

Charging and Remissions Policy

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Purpose and background

Southern Academy Trust wishes to make a broad programme of activities accessible to as many students as possible. This policy is intended to maintain a fair and coherent system of charges and remissions within the constraints of the Trust's budgets. It also defines other circumstances when the Trust may wish to ask for voluntary contributions, how these charges will be calculated and who might qualify for help with the costs.

The policy is written to comply with the relevant terms of:

- The Education Act 1996, S449-462;
- The Education (School Sessions and Charges and Remissions Policies) (Information) (England) Regulations 1999; and
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010.

It also references the 'Charging for School Activities' guidance produced by the Department for Education.

What can and cannot be charged for

No student should have his/her access to the curriculum limited by charges. However, each Academy within the Trust reserves the right to levy a charge in any circumstances permissible under statute as detailed in the following pages.

When charges are to be made each Academy reserves the absolute right to determine whether the activity has to be cancelled if an insufficient number of families are prepared to pay for the activity to take place.

Parents may apply to the relevant Academy for special consideration regarding financial support.

Southern Academy Trust will not charge for:

Education:

- admission to any of its Academies
- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)¹
- education provided 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 statutory religious education

¹ Parents/carers will be expected to pay for the replacement or repair for any of these items that are lost or damaged.

- tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments, individually or in a group, **if** the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
- entry for a prescribed public examination if the pupil is being prepared for it at the school
- examination re-sits if the pupil is being prepared for it/them at the school²

Transport:

- transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the Local Authority (LA) has a statutory duty to provide transport;
- transporting registered pupils to other premises where this has been arranged by the Academy or the LA;
- providing transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school;
- providing transport in connection with an educational visit

Residential visits:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours
- education provided on a visit that takes place outside schools hours if it is a part of the national curriculum or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the pupil is being prepared by the school
- supply teachers employed to those teachers who are absent from school with pupils on a residential visit

Voluntary contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents the Trust from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the Trust, individual Academies or any school activity. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, this will be made clear to parents at the outset. It will also be made clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, then it may be cancelled. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. Each Academy will make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

Refunds

Refunds will only be given in exceptional circumstances including refunds of deposits. They are normally only given if another pupil takes up the previously booked place on the activity.

² However, if a student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the fee can be recovered from the student's parents.

Surplus funds on completion of trips

If upon completion of a school trip there is more than £5 per paying pupil, that amount will be returned to the payee.

Southern Academy Trust may charge for:

Material and Equipment

Parents may be expected to provide materials, or be charged for materials where, the parents wish to own the end product, for example, ingredients and or materials for items produced during food technology, textiles, design technology and art classes. Also, should a parent wish to own the books or equipment, such as revision guides, text books and musical instruments, these items will be chargeable.

Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as “optional extras”. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. These include:

- activities that are provided outside of school time that are not part of:
 - i. the national curriculum
 - ii. a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
 - iii. statutory religious education
- examination fees if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination at the school
- transport to education not arranged by the Academy or the LA
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit, the charge will not exceed the cost
- extended day services offered to pupils (e.g. breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions)

In 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, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra
- the costs, or a proportion of the costs, of teachers employed to provide musical instrument tuition or singing lessons where the tuition is an optional extra, this may be to individuals or small groups

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. It will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

No charge will be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional extra will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Therefore parents/carers will be asked to sign an agreement agreeing to such charges for the provision of an optional extra activity.

Lost equipment, damages and vandalism

All losses and damages will be charged at cost (VAT exempt)

Boarding at Barton Hill House

A charge will be made for boarding and lodging but will not exceed the cost of supplying it.

Remissions

Criteria for Exceptions

No charge will be made for board and lodging in respect of students who are entitled to Free School Meals or whose parents are receiving:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit (providing that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue) that does not exceed £16,190)
- Guarantee element of Pension Credit

Charges for other 'chargeable activities' may also be fully or partly remitted. Details of any remission arrangements will be made clear when parents are informed of charges for individual activities