

13. Charging and Remission

The Board of Directors recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including clubs and visits, can make towards a pupil's education. The Board of Directors recognises its duty to provide statutory education free of charge to all pupils on roll. The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly activities for which parents/guardians can be charged and for those where Matrix Academy Trust ask for a voluntary contribution. The cost of providing educational based activities in each school is met either by the Board of Directors from the academies budget or by pupils and their parents/guardians. The academies budget consists primarily of funds provided by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and of the income from other sources. The Board of Directors will charge pupils and their parents for all activities for which charging is permitted. They will recover as much of the expenditure as is allowed on the basis of the cost to each individual pupil participating in the activity. This policy is complemented by a remissions policy.

The range of education based activities arranged by each academy for its pupils includes those essential to the National Curriculum, those related to the broader curriculum and those of an entirely voluntary extra-curricular nature.

13.1 Charging Policy

There will be no charge made by Matrix Academy Trust in respect of basic books, materials, equipment and educational based activities which are an essential part of the National Curriculum, their costs will be borne by the academies budget.

Materials & Textbooks

Where a pupil or parent wishes to retain items produced as a result of art, craft and design, or design and technology, a charge may be levied for the cost of the materials used. In the case of Food Technology, pupils usually provide their own ingredients, but if the pupil forgets, the academy provides the ingredients and a charge will be levied. Textbooks are provided free of charge, but in some subject's additional revision guides are available for which a charge is made.

Music Tuition

Matrix Academy Trust levies charges in respect of individual music tuition and group music tuition, if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil. Pupils using school instruments must sign an instrument loan form beforehand, part of the instrument loan form explains parents must take out personal insurance to cover any costs arising from loss or breakages.

Damage/Loss of Property

A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of school property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials) the charge to be the cost of replacement or repair or such lower cost as the Chief Executive or Head teacher may decide.

Lettings

Some academies within Matrix Academy Trust will make designated facilities available to outside users at a charge of at least the cost of providing the facilities. The scale of charges will be determined and approved by the Board of Directors.

Matrix Academy Trust – Financial Procedures Manual

Public Examinations

A charge will be levied in respect of examination entries for pupils where the academy has not prepared the pupil for the examination.

A charge will be levied in respect of examination entries for pupils where the academy has prepared the pupil for the examination and it considers that for educational reasons the pupil should not be entered and the pupils parent/guardian wishes the pupil to be entered (or the pupil him/herself when over 18 years old). In these circumstances if the pupil subsequently passes the examination the academy may refund the cost.

A charge may be levied for pupils re-sitting an examination.

A charge will be levied where a pupil fails without good reason to complete the requirements of any public examination where the academy paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

A charge will be levied where a pupil has failed to attend the examination without justified reason (at the discretion of the Chief Executive or Head teacher)

Voluntary Contributions

There is no limit to the level of voluntary contribution that may be asked for or any restriction on the way in which it is used.

Matrix Academy Trust may invite parents/guardians to make voluntary contributions for activities that take place substantially within school hours for which compulsory contributions cannot be levied but which can only proceed if the level of voluntary funding is sufficient.

The recommended level of individual voluntary contribution set for any activity will be such that the total sum collected shall not exceed the total cost of the activity. Should the total amount of voluntary contributions for an activity fail to cover the costs of the activity, the academy reserves the right to cancel the activity and refund all voluntary payments made in full.

If a pupil chooses to withdraw from an activity when a voluntary contribution has been made and the academy has used or committed the contribution for necessary payments in connection with the activity the academy will only refund that voluntary contribution if a replacement paying member of the group can be found. In such circumstances the academy will make every effort to find a suitable replacement.

Where no costs are incurred through late withdrawal then a refund will be made in full.

If a pupil is obliged to withdraw from an activity due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the pupil or their parents/guardians, then the academy will make all efforts to provide a full refund.

Residential Activities/Activities Outside School Hours

If the activity is held outside of school hours and is education other than non-chargeable education, then it is regarded as an 'optional extra'. A charge may be made for the full cost of the activity but must not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity. The charge may include the costs of travel, board and lodgings, additional staff costs, entrance fees, insurance, materials and equipment.

However, the charge made to individual parents cannot include any cost added to subsidise parents of children who are unwilling or unable to pay the charge.

Board and Lodging

The board and lodging element may be charged in connection with residential activities irrespective of whether the activity is undertaken in or outside school hours or for part of the National Curriculum etc. The charge must not exceed the actual cost of providing board and lodging and prior written confirmation from the parent/guardian is required that they are willing to pay the charge. (subject to the remissions policy)

Transport

Where a pupil travels direct from home to a place of work experience and vice-versa, parents/guardians can be asked to meet the costs of such travel.

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Permitted Charges

Permitted charges are a direct request to cover certain costs involved with a school activity. No charge can be made in respect of education provided during school hours (which excludes midday break). Furthermore, no charge can be made for any education provided outside of school hours if this forms part of the syllabus for a public exam, or is part of the National Curriculum or Religious education (non-chargeable education).

Optional Extras

Participation in optional extras will be on the basis of parental choice and prior confirmation in writing is required from parents/guardians. The charge must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra, divided equally by the number of participating pupils.

The Chief Executive, Head teacher or Board of Directors may levy charges for miscellaneous services up to the cost of providing such services (e.g. for providing a copy of an OFSTED report).

13.2 Remissions Policy

Where non-chargeable education is provided during a residential visit, then the parents of a pupil who is eligible for free school meals shall receive a complete remission of any charges that would otherwise be payable in respect of board or lodgings.

Under current regulations children whose parents receive the following support payments are eligible for free school meals:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers 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 with an annual gross income into the household that is no more than £16,190 provided you are not entitled to working tax credit. If you are entitled to any part of working tax credit, there is no eligibility with the exception of working tax run-on as shown below
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- **Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018, your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)**

Where charges are to be made by the Board of Directors for optional extras, parents may receive a remission for the whole or part of the charge as deemed viable by the Board of Directors, acting on advice from the Chief Executive or Head teacher.

Parents/guardians are welcome to approach the academy for support if appropriate.