MINSTER TRUST FOR EDUCATION
REVIEW DATE SUMMER 2024

Background

Section 457 of the Education Act 1996 required each school governing body to draw up, and keep under review, its policies on:

- charging for school activities; and
- any remission arrangements

Schools admissions

1. There will be no charge relating to a pupil's admission to school. The ability of parents to contribute to the school, either financially or in any other way is not to be a consideration when deciding whether to admit a pupil. No parent will be asked to make a contribution of any kind prior to a pupil's admission.

Educational activities taking place during school hours

2. No charge will be made for any activity which takes place during school hours, including any materials, books, instruments or other equipment (excluding clothing) provided in connection with the activity. The cost of such activities will be contained within the funds available to the school, such as the school's budget or school fund.
3. "School hours" are defined as being those hours during which the school is in session, but excluding the mid-day break.
4. Parents or students will not be charged for or be required to provide such items as art or design and technology materials except where parents or students have confirmed that they wish to own the finished product. Within Technology, Art and Design, students pay a contribution towards the cost price of materials and consumables (cling film/foil containers/foil) where they wish to take the product home.
5. Clothing is excluded from the definition of 'equipment' under the Education Act. Thus parents can still be expected to provide items of clothing, such as cookery aprons and football boots. The school will continue to provide essential protective clothing, such as goggles.
6. Charges may be made for any additional materials, books, instruments or equipment where the pupil's parent wishes him or her to own them.

Educational activities taking place outside school hours

7. A charge may be made for activities taking place outside school hours EXCEPT where the activities are required either:
 - a) as part of the syllabus of a prescribed public examination; or
 - b) to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or religious educationin which case no charge will be made, with the exception of board and lodging charges for a residential visit (but see paragraph 18 below). Activities not falling into the above categories are known as 'optional extras'.

Optional Extras

8. Where charges are permitted and made, they will not exceed the cost of the 'optional extra' to each individual pupil participating in the activity. Parents of participating students will not be asked to subsidise other students taking part in the visit. The cost of any students whom the charge for a school activity has been remitted will be met from the school's budget or school fund.
9. An amount may be charged in relation to
 - a) any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
 - b) teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.
10. The cost of any teacher employed by the Trust will not be charged to participating students. Teachers who organise or participate in such visits do so as a voluntary activity and it is the policy of the Trust not to make additional payments to teachers for such activities. However, the Trust is grateful to the large number of teachers who continue to volunteer in this way and it is important to note that costs incurred by teachers in providing the optional extra may be included in the charge to students. In order to achieve this it may be necessary for the teacher to be engaged on a separate contract for services (as distinct from a contract of employment) specifically for the purposes of providing the activity. The Trust may, therefore, engage existing teaching staff on a contract for services for the specific activity and then charge the costs incurred by the teachers, including the cost of any travel and board and lodging, among the participating students. Any such contract for services will be made in writing with the teacher concerned and will make it clear that the activities covered by the contract are taking place outside school hours and that there will be no extra payment to the teacher.
11. A pupil's participation in any 'optional extra' will be a matter for parental choice and on the basis of their willingness to meet any charges which are applicable. The agreement of parents is therefore a necessary prerequisite to a pupil's inclusion in any such activity.
12. It will be for the Local Governing Body to determine whether any charge should be made and, if so, the amount.

Transport

13. No charge may be made for any transport provided to convey students between school sites, or between the school and any other place where educational provision has been arranged by the school during school hours, e.g. swimming pools, off-site playing fields or sports centres, other schools under consortium arrangements or colleges or further education under a link scheme.

School visits and other activities taking place partly during and partly outside school hours

14. Many school visits and other activities will inevitably take place partly during and partly outside school hours. The Act therefore provides a basis for determining whether an activity is deemed to take place wholly during or wholly outside school hours for the purposes of charging arrangements:

Day visits and non-residential activities

15. A day visit or activity is deemed to take place during school hours if 50% or more of the time spent on the activity, including any connected travel, occurs during school hours. In those circumstances no charges may be made for anything connected with the visit or activity, including transport and admission to places of interest. The cost of such a visit or activity will be made from within the funds at the school's disposal.

