

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Legislation restricts the types of activity schools are allowed to charge parents for. Airedale Academy's policy applies to charges made to parents/pupils, for facilities used by private individuals and third-party organisations that rent school premises (*excluding the Sports Centre and Phoenix Theatre, for which separate arrangements apply and can be provided on request*).

As a school we try:

- To make activities accessible to all pupils regardless of family income;
- To encourage and promote external activities which give added value to the curriculum;
- To respond to the wide variations in family income while not placing additional unexpected burdens on the school's budget

For the purposes of this document:

- 'Parent' is taken to include any parent, carer or person with parental responsibility for a pupil.
- 'Charge' is a fee payable for specifically defined activities
- 'Remission' is the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

2. LEGISLATION

Under the terms of the Education Act 1996, the Academy Council of Airedale Academy must have a policy on charging pupils to participate in school activities. This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on charging for school activities and the Education Act 1996, sections 449-462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England. Academies are required to comply with this Act through their funding agreements.

The law says that we cannot charge for the following:

- Admission applications
- 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
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
 - 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
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school
- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing board or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he or she has been prepared for that examination at the school
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit

- 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
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
 - Religious education
 - Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit

The law says that we can charge for:

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him or her to own them
- Optional extras (see below)
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities

Optional extras

We are able to charge for activities known as 'optional extras'. In these cases, schools can charge for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. The following are optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not part of:
 - The national curriculum
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
 - Religious education
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school
- Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority or governing board 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 (such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions)

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
- The cost of buildings and accommodation
- 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 an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra
- Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not be greater than the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating.
- Any charge will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils who wish to take part in the activity but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.
- In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate.

Parental agreement is necessary for the provision of an optional extra which is to be charged for.

Music tuition

Schools can charge for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of pupils, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff giving the tuition.

Charges cannot be made:

- If the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum

- If the teaching is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 instrumental and vocal tuition programme
- For a pupil who is looked after by a local authority

Residential visits

We can charge for board and lodging on residential visits, but the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

As an exception to the requirements set out in section 5 of this policy, the school is able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents to fund activities during school hours which would not otherwise be possible.

Some activities for which the school may ask parents for voluntary contributions include:

- School trips
- Visiting shows / productions

There is no obligation for parents to make any contribution, and no child will be excluded from an activity if their parents are unwilling or unable to pay. However, if the school is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit then it will be cancelled.

3. DETAIL OF CHARGES

3.1 Admissions

No charge will be made in respect of admission to the Academy unless it is for the purpose of:

- Part time education for persons over compulsory school age
- Full time education for persons over compulsory school age
- Teacher training

3.2 Provision of education

No charge will be made in relation to the education of registered pupils where education is provided during school hours. Where education is provided outside of school hours, no charge will be made provided it is required as part of the syllabus/curriculum. The Academy may charge individuals who are not registered pupils of the school for education provided or facilities used by them belonging to the school.

3.3 Musical instrument tuition

The Academy will review on a yearly basis whether or not to charge a contribution towards musical instrument tuition either individually or for a group of not more than four pupils, where the lesson is not considered to be part of the National Curriculum or is not preparation for a public examination, even if this lesson takes place during school hours. The cost of such tuition will be charged based upon the tutors invoice costs.

3.3 Practical subject charge

Voluntary contributions may be requested to cover the cost of materials and ingredients provided by the Academy for practical subjects where parents indicate that they wish to receive the finished articles.

3.4 Visits during the school day

A voluntary charge will be made to cover the cost of educational visits and other activities. However, charges cannot be enforced where this forms part of the curriculum. Where the level of non-payment renders a trip financially unviable, consideration will be given to cancellation. Refunds will not be given if parent makes a contribution but then a child does not participate in the visit.

3.5 Residential visits

Where at least half of the time away from home is not normal school time, where the trip involves an overnight stay or where the work undertaken is not an integral part of an examination course, the trip is classed as optional and parents will be expected to meet the full cost of residential visits in school time. If the visit is deemed to have taken place during the school day, or is part of the national curriculum, or is preparation for a public examination, then only the cost of board and lodging will be passed onto parents and this will not exceed the actual cost.

Any charge in respect of an optional extra requires parental agreement and willingness to meet the charges. Parents should be aware that the activity may be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received.

Any pupil who has not paid the required amount by any date when money is due to be paid by the Academy will be withdrawn from the trip. They will lose their deposit plus any money the school has already paid to the travel company on behalf of that pupil which it cannot recover, e.g. if the place is withdrawn or cancelled after the point at which cancellation charges are incurred.

If for any reason (except ill health) a pupil does not attend an optional trip after the initial deposit has been paid, parents will lose their deposit plus any money received by the school which has already been paid to the travel company and that the school cannot recover.

