



Slough and East Berkshire  
C of E Multi Academy Trust

# Charging and Remission Policy

Category:	Statutory
Owner:	SEBMAT trustees/directors and local governing bodies
Ratified by trustees/directors	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 Signature: <i>C James</i>
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## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this policy is to explain SEBMAT's approach to making charges to pupils/students and their parents/carers (throughout this document reference to parent/s will include carer/s). It also explains the circumstances where it may be possible to offer financial assistance.

The policy applies to all academy pupils/students and parents.

The Trust acknowledges the right of every pupil/student to receive free school education and understands that activities offered wholly or mainly during normal teaching time must be made available to all pupils/students regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.

The Trust also recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, trips and residential experiences can make towards pupils'/students' education and aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils/students of the school and as additional optional activities.

## **THE LEGAL POSITION**

The SEBMAT charging policy has been compiled in line with Department for Education (DfE) requirements and in accordance with Section 457 of the Education Act, 1996.

a) In general, no charge can be made for admitting pupils/students to maintained schools. The general principle that no charge can be made for education in school hours (excluding the mid-day break) in maintained schools was first set out in the Education Reform Act 1988. Guidance came in the Circular 2/89, Education Reform Act 1988: Charges for School Activities.

The Circular explains that:

No charge can be made for any books, materials, instruments, equipment or transport for use in connection with education if the education is:

- within school hours;
- for the National Curriculum programme out-of-school hours;
- for statutory religious education; and
- for a prescribed public examination prepared for by the school.

b) Examinations (mainly secondary schools)

All pupils'/students' examination fees are paid for by the school. If a department deems it desirable or necessary for pupils/students to re-sit an examination, these will be paid for either through the central examination budget or departmental budgets.

Examination fees/retakes

Initial registration and entry exam fees are paid by the Centre. Pupils/students will not be charged for changes of tier, withdrawals made by the proper procedures or alterations arising from administrative processes, provided these are made within the time allowed by the awarding bodies.

Reimbursement will be sought from candidates who fail to sit an exam or meet the necessary coursework requirements.

This fees reimbursement policy will be communicated in writing to candidates and parents at the start of GCSE and post-16 courses.

The Trust reserves the right to pass on any re-take fees for first and any subsequent re-takes where it is appropriate to do so.

Pupils/students must pay the fee for an enquiry about a result, should the school not uphold the enquiry and the candidate insists on pursuing the enquiry.

c) Admission

No charge can be made in connection with admission to an academy school.

d) Finished products (Secondary schools)

Where parents have expressed a wish in advance to have a finished product made at school (e.g. in craft, art or food and nutrition lessons) a charge can be made at cost price. The parents must know the charge for the product in advance.

e) Board and lodging

A charge can be made for board and lodging on residential educational visits/activities, but parents who qualify for prescribed benefits and allowances are entitled to a remission of the charges.

Guidance on how to check the eligibility (for remission of charges) of children whose families receive tax credits can be accessed via the DfE website at [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk).

f) Transport

Transport to and from home to any activity not provided by, but permitted by, the school, can be charged for (the main example is work experience).

It is not possible to levy a compulsory charge for transport or admission costs for swimming lessons or visits to museums etc. during school hours.

g) Voluntary contributions

Parents may volunteer to pay for any educational activity. The school may request voluntary contributions for any visits/activities both inside and outside school time. However, No pupil/student may be excluded from the activity for not having paid the contribution. The headteacher and governing body may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

- any activity which takes place during school hours;
- school equipment;
- school funds generally.

Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, then regretfully the activity will be cancelled.

The identity of the child or parents of the child who did not want to make a payment, or could not make a payment, will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

h) Permitted charges

The following are permitted charges:

- charges for board and lodging on trips;
- costs of lost and destroyed school property and breakages;
- any costs associated with individual tuition in the playing of musical instruments whether in or out of school hours (UNLESS it is provided as part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination or is required by the National Curriculum);

- the cost of optional extras provided outside school hours (or mainly outside school hours), but the charge must not exceed the cost of the provision, and parents must agree to their child receiving the optional extra;
- the cost of entering a pupil/student for a public examination not prescribed in regulations, and the cost for preparing the pupil/student for such an examination out of school hours (Secondary schools); and
- re-sits of prescribed public examinations where no further preparation has been provided by the school (Secondary schools).

In all cases where a permitted charge is likely to be made the parents must be told the amount in advance.