Residential visits and activities

16. A residential visit or activity is defined as being one which involves students spending one or more nights away from home. Such a visit or activity is deemed to take place during school hours if the number of school sessions taken up by the visit or activity is 50% or more of the number of half days involved (in this connection a 'half day' is defined as any period of 12 hours ending at noon or midnight on any day.)
17. Thus a residential trip taking place in term-time from noon on Wednesday to 9.00pm on Sunday (9 half days; 5 school sessions) would be regarded as taking place during school hours; a trip lasting from noon on Thursday to 9.00pm on Sunday (7 half days; 3 school sessions) would not.
18. If a residential visit or activity is deemed to take place during school hours no charge will be made except for board and lodgings. This charge must not exceed the actual cost of the board and lodgings provided and cannot include the cost of alternative provision – including supply teacher cover – for those students who do not wish to participate. Remission applies if a pupil's parents are eligible for:-
- Income Support (or Universal Credit)
 - Income –based Job Seeker's Allowance
 - An income-related employment and support allowance
 - Support under Part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - Child Tax Credit, where the parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and has an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs) that does not exceed £16,190
 - The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
19. If a day or residential visit or activity is deemed to take place outside school hours an appropriate charge will be made unless the visit or activity is required either:
- a) as part of the syllabus of a prescribed public examination; or
 - b) to fulfil statutory duties to the National Curriculum or religious education,

in which case no charge will be made, with the exception of board and lodgings charges for students involved in residential visits or activities. These charges, too, will be wholly remitted if a pupil's parents are eligible for one or other of the benefits listed in paragraph 19 above AND the visit or activity forms part of the syllabus of a prescribed public examination or is provided specifically to fulfil statutory duties under the national curriculum or relating to religious education.

20. It will be seen from paragraph 19 above that it will be necessary in some circumstances to identify students whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits if charges are to be made for the board and lodging element of a residential visit. The school may not be immediately aware of all cases where parents are in receipt of these benefits. It will be necessary, therefore, when a school proposes arranging an activity for which a charge for board and lodging can be made and where statutory remission arrangements apply, for the parents of all the participating students to be advised of the statutory entitlement to remission. This will ensure that those parents in receipt of these benefits are aware of their entitlement and have the opportunity to claim remission.
21. Where students are in receipt of pupil premium funding, the school will fund one residential trip whilst the student is in attendance at that school.
22. Parents will also be informed if the Trust has decided to operate a remissions policy which goes beyond the statutory minimum.

Activities arranged during school hours by a third party

23. Where activities are arranged by someone other than the school and parents ask the school to grant their children leave of absence to join the activity, it would not be appropriate in such circumstances for the governing body to be involved in any way in arranging or helping to arrange such an activity for which they would have no legal liability. Nor is it anticipated that teachers would be granted leave of absence to participate in such an activity in a private capacity.

Entry for public examinations

24. No charge will be made for a pupil's entry to any prescribed public examination (*including re-sits) for which the pupil has been prepared at the school, whether during or outside school hours. Parents and students will not be required to provide or pay for any books, materials, instruments or other equipment (excluding clothing) necessary for the purposes of the examination entry. Details of the public examinations which are prescribed for this purpose are set out in Appendix 3.

*However, if a pupil fails without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the fee can be recovered from the pupil's parents if the pupil requires a higher grade.

25. Nor will any charge be made for transport provided to enable a pupil to take such an examination.
26. The school is required to enter a pupil for each examination in a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the pupil has been prepared for entry by the school except where, in the opinion of the school, there are educational reasons for

not doing so or where the pupil's parents request in writing that the pupil should not be entered.