In both cases, the Academy will return to parents any amounts it can recover from the travel company.

If a pupil is unable to participate in a residential trip due to ill health, parents must submit a letter outlining the reason for the pupil being unable to attend. In these cases, the trip organiser will attempt to recover any amounts already paid to the travel company by making a claim on the trip travel insurance, subject to cooperation by the parents in obtaining any medical evidence required by the insurers. Any sums recovered by the school will be returned to the parents.

3.6 Public examinations

No charge will be made in respect of the entry of a registered pupil at the school for an examination for which the school agrees the pupil should be entered. Charges will be applied for the entry of a pupil for an examination for which s/he has not been prepared by the school, or for entry to an examination against the advice of the school.

Entries for re-sits of examinations where the school has not provided additional tuition are also subject to charge. Parents seeking to have an examination paper remarked will be required to pay the re-mark fee; however, if the new grade exceeds the original then this fee will be refunded.

Where a pupil fails to attend for an examination for which they have been entered (unless this is because of ill-health, for which a doctors' note will be required), parents will be expected to meet the cost of the examination entry.

3.7 Optional extra visits

Visits that take place outside the school day or as part of an extra-curricular activity can be charged for, and parents are expected to meet the full cost of the trip.

3.8 Loss or damage

Parents will be expected to meet the cost of repairing or replacing any school property damaged or destroyed by a pupil, or any fines to be paid by the school as a result of the actions of a pupil. A charge will also apply for loss or damage of school property (including books or equipment) placed under the care of the pupil.

3.9 Fundraising and sponsorship

General fundraising and sponsorship from a variety of sources may be used to allow additional activities to take place. Any fundraising activity must make the purpose of the fundraising clear to those who may wish to contribute.

3.10 Materials and equipment sold to pupils

The Academy sells a range of items of uniform and other education-related sundries to pupils. The price of these is set to cover the Academy's costs.

3.11 Private fees

Any report or data regarding a child requested by a parent for the purpose of third-party private assessment will be charged at a rate agreed by the Principal in discussion with the Chair of Governors. This rate will include a cost for staff time, photocopying costs and postage.

3.12 Facilities used by private individuals

Currently this relates to reprographic/printing facilities used by staff members and personal use of school mobile phones/landlines. Charging is on the basis of metered volumes in the case of printing/copying and itemised bills in the case of telephone calls, and at the rate charged to the school.

3.13 Lettings of the Academy buildings

Charges will be levied for the use of the Academy's facilities by private individuals or external organisations at a rate to be determined annually by the Trust Executive Team. Facilities will only be let where they are not needed for the purpose of education during that time and under no circumstances will lettings be subsidised from resources provided for the education of pupils.

Hirers will need to demonstrate that they have adequate insurance or provision for compensating the school for any damage they cause. They must also leave the facilities in a clean and tidy state, otherwise an additional fee for cleaning will be charged.

4.0 REFUNDING OF CHARGES

4.1 Trips and activities

Charges and contributions are set to cover the anticipated costs. If the income from an activity exceeds the actual costs, the school will refund any surplus of £5 or more per pupil who contributed to the activity. If a visit is paid for and a child does not attend, unfortunately this will not be refunded

4.2 Cashless Catering/Online Payment Systems

Any credit above £5 remaining on a pupil's account on the Cashless Catering/Online Payment system at the point at which they leave the Academy will be refunded.

4.3 Arrangements for surpluses not refunded

Any surpluses not refunded will be transferred to the Discretionary Grants to Pupils/School Fund and used to support access to optional activities for those pupils whose families are experiencing financial hardship/for the benefit of all pupils in the school.

5.0 REMISSION OF CHARGES

Airedale Academy believes that all pupils should have the opportunity to gain fully from the experiences the school has to offer and recognises the real and persistent difficulties faced by families on low incomes in meeting the cost of educational activities for their children.

Parents who can prove they are in receipt of any of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging for residential visits:

- 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 Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's annual gross income does not exceed £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (this is paid for 4 weeks after an individual stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit (if the application was made on or after 1 April 2018, the family's income must be less than £7,400 per year – after tax and not including any benefits)

Parents who find themselves in financial difficulties and who have children at the Academy in receipt of Free School Meals may apply in confidence to the Academy for financial support with optional activities. Remission of charges in part or in full will be authorised by the Principal in discussion with the Chair of Governors.

5.0 PROVISION FOR REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Resources Committee of the Trust Board, with amendments to those sections where schools have discretion over their own arrangements agreed by the school's Academy Council. This policy will be adjusted in accordance with any subsequent guidance issued by DfE, ESFA or the Trust Board.