

1. Other relevant policies and documents

- Educational Visits and Trips Policy
- Finance Policy
- Financial Procedures Manual

2. Explanation of terms used in the policy

'Trust' = Seckford Education Trust

'School(s)' = schools within the Trust

'Charge' = a fee payable for specifically defined activities

'Remission' = the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

3. Purpose of the policy

This document outlines the policy with regard to charging and remissions for Schools within the Trust and as such there is no need for each School to have its own policy.

The Trust aims to have robust, clear processes in place for charging and remissions and clearly set out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will be made.

4. Introduction to the policy

This policy is based on advice from the Department of 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 agreement.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

The Trustees reserve the right to make a charge in the circumstances outlined in this policy for activities organised by its Schools.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Trust Board

The Trust Board has delegated responsibility for the approval and monitoring of the charging and remissions policy to the Finance, Audit and Resources Committee.

5.2 Headteachers

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the charging and remissions policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

5.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently;
- Notifying the Headteacher of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies.

5.4 Parents

Parents are expected to notify staff or the Headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding the charging and remissions policy.

6. Charges that cannot be made by the Trust

Set out below are charges that cannot be made by the Trust:

6.1 Education

- 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.

6.2 Transport

- 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 Trust 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.

Where the Trust provides transport for students to or from the school premises and the local authority has no statutory obligation to provide transport, a charge may be made by the School to parents as a contribution towards the cost of that transport, provided that this is at or below cost.

6.3 Residential visits

- 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

7. Charges that can be made by the Trust

Except where students are entitled to statutory remission, the Trust reserves the right to make a charge in the circumstances outlined below:

7.1 Education

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parents/carers wish him or her to own them;
- Optional extras (see below);
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances;
- Certain early years provision.

7.2 Optional extras

The Trust 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 Trust 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)

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.

7.3 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/carer. A charge may be made for the hire of a musical instrument provided by the school for the purposes of individual tuition.

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.

7.4 Residential visits

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

7.5 School lunches

Charges will be made for any school lunches, except where students are entitled to Free School Meals (when food will be provided free of charge). Further charges may be made for food at breakfast clubs and snacks provided.

At SET Beccles School, SET Ixworth School and SET Saxmundham School, all students in attendance will incur a daily charge to cover the cost of food provided, except where students are entitled to Free School Meals.

Subsidies may be provided where parents/carers have provided evidence of financial hardship. Determination of the level of the subsidy is at the discretion of each Headteacher.

7.6 Damage to Trust property

The Trust will seek payment from parents/carers for damage or loss to the Trust or School property caused wilfully or negligently by their child.

8. General and voluntary contributions

As an exception to the requirements set out in section 6 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.

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.

If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised for an activity or visit, the Trust and its Schools may have to cancel the activity.

9. Remissions

In some circumstances the school may not charge for items or activities set out in sections 7 and 8 of this policy. This will be at the discretion of the school and will depend on the activity in question.

9.1 Remissions for residential visits

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 that is deemed to take place in school hours, forms part of the curriculum or is a requirement of a prescribed examination:

- 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)

(Subject to changes in legislation but correct at the time of approval of this policy).

9.2 Remissions for lunches and other charges

In the event that parents/carers believe they will be unable to pay the charges outlined in this policy, they may apply for remission of part or all of the charges due and should contact the school for details.

They will be required to provide evidence of financial hardship and the decision as to whether to offer any remission will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

10. Delegation

The Headteacher of each School is empowered to make determinations regarding individual cases arising from the implementation of this policy.

In the case of appeals, the CEO is empowered by the Trust to make any final determinations.

11. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The Trust will review this policy every two years and ensure that practice across all schools is in line with this policy. Any review will take into account the most up-to-date legislation and guidance.