27. Head Teachers are required to inform parents in writing as soon as it has been decided for which examinations students should be entered.
28. Where the preparation provided by the school would enable a pupil to take two or more prescribed public examinations in the same syllabus the requirement to enter a pupil applies to a single examination entry only. It will not be possible, however, for a charge to be made to the parents for double entry of a pupil if the school has prepared the pupil for the examination.
29. Where the school agrees to enter a pupil for a prescribed public examination for which the pupil has not been prepared by the school, the cost of the examination entry may be passed on to the pupil or parents.
30. Similarly, where a pupil has, with parental agreement, been entered for a public examination other than one which has been prescribed by regulations, a charge may be made for the entry fees. Any preparation provided by the school outside school hours may also be charged for but this must not exceed the actual costs of providing the optional extra. Any costs relating to the school's teaching staff cannot be recovered unless the staff have been specifically engaged under a contract for services for the purpose of providing the optional extra.
31. Examination entry fees will be recovered from parents if a pupil fails without good reason to complete the requirements for any public examination for which the school has paid, or is liable to pay, fees. Failure to complete the examination requirements may include failure to complete the coursework requirements or failure to sit final examinations. It is a matter for the school to determine what constitutes a good reason in this respect.

Music Provision

32. No charge will be made for class music tuition during school hours. Music tuition, whether group or individual, forming part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or required by the National Curriculum will also be free, whether it is provided during or outside school hours. No charge will be made for group musical activities, e.g. school orchestras, which take place during school hours.
33. Individual music and vocal tuition not forming part of the syllabus of a prescribed public examination or required by the National Curriculum, may be charged for, provided parental agreement is obtained before a pupil is given the tuition. The charge can include the cost of the teacher giving the tuition as well as the cost of sheet music and the hire and insurance of a musical instrument. This is the only activity taking place wholly during school hours for which a charge may be made. Schools are charged for the full cost of tuition by the provider, although the charge is remitted for all students who received free school meals and certain other students where at the discretion of the Director of Education, it is considered that there are exceptional circumstances. Schools may pass on all or part of the charge to parents for groups of up to four students. The cost of tuition for groups of 5 or more students will be met by the school.

34. Remission Scheme: The Local Authority, in recognition of the need for equality of access to this provision, has set aside funds paid to the Arts Support Service to remit the charge for those students who are eligible for free school meals or working tax credit (NHS exemption certificate). The criteria being that the pupil has already demonstrated and has received 7 lessons from the Instrumental & Music Teaching Service. The school bear the cost of the first 7 lessons and remission will be awarded from the eighth lesson onwards providing that satisfactory progress has been recognised by the Instrumental Music Teacher.

Voluntary contributions

35. The restrictions on charging for activities do not in any way prohibit the school from seeking voluntary contributions from parents for the benefit of the school or towards any school activities. Any such contributions must, however be genuinely voluntary. It will therefore be made clear to parents if contributions are requested that:-

- a) there is no obligation to contribute; and
- b) that students will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have contributed

Thus, for example, parents may be invited to make a contribution towards a school visit planned to take place during school hours but no pupil may be omitted from the visit if the pupil's parents decline to contribute for whatever reason.

36. The school reserves the right to cancel any activity or trip should insufficient voluntary contributions be received. An initial letter to parents in those circumstances could explain the nature of the proposed activity and its educational value. The letter should indicate the contribution per pupil which would be required if the activity were to take place. It should also emphasise that there would be no obligation to contribute and that no pupil would be excluded from the activity because their parents/carers were unwilling or unable to contribute. However, the letter should make it clear that the activity would not take place if insufficient contributions were received to support it.
37. There is no limit to the level of voluntary contribution which parents or others can make towards school activities. A request for a contribution towards the cost of a school visit could, for example, include an element to cover the cost of subsidising students from low income families or the costs incurred by accompanying teachers.

Breakages and fines

38. Parents will be asked to pay for the cost of any damage resulting from a pupil's misbehaviour.