#### i) Activities partly during school hours

In order to determine whether an activity that is undertaken partly during school hours and partly out of school hours the 50% rule is applied:

- Non-residential activities: if 50% or more is spent on an activity in school time (including travelling time, but excluding midday breaks) the whole activity is deemed to be inside school time, and cannot be charged for; and
- Residential activities: the number of half-days is counted (a half-day being any 12-hour period ending noon or midnight). If the number of days and half-days spent on the activity is greater than the number of school sessions (morning and afternoon sessions) that a pupil/student would spend on a normal school day, the activity is deemed to take place outside school hours, and vice-versa. Travelling time is included in the time spent on the activity.

When a departure or return time splits a half-day then all the half-day counts if more than 50% of the half-day is used for the activity.

### **TRUST POLICY (for all Trust schools)**

The law allows governing bodies to charge only for the defined activities if they have first made a policy on charging and remissions.

Parents will be made aware of the policy, and where they can consult it. This requirement should be set out in each academies website.

### **THIRD PARTIES**

The school is permitted to charge for the provision of educational services by a third party, but schools must ensure that the monies are paid directly to the third party organisation.

In such cases, if the activity is in school time, the school has to formally grant leave of absence to the pupils/students taking part, as the activity would no longer technically be part of the school's official programme.

It is likely, too, that any staff taking part in the activity would also have to be granted leave of absence. The headteacher must consider carefully the position of accompanying staff, depending on the precise nature and duration of the visit.

### **THE TRUST'S GOVERNING BODIES CHARGING POLICY**

The governing body therefore reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances for activities organised by the school:

#### a) Practical subjects

- Where parents have indicated in writing that they wish to own a finished product, a charge will be made. The charge shall not exceed the cost of the materials used by the pupil/student.

#### b) Residential trips

- The board and lodging element of approved residential activities deemed to take place in school hours. The cost will not exceed the actual cost of the provision and prior written confirmation from the parent is required that he/she is willing to pay the charge.

#### c) Activities outside school hours

- The full cost to each pupil/student of all approved activities deemed to be optional extras taking place outside school hours and therefore not part of the National Curriculum.

### **VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS**

The governing body reserves the right to ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

- any activity which takes place during school hours;
- school equipment;
- school funds generally.

Parents may be advised that the continuance of an activity may depend upon voluntary contributions but once it has been decided to run such an activity, no qualifying child will be excluded on the grounds of voluntary contributions.

### **SUBSIDY GRANT**

The trust aims to provide pupils/students with a holistic learning experience. This includes exposing them to activities that are not provided by their families. The schools within the trust will allocate a sum of money each year to subsidise activities to ensure that all pupils/students are able to engage in these experiences.

Each activity will be raised with the senior team of each school and a decision will be made to decide the level of subsidy.

### **PRIVATE USE OF FACILITIES**

Private use of the telephone and photocopying facilities by pupils/students is not permitted. In the rare case that a private telephone call is made it is deemed to be an emergency and no charge is made.

### **DAMAGE TO PROPERTY AND BREAKAGES**

Where school property has been wilfully damaged by a pupil/student or parent the school may charge those responsible for some or all of the cost of repair or replacement.

Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a pupil, and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible.

Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the headteacher and dependent on the situation.

### **REMISSIONS**

Parents of pupils/students who are in receipt of the following support payments will, in addition to having free school meals entitlement, also be entitled to the remission of charges:

- Universal credit

When arranging a chargeable activity such parents will be invited in confidence for the remission of charges in full or in part.

The headteacher in consultation with the chair of governors will make authorisation for such remission.

Pupils who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged a set amount per meal as decided by the catering provider.

Parents will be expected to notify the school immediately if they are no longer eligible for free meals. The school reserves the right to request a refund where any services have been given based on inaccurate or fraudulent information.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The headteacher will ensure that the school's equal opportunities policies are observed in implementing this policy.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Trust in conjunction with the respective local governing bodies (LGBs) for each school are responsible for making and reviewing the policy.

The headteacher is responsible for the implementation of the policy and ensuring that staff, parents and pupils/students know the details as appropriate.

Other staff may be responsible for implementing the policy as part of their overall responsibilities (e.g. the educational visits co-ordinator, or heads of department in a secondary school).

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The Finance Director will report on the policy to the headteacher as appropriate.

The headteacher will report to the Trust and the local governing body on any relevant aspects of the working of the policy as appropriate.

The Trust in conjunction with the local governing bodies for each school will review the policy every two years.

In implementing this policy, staff will have regard to the school's Safeguarding Policy and procedures, the school's Child Protection Policy and the school's e-Safety Policy and the over-riding principle at all times will be the safety, security, enjoyment and achievement of the pupils/students.

Policy endorsed by trustees/directors in March 2024

Date for review of policy is March 2026