

The Spire Church of England Learning Trust

Charging and Remissions Policy

Introduction

Sections 449 – 462 of the Education Act 1996 requires the Trust Board to adopt a policy on charging and remission arrangements for trips & activities organised by the MAT.

The MAT wishes to provide for all students the best possible educational opportunities available from within the funds allocated by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The law states very clearly that education during normal school hours is to be free of any compulsory charge to parents/carers and the MAT is committed to uphold the legal requirements.

However, many educationally valuable trips have been and will continue to be dependent on financial contributions in whole or in part from parents/carers. Without that financial support, the MAT would find it impossible to maintain the quality and breadth of the educational programme currently provided for students. The MAT's concern is to keep financial contributions to a reasonable minimum, and to ensure as far as possible that all students are able to take part, irrespective of their circumstances. The charging and remissions policy is an integral part of our inclusive arrangements for students.

Where charges are applied or invited, these will be calculated at cost by dividing the total cost of the trip/activity by the numbers of students invited to attend. It is not the MAT's policy to make any profit on any trips but similarly the MAT would need to assess the viability of each trip should there not be enough contributions to cover the cost.

The law recognises that charges may be made to parents/carers in certain defined circumstances - provided that the academy trust has identified the activities for which charges will be made, and has explained the basis on which charges may be reduced or waived for certain students.

Visits/activities

The MAT will not charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours; and
- 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 student is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.

Non-residential visits/activities

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include lunchtime. Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, a trip might require students to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

For non-residential visits fulfilling a statutory requirement or occurring during school hours the MAT will invite a voluntary contribution from parents/carers to meet the costs. The cost of the voluntary contribution will be reviewed for the students who qualify for the pupil premium. The pupil premium is applied to students who:

- are registered and in receipt of free school meals currently or in the past six years*;
- are looked after children;
- have been adopted from care under the Adoption and Children Act 2002;
- have left care under a Special Guardianship or Residence Order; or
- have parents/carers in the armed forces.

*Parents/carers may qualify for free school meals if they are in receipt of certain benefits and meet certain criteria:

- Universal Credit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided you are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income that does not exceed the maximum limits.
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on'-the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

The MAT has a contract with Babcock Prime' who undertake the assessment and the administration of eligibility for free school meals. Further information can be found by visiting <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/schoolinformation/school-free-meals.aspx> or by contacting the Free School Meals Team on 01905 678154 or at primefreeschoolmeals@babcockinternational.com or you can also visit the free school meal website: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>.

Any children of parents/carers who do not wish to contribute will not be treated any differently. However, where there are insufficient contributions to make the activity viable then the activity will be cancelled.

For non-residential visits not fulfilling a statutory requirement and occurring mainly outside of school hours a charge will be levied up to the full cost of the visit.

Residential visits/activities

For residential visits fulfilling a statutory requirement or occurring during school hours the MAT will charge for the full cost of the student's board and lodgings and invite voluntary contributions from parents/carers to meet costs other than children's board and lodgings. Details of any remission arrangements will be made clear by the trip leader when the parents/carers are informed of the proposed visit/activity.

For residential visits not fulfilling a statutory requirement and occurring outside school hours a charge will be levied up to the full cost of the visit. However, where there are insufficient contributions to make the activity viable then the activity will be cancelled.

The cost of the residential visit will be reviewed for looked after children. Please contact the finance office should you require details of remuneration payments

Instrumental music tuition an individual basis

The MAT has a contract with Severn Arts (formerly Worcestershire Youth Music) and various peripatetic music teachers to provide private music tuition on an individual or small group basis. The prices agreed with Severn Arts and individual peripatetic teachers have been negotiated to ensure best possible value for money and the MAT makes no financial gain from these charges. A charge will be agreed and made for individual and small group music tuition not forming part of the syllabus of a prescribed public examination or required by the national curriculum. Parental agreement and regular 'up front' termly payments must be obtained before the student is given tuition. Hire of certain musical instruments may also be available via Severn Arts directly and parents/carers should contact Severn Arts on 01905 947300 for further information. Please contact the Finance Office to discuss any remission for private music tuition.

Classroom Materials

No charge will routinely be made for materials or equipment. However, for certain practical activities (e.g. technology, food technology etc) parents/carers may be invited to provide materials or ingredients on a voluntary basis but any children of parents/carers who do not wish to contribute will not be treated any differently. Where parents/carers would like to possess the finished product, the MAT reserves the right to charge the cost or require the supply of the necessary materials.

Damage and Loss to Property

The MAT reserves the right to levy a charge in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of academy property and/or third party property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials), the charge to be the cost of replacement or repair is at the discretion of the relevant Headteacher.

Lettings

Please refer to the individual school's Lettings Policy.

Signed.....
Chair of Governors

Date.....

Signed.....
Headteacher

Date.....

Reviewed June 2019
Next review date June 2020