



<b>Policy Approved:</b>	<b>8 July 2025</b>
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This policy ensures that statutory requirements are met and is intended to reflect the general principles of the 1996 Act which identifies activities for which:

- i. Charges will not be made
- ii. Charges will be made
- iii. Charges may be waived

**Voluntary Contributions**

The Trust will seek voluntary contributions for any activity in order to benefit an individual school or support a school activity whether during or outside school hours, residential or non-residential and including inviting parents to pay for materials or ingredients where they wish to own the finished product. However all requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that students of parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have. Such contributions must be genuinely voluntary.

There is no limit to the level of voluntary contributions which parents or others can make to school activities, nor is there any restriction placed on the use which can be made of such contributions, provided they are used for the purpose specified in the request for them. They could, for example, be used to subsidise students from low-income families, or the cost of travel for accompanying teachers. The law says that if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the parents will be notified of this from the outset.

No child will be excluded from an activity because the parents are unable to pay. If insufficient contributions are raised the trip or activity may have to be cancelled. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay their child will be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

**Education Provided Within School Hours**

Education provided by any school for its registered students should be free of charge if it takes place wholly or mainly during school hours, school hours being those hours when a school is actually in session and not including the break in the middle of the day. This means that neither the student nor their parents or guardian may be required to pay for, or to supply, any materials, books, instruments or other specialist equipment for use in connection with education provided during school hours.

**Education Provided Out of School Hours**

Where education is provided out of school hours, charging is permitted, except where the education is provided:

- i. to fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus for a prescribed public examination; or
- ii. specifically to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum;
- iii. to fulfil duties relating to Religious Education.

In these cases the only charge that may be made is for board and lodging or for residential trips.

### **Is an Activity in or out of School Time?**

If the number of school sessions on a residential trip is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on a trip it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some of the activities take place in the evening). Whatever the length of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A 'half day' in this context means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

A statutory minimum is the complete remission of board and lodging charges to students whose parents receive Income Support, Child Tax Credit, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance and support under part of Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 but not Working Tax Credit even if it is paid with other benefits e.g. Child Tax Credit. If the activity is deemed to take place during school hours, or is out of school hours but is covered by the criteria set out above, the governing body may not charge for anything unless it has drawn up a statement of general policy on charging.

### **Music Tuition**

The main exception to the principle of free education, which the law allows is that a charge may be made in respect of individual tuition in playing any musical instrument, even if such tuition takes place during school hours. Parental agreement must be obtained before a student is given that tuition.

### **Activities Run by a Third Party**

The Act permits an organisation other than the governing body to levy a charge directly on parents for activities organised in school hours by a non-school organisation. The school will not be involved in collection of charges on behalf of the third party organisation.

Where students are granted leave of absence to attend these activities the school should seek assurance that adequate safeguarding measures are in place; the third party is responsible for day-to-day safeguarding during the activity itself. Parents and any staff members similarly released should also satisfy themselves about the adequacy of the arrangements made by the third party to secure the safety and welfare of the children.

### **Charging Policy**

If a charge is made for each student it should not exceed the actual cost. If further funds are needed for additional costs e.g. to help hardship cases this must be by voluntary contributions or general fund raising.

The permitted charge may include an allowance for the costs of members of staff from the school who supervise the activity.

### **Board and Lodging on Residential Visits**

Board and lodging on residential visits may be charged for whether or not the visit takes place within school time and whether or not the activity is provided to fulfil the requirements of the syllabus of a prescribed public examination; or of the National Curriculum; or to fulfil statutory duties relating to religious education.

Charges for board and lodging must not exceed the actual cost to the student. They must not, for example, include any element representing a share of the costs of staff accompanying the visit. This may, however, be covered by voluntary contributions. Governors will, as a statutory minimum, remit any charges for board and lodging in the case of students whose parents are in

receipt of Income Support or Child Tax Credit etc where the activity is deemed to take place in school hours.

### **Optional Extra Activities**

'Optional extra' activities are those which take place wholly or mainly outside school 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 will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet such charges as are made. Any charge made in respect of individual students may include an appropriate element for the following: a student's travel costs; a student's board and lodging; materials, books, instruments and other equipment; non-teaching staff costs; entrance fees to museums, theatres etc.; insurance costs.

It should be noted that any charge for an 'optional extra' activity, as distinct from a request for a voluntary contribution, should not exceed the actual cost of providing that activity, divided equally by the number of students willing to participate. It may not, therefore, include an element of subsidy for any other students wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

The costs of members of staff involved in optional extra activities may only be passed on through charges if:

- i. they are engaged specifically by the Trustees for the purpose of providing the activity;
- ii. they are employed by the Trustees to provide instrumental music tuition; or
- iii. they are members of staff already employed by the Trustees, who have been engaged on a separate contract for services to provide the optional extra.

### **VAT and School Journeys**

To enable schools to reclaim VAT on school journeys the visit should be part of the curriculum and the school should have purchased all elements, apart from accommodation, directly and not via a travel/tour operator.

### **Public Examination Entries**

The Trust is required to enter a student for each examination in a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the student has been prepared at its own expense. A student is regarded as having been prepared for the syllabus at the school if the school has provided any part of the necessary preparation. The requirement to enter a student may only be lifted where, in the opinion of the Trust, there are educational reasons for not entering the student, or where the student's parents request in writing that the student should not be entered.