

GREAT OAK MULTI ACADEMY TRUST



Charges and Remissions Policy

Approved by the Board of Directors September 2023

Introduction

This Charging and Remissions Policy complies with statutory requirements and has regards to the Department for Education's guidance on charging and is reviewed on an annual basis by the Trust.

The Education Reform Act (1988) introduced provisions on charging for school activities. The purposes of these provisions are:

- to maintain the right to a free school education.
- to ensure that activities offered as part of the National Curriculum and wholly within normal school time should be available to all pupils, regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.
- to give educational authorities and schools the discretion to charge for optional activities provided wholly or mainly out of school hours.
- to confirm that schools may invite voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or in support of any activity organised by the school, either in or outside school hours.

The Trust believes that activities such as educational visits are an extension to, and an enrichment of the curriculum. The Trust has adopted the National Policy of Charging for School Activities, which allows the school to ask for voluntary contributions from parents to support these activities. The policy is reviewed annually.

Aims and Objectives

Our Trust aims to:

- have robust, clear processes in place for charging and remissions
- clearly set out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will and will not be made
- offer a range of activities and visits whilst minimising the financial barriers that may prevent some pupils from taking full advantage of these opportunities

Education during school hours

- All education during school hours is free. We do not charge for any activity undertaken as part of the National Curriculum.

Voluntary contributions

- When organising school trips or visits which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to contribute to the cost of the trip. All contributions are voluntary. If we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, we may cancel an activity / visit. If the activity/visit is cancelled, all monies will be returned to the parents. If a trip goes ahead, it may include children whose parents have not paid the full contribution. We do not treat these children differently from any others. The identity of the child or parents of the child who did not want to make the payment, or could not make the payment, will not be disclosed under any circumstance.
- If a parent wishes their child to take part in a school 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. Sometimes the school pays additional costs in order to support the visit. Parents have a right to know how each trip is funded. The school provides this information on request. In the case of Residential trips when the school has to make a commitment in advance, any deposit received from the parents will be non-refundable. Details of any non-refundable deposits will always be shared prior to booking and providing consent.

- 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:
 - extra-curricular clubs
 - visits to museums;
 - sporting activities which require transport expenses;
 - outdoor adventure activities;
 - visits to the theatre;
 - school trips;
 - musical events.
- The following are additional items for which a voluntary contribution from parents may be sought. This list is not exhaustive:
 - hiring / purchasing musical instruments for class musical activities;
 - cost of ingredients and resources used in Art and D and T (this assumes that the parents will own the finished product);
 - any materials, books, instruments or equipment where the child's parent wishes him or her to own them;
 - transport provided by the school, in school hours, for activities not deemed to be essential parts of the curriculum.

Education outside school hours

- Any activity required specifically by the syllabus for a public examination or to fulfill a statutory duty relating to the National Curriculum cannot be charged for, except for the board and lodging element of residential trips. Remission for board and lodging charges is available to families in receipt of family credit or income support, on production of proof of eligibility (Appendix 1).
- Charges may be made for out-of-school trips on the basis of parental willingness to pay for these 'optional extras'. No remission is available for these trips.

Residential visits

- If a school organises a residential visit in school time or mainly school time, which is to provide education directly related to the National Curriculum, we make a charge to cover the costs of board and lodging. The charge for board and lodging will not exceed the actual cost.
- The school will not charge for education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours.
- If parents are experiencing financial difficulty they are invited to speak in confidence to the Headteacher. Parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits may be exempt from paying this cost (Appendix 1).
- Travel charges will apply for residential activities. 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 these costs.
- The school may charge for residential activities that fall outside of school hours.

- Charges may be made for supply teachers where the residential activity is classed as being within school hours.

Music tuition

- Where music is studied as part of the normal school curriculum. We do not charge for this.
- There is a charge for individual music tuition if this is not part of the National Curriculum. This is charged directly to parents by Essex Music Services or peripatetic teachers.

Swimming

- Each school organises swimming lessons. These take place in school time and are part of the National Curriculum. We make no charge for the swimming lessons but request a contribution for the cost of the coach to take the children to the Lord Butler Leisure Centre.
- We inform parents when these lessons are to take place, and we ask parents for their written permission for their child to take part in swimming lessons.

Breakages and damages

The governors are entitled to require parents to pay for the cost of damage caused by the pupil's behaviour (e.g. breakage of a window, damage to furniture). This also applies to lost, damaged or defaced text books, equipment or any other school property.

Admissions

There is no charge for admissions.

School meals

There is no charge for children who are entitled to free school meals or infant free school meals. Pupils who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged a set amount per meal decided by the governing body of the Academy.

Lettings charges

The school office is responsible for raising invoices for lettings on a termly basis. Any other lettings would be charged at the rate recommended by the Governing Body.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Executive Headteacher and MAT Finance Manager and approved by the full board of directors.

Adopted

Adopted by directors (signed): _____ date: _____

Review date: September 2024

Appendix 1

Government Legislation on charging for school activities Guidance for school letters

Under the terms of the Education Reform Act 1988, an activity may not be charged for compulsorily. A voluntary contribution will be requested and the sum suggested specified in the visit letter. The school reserves the right to cancel an activity entirely if there are insufficient funds available.

Families in receipt of income support or family credit should contact the headteacher, or a member of the admin team indicating their position so that funds to cover the cost of their child's participation may be made available, under the terms of The Education reform Act 1988, from school funds. This information will be treated in the strictest confidence.