



PONTEFRACT
ACADEMIES TRUST

Charging and Remissions Policy



Summary:

The charging and remissions policy aims to inform parents and carers where the school will or will not charge for activities, or alternatively where the school will request voluntary contribution to support in covering the costs of activities, and clarify how charges will be determined.

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Document Control

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July 2021	01	New Policy	
July 2022	02	Updated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of reference to ESFA (2021) Academy Trust Handbook 2021 in section. • Updated Head of School to Headteacher.
July 2023	3.0	Updated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review frequency amended in line with policies register. • No other changes.

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1. Statement of intent

The Trust is committed to a free and comprehensive education which provides equality of access and opportunity to all pupils and students.

The Charging and Remissions Policy aims to:

- inform parents and carers where the school will or will not charge for activities, or alternatively where the school will request a voluntary contribution to support in covering the costs of an activities.
- clarify how charges will be determined, to assist parent and carers in understanding why requests for payment are required for some activities.

This policy will have consideration for, and be compliant with, the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Education Act 1996.
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007.
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010.
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'.
- DfE (2020) 'Governance handbook'.
- 'Our Funding Agreement'.
- ESFA (2021) 'Academy trust handbook 2021'.

2. Admissions

There is no charge for admissions.

3. Examinations

There is no charge for examinations that are part of the curriculum and on the school's set examinations list, where children have been prepared for the examinations by the school. However, if the pupil fails without good reason to meet an examination requirement, the school may recover the fee incurred from that pupil/student's parents. These principles apply equally to re-sits.

There is no charge for examinations that are not on the set list but have been arranged by the school.

There is a charge of the examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school (section 6).

There is a charge equal to the cost of the service, if the parent/carer have requested that their child's examination is re-marked. If the awarding body changes the overall grade of the result, the school will not be charged by the awarding body and the parents or pupil will have their fees refunded.

4. School meals

There is no charge for children who are entitled to free school meals or infant free school meals. Pupils/students who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged in accordance with the prices decided by the Trust.

Parents are required to make payment through the school's online payment system.

Please note – refunds will not be given for any payments made, for example if a pupil is then subsequently absent due to illness. Any overpayment will be credited to your child's account.

Dinner money balances are retained on the school's online payment system and are available for parents to check through logging onto their online account. Any unused balances will be dealt with in accordance with school procedures.

Outstanding payments will be dealt with in accordance with the Trust debt recovery procedures.

5. School Milk

School milk is provided free of charge for children under the age of 5 until the beginning of the term in which the child turns five. Other milk provided is charged per carton.

6. Activities that take place during school hours (this does not include the break in the middle of the school day)

There is no charge for activities during school hours with the exception of music tuition (section 8).

There is no charge for transport during school hours to school-organised activities.

We may charge for:

- books and materials that the parent wishes the child to keep the cost will be made clear to the parents before charge.
- optional extras (section 6).
- music or vocal tuition (section 9).

7. Activities that take place outside of school hours (non-residential)

There is no charge for activities that take place outside of school hours when they are:

- part of the national curriculum, including sports matches against other schools;
- part of the syllabus for a public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the school;
- part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education.

Optional extras

The school will charge for optional extras. Optional extras are:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - part of the national curriculum.
 - part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school.
 - part of religious education.

- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school.
- transport that is not taking the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority or Trust has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education.
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.
- extended day services offered to pupils (e.g. breakfast clubs, after school clubs etc.).

The cost of optional extras

Each school will decide when it is necessary to charge for optional activities and the level of those charges. The charges, when determined, will be published on the school's website and appended to this policy.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. In no circumstances will there be an element of subsidy required for any pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge (section 13).

When calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra.
- non-teaching staff.
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra.
- the cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.
- the cost of buildings and accommodation.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to pay the charges. The school will need to have the agreement of parents before organising the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

8. Activities that take place *partly* during school hours either on or off site

Where the majority of a non-residential activity takes place during school hours the charging of the activity will be the same as is outlined in section 5. Travelling time is included in time spent on activity.

In cases where the majority of a non-residential activity takes place outside of school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. So no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a visit.

In this case the charging of the activity will be the same as is outlined in section 6.

9. Residential activities

Schools will not charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours.

