



Thomas Hepburn
Community Academy

Charging Policy

Approved by Governors: July 2017

Chair of Governors signature:

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Education Act 1996 recognises the principle of free school education and also reflects the Government's view that Academies should be able to charge parents/carers for optional activities which are provided out of Academy hours

1.2 The objectives of the charging provisions in the Act are:

- To maintain the right to free school education
- To establish that activities offered wholly, or mainly during normal teaching time should be available to all learners regardless of their parents'/carers' ability or willingness to help meet the cost
- To emphasise that there is no statutory requirement to charge for any form of education or related activity, but to give Academies the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of Academy hours
- To confirm the right of Academies to invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the Academy, or in support of any activity organised by the Academy, whether during or outside of Academy hours

2. Charging at different times

2.1 The charging policy of the Academy is consistent with that recommended by the Trust in that no charge is made for any educational activity that takes place during the Academy day

2.2 The following activities may incur a charge as permitted under the Education Act 1996:

i. During Academy Hours

- The cost, in cash or in kind, of ingredients and materials needed for practical subjects such as Art and Design/Technology if parents/carers have indicated in advance a wish to own the finished product
- Individual Music tuition except where it is provided to fulfil the requirements for a syllabus for a prescribed public examination or the requirements of the National Curriculum. If a charge is to be made then parental agreement must be obtained before the tuition is provided
- The cost of re-sits of prescribed public examinations where no further preparation has been provided by the Academy
- The cost of entering a learner for a public examination not prescribed in regulations
- The cost of any scrutiny of examination results if so requested by parents/carers

ii. Outside Academy Hours

- Board and lodging on residential visits
- Optional extra activities which take place wholly or mainly outside Academy hours but which are not provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination, and are not required in order to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to Religious Education. Participation in any such activities should be on the basis of parent/carer choice and a willingness to meet any charges made
- The cost of preparing a learner, outside Academy hours, for a public examination not prescribed in regulations

2.3 **Voluntary Contributions**

The restrictions on charging for Academy activities do not prohibit Academies from seeking voluntary contributions for the benefit of the Academy or in support of any Academy activity, whether during or outside Academy hours, residential or non-residential. Such contributions must, however, be genuinely voluntary and any request for contributions must make it clear that:

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

Voluntary contributions to subsidise the cost of educational visits and activities are sometimes necessary in order for them to take place. Whenever this is the case, parents/carers will be informed.

3. **Breakages and Fines**

3.1 There is no reference to breakages and fines in the Act's charging policy. Academies are able to ask parents/carers to pay the repair costs for acts of vandalism, or the

replacement costs for lost or damaged resources. The decision to charge parents/carers will be made by the relevant Head of Year or member of SLT taking into account all the information available. Parents/Carers will be informed of the circumstances and associated costs by letter followed by an invoice raised by the Operations Manager/Finance Lead. In the event of non-payment the Academy may refer the debt to the Trust's solicitor for debt recovery

This policy links and relates specifically to the following statute:

- The Education Act 1996; Section 457
- The Education (School sessions and charges and remissions Policies) England Regulations 1999 SI 1999/2255