



CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Reviewed: Spring 2024 Review Frequency: Annually

Approved by: Board of Trustees

1) Introduction

This policy sets out Aspire Academies Trust's policy on Charging and Remissions. Academies are required through their funding agreements to comply with the law (sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996) on charging for school activities.

2) Aims and Expectations

Academies, subject to the limited exceptions referred to in this policy, cannot charge for education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment). This policy states what can and cannot be charged for and informs parents on low incomes the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the costs of school visits.

3) Authority

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to ensure that the Charging and Remissions Policy is adhered to. Day to day responsibility can be delegated to the CFO, CEO, Executive Principal and Principal to implement.

Academies cannot charge for:

- an admission application to any state funded school 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;
- instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent;
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school; and
- examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school

Academies can charge for:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them;
- optional extras (see 4.d);

- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances
- certain early years provision
- community facilities

4) Voluntary contributions

a) We may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

- any activity outside of the national curriculum, which takes place during school hours
- academy equipment;

b) The contribution must be genuinely voluntary and the pupils of parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute will not be discriminated against. Where there are not enough contributions to make the activity possible, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, then it will be cancelled.

c) When organising school trips or visits which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school will invite parents to contribute to the cost of the trip. All contributions are voluntary. If a parent wishes their child to take part in a trip or event, but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, we do allow the child to participate fully in the trip or activity but if there are insufficient funds available, trips may have to be cancelled. Sometimes the academy pays additional costs in order to support the visit. If a trip goes ahead, it may include children whose parents have not paid any contribution, and we will not treat these children differently from any others.

d) The following is a list of additional activities organised by the school, which require voluntary contributions from parents. These activities are known as 'optional extras'. This list is not exhaustive:

- visitors to the school
- musical / dramatic performances
- contributions towards the cost of certain activities such as cooking, design technology etc where expensive materials have been used and parents have indicated in advance that they wish their child to take their finished article home.
- contributions towards the cost of snacks and some craft materials for children in Nursery.

e) Where a charge is made for a particular activity parents have a right to know how the charge is worked out. The school will provide this information on request. Charges may include an admin fee of 5% of total costs to cover online payment charges and other office costs.

5) Residential Trips

- a) We are permitted to charge for the cost of board and lodging during residential trips, even if they occur mainly during school time. This cost must not exceed the actual cost of the provision. However, the academy cannot charge for the educational or travel elements.
- b) Where the trip takes place wholly, or mainly, during school hours, children whose parents are in receipt of the following support payments will, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, also be entitled to the remission of the charge for board and lodging:
 - Income Support;
 - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
 - Child Tax Credit provided the parent is not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income does not exceed the annual earnings currently published by the DWP
 - Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
 - Universal Credit – if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 and the household income must be less than the annual earnings currently published by the DWP (after tax and not including any benefits received)
 - Pupils who receive Income Support or Income Based Jobseekers Allowance in their own right are also entitled to free school meals
 - Parents in receipt of the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit are also entitled to free school meals

6) Music tuition

- a) All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. We do not charge for this.
- b) There is a charge for individual or group music tuition if this provided at the request of the pupil's parent. The peripatetic music teachers teach individual or small group lessons. Parents in receipt of certain state benefits are exempt from payment.
- c) Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff who provide the tuition.

7) Swimming

- a) External swimming lessons are organised for a period of time during KS2. We inform parents when these lessons are to take place and we ask parents for their written permission for their child to take part. Voluntary contributions are asked for to cover costs.

8) Public Examinations

- a) No charges will be made for entering pupils for public examinations that are set out in Regulations. However, an examination entry fee may be charged to parents if:
 - the examination is on the set list, but the pupil was not prepared for it at the school;
 - the examination is not on the set list, but the school arranges for the pupil to take it;
 - a pupil fails without good reason to complete the requirements of any public examination where the Governing Body or LEA originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.
- b) Charges will not be made for any cost associated with preparing a pupil for an examination. However, charges may be made for tuition and other costs if a pupil is prepared outside school hours for an examination that is not set out in Regulations.

9) Minibus

- a) Only the academy's pupils, staff or parents may travel for a charge in a school's minibus. Where charges are made, a permit will be issued under Section 19 of the Transport Act 1985. This permit is not required where no charge (in cash or kind) is made. Any charge in place will cover the costs of running the vehicle only, not for profit.

10) Extra-curricular activities

- a) The Trust offers a wide variety of activities after school. For some, parents are asked to pay towards the cost of the activity, which are circulated to parents in advance. Payments are to be made in advance via Arbor.

11) Extended Schools

- a) Any surplus made from providing facilities or services will be reinvested in the Trust or in the service.
- b) Bookings for school run wrap around care must be made in advance via Arbor.
- c) We may use our delegated budget to subsidise a child's access to chargeable extended activities, where they consider that the activities are provided for the purposes of the school, because they are of educational benefit to the child.
- d) We may lawfully charge for study support (other than that which delivers the National Curriculum or preparation for a public examination) e.g. additional sports, drama and music clubs, holiday activities, visits and additional courses, i.e. first aid.
- e) We will endeavour to provide some level of free study support for pupils and young people in 'workless' households through the flexibility in their delegated budgets.