- education provided on any visit that takes place 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.
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.
- travel costs where the residential activity is classed as being within school hours.
- residential activities that take place during school hours.

Trust schools will charge for:**1. Board and lodging:**

When any visit has been organised by the school where there may be a cost for board and lodging, parents will be informed of this before the visit takes place. The school will charge anything up to the full cost of board and lodging on residential visits, whether it is classified as taking place during school hours or not. The charge will not exceed the actual cost. Parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits may be exempt from paying this cost (see section 13 for more guidance on remissions).

2. Travel:

Travel charges may apply when the residential activity takes place outside of school hours. 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 those costs.

3. Activities:

The school may charge for residential activities that fall outside of school hours (see section 6).

10. Music tuition within school hours

The Trust schools will follow government legislation that states that all education provided during school hours must be free; however, music lessons are an exception to this rule.

Charges will be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil(s), or the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme (Wider Opportunities).

The school may charge for teaching requested by parents and delivered by specialist tutors given to either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing. The cost of these lessons may depend on the size and duration of the class as well as the type of instrument.

The school will not charge if the music tuition is part of the National Curriculum or public examination syllabus being followed by the student. This includes instruments, music books and exam fees.

The Trust schools are all dedicated to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils and students

including access to specialised music tuition, therefore charges made for music tuition within school hours will be remitted for pupils on free school meals.

There is no charge for vocal or instrumental tuition for children in care. This includes instruments, music books and exam fees.

11. Extended services

The Trust schools are dedicated to providing a well-rounded and extensive education for our pupils which includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities (extended services). Extended services enable our school to provide:

- high-quality learning opportunities either side of the school day.
- ways of intervening early when children are at risk of poor outcomes, e.g. by providing access to study support, parenting support or to more specialist services (such as health, social care or special educational needs services).
- ways of increasing pupil engagement.
- ways of improving outcomes and narrowing gaps in outcomes between different groups of pupils.

The total charge for any extended services will not exceed the cost of providing the activity and no parent will be asked to subsidise others.

12. Refunds

Request for refunds for trips will be considered on an individual basis and may be rejected if the school is unable to recoup the costs incurred.

In all cases of withdrawal, either voluntarily or otherwise, applications should be made in writing to the Headteacher. If approved, refunds will be processed via the original method of payment.

The school reserves the right not to refund costs where a pupil is withdrawn from an activity by the school because of a pupil's breach of the Trust's Behaviour & Relationships Policy.

13. Damage to property and breakages

Where school property has been wilfully damaged by a pupil/student or parent the school may charge those responsible for some or all of the cost of repair or replacement.

Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a pupil, and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible.

Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the Headteacher and dependent on the situation.

14. Remissions and concessions

The school will consider the remission of charges to parents or carers who receive the following support payments:

- Income Support.

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance.
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit.
- Child Tax Credit, provided that they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190.
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit – if they apply on or after 1 April 2018, their household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive).

Children of families who receive these payments are also entitled to free school meals.

Parents who are eligible for the remission of charges will be dealt with confidentially.

The school may choose to subsidise part or all of the payment of some charges for certain activities and pupils.

15. Voluntary contributions

The Trust schools may ask for voluntary contributions to the school for general funds and/or to fund activities or trips that will enrich our pupils' education.

In any case where an activity cannot be afforded without voluntary funding, this will be made clear to the parents by the school. If the activity is cancelled all monies paid will be returned to parents. If the activity costs less than the estimated cost then if this equates to more than £10 per pupil it shall be refunded, or if the amount equates to less than £10 per pupil the contribution will be retained to support future school activities.

There is no obligation for a parent or carer to make any contribution and the school will in no way pressure parents to make a contribution.

16. Inability or unwillingness to make voluntary contributions

The Trust is committed to ensuring fair access and treatment of all pupils, and this means ensuring that no child is excluded from an activity because the parents or carers of that child are unwilling or unable to pay. If there is insufficient funding for an activity, then it will be cancelled.

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 circumstances.

17. School lettings

The Trust is committed to making its premises available for the benefit of the community and will recover the costs of the letting.

18. Schedule of charges and remissions

Each Trust school will attach their schedule of charges and remissions for the current academic year to this policy prior to publication on the school website.