Charging & Remissions Policy

Adopted by Trustees: 19th October 2021

Review Date: December 2025

Next Review Date: December 2026

Person responsible for overseeing the implementation: CEO

Chair of Trustees signature: C. L Chevassut

NB All references to legislation and guidance are as updated, amended or replaced from time to time.

Introduction

In accordance with Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 and the Funding Agreements of each Academy within Stowe Valley Multi Academy Trust, the Trust is required by law to adopt a policy on charging and remission arrangements for each school's activities.

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

However, educationally valuable activities have been and will continue to be dependent on financial contributions in whole or in part from parents/carers. The Trust's concern is to keep financial contributions to a reasonable minimum, and to ensure as far as possible that all children are able to take part, irrespective of their circumstances.

The law recognises that charges may be made to parents/carers in certain defined circumstances - provided that **each school** 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. The agreed policy is as follows:

1. Admissions

There is no charge for admissions.

2. School meals

There is no charge for children who are entitled to free school meals or infant free school meals. Pupils who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged as per the displayed prices.

3. Examinations

There is no charge for external examinations that are part of the curriculum and on the school's set examinations list, where pupils have been prepared for the examinations by the school.

However, if the pupil fails without good reason to meet an examination requirement, the school may recover the fee incurred from that pupil's parents/carers.

There is no charge for examinations that are not on the set list, but have been arranged by the school.

There is a charge of the examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school (see Optional extras under section 5).

Charges for re-sits will be at the discretion of the Headteacher and will usually be granted where it is judged to be beneficial to the educational progress of the pupil.

In most cases, where pupils are entered to re-sit examinations at the request of parents/carers, despite the school's view that the re-sit will not be beneficial, parents/carers will fund the entry fees.

4. Activities that take place during school hours

There is no charge for activities during school hours with the exception of music tuition (section 8).

There is no charge for transport during school hours to school organised activities.

The school may charge for:

- books and materials that the parent wishes the child to keep (the cost will be made clear to the parents before charge)
- optional extras (section 5)
- music or vocal tuition (section 8).

5. Activities that take place outside of school hours (non-residential)

There is no charge for activities that take place outside of school hours when they are:

- part of the set curriculum, including sports matches against other schools
- part of the syllabus for a public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the school
- part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education

Optional extras

The school will charge for optional extras. Optional extras are:

- education provided outside of school time that is **not:**
- part of the National Curriculum
- part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
- part of religious education
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school
- transport that is not taking the pupil to a school or to other premises where the local authority or Trust has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education
- board and lodging on a residential trip

The cost of optional extras

The Headteacher of each school will decide when it is necessary to charge for optional activities, and the levels of charge will be set by the Headteacher.

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. In no circumstances will there be an element of subsidy required for any pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

When 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
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra
- the cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to pay the charges. The school will need to have the agreement of parents before organising the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

6. Activities that take place partly during school hours either on or off site

Where the majority of a non-residential activity takes place during school hours the charging of the activity will be the same as is outlined in section 4.

Travelling time is included in time spent on activity.

In cases where the majority of a non-residential activity takes place outside of school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. So no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from the school accompanying pupils on a visit.

7. Residential activities

Our schools will not charge for:

- 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, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from the school accompanying pupils on a residential visit
- a residential activity that takes place largely during school hours
- travel costs where the residential activity is classed as being within school hours

Our schools will charge for:

- When any visit has been organised by the school where there may be a cost for board and lodging, parents will be informed of this before the visit takes place. We will charge anything up to the full cost of board and lodging on residential visits, whether it is classified as taking place during school hours or not. The charge will not exceed the actual cost. Parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits may be exempt from paying this cost (see section 11 for more guidance on remissions).
- Travel charges may apply when the residential activity takes place outside of school hours. The amount charged will be calculated to cover the unit cost per pupil. These charges may

not apply to those pupils entitled to remissions, but no other pupils will be charged extra to cover those costs.
- The school may charge for residential activities that fall outside of school hours (see section 5).

8. Music tuition within school hours

The Trust follows government legislation that states that all education provided during school hours must be free; however, music lessons are an exception to this rule.

Charges will be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil(s), or the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme (Wider Opportunities).

The school may charge for teaching requested by parents and delivered by specialist tutors given to either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing. The cost of these lessons may depend on the size and duration of the class as well as the type of instrument.

The school will not charge if the music tuition is part of the National Curriculum or public examination syllabus being followed by the student. This includes instruments, music books and exam fees.
Any pupil who is looked after by a local authority and wishes to partake in music tuition will do so free of charge.

9. Extra-curricular activities

The Trust is dedicated to providing a well-rounded and extensive education for our pupils which includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These enable our schools to provide:

- high-quality learning opportunities either side of the school day ways of intervening early when pupils are at risk of poor outcomes, e.g. by providing access to study support, parenting support or to more specialist services (such as health, social care or special educational needs services)
- ways of increasing pupil engagement
- ways of improving outcomes and narrowing gaps in outcomes between different groups of pupils
- Breakfast and homework/extended hours clubs which sometimes include providing meals

The total charge will not exceed the cost of providing the activity and no parent will be asked to subsidise others.

10. Damage to property and breakages

Where school property has been wilfully damaged by a pupil 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 are dependent on the situation.

11. Remissions and Concessions

In some circumstances, there may be cases of family hardship which make it difficult for pupils to take part in particular activities for which a charge is made.

When arranging a chargeable activity, the Headteacher will consider applications in confidence for the remission of charges in either part or in full. Application for remission of charges can be made via the Headteacher or senior member of staff with responsibility for pupil premium funding.

Parents who are eligible for the remission of charges will be dealt with confidentially.

The Headteacher will authorise the remission of charges.

The school may choose to subsidise part or all of the payment of some charges for certain activities and pupils, and this will be determined by the Headteacher.

12. Voluntary contributions

The Trust may ask for voluntary contributions to the school for general funds and/or to fund activities that will enrich our pupils' education.
In any case where an activity cannot be afforded without voluntary funding, this will be made clear to the parents by the school. If the activity is cancelled all monies paid will be returned to parents.

There is no obligation for a parent or carer to make any contribution and the school will in no way pressure parents/carers to make a contribution.

13. Inability or unwillingness to pay

The Trust is committed to ensuring fair access and treatment of all pupils, and this means ensuring that no child is excluded from an activity because the parents or carers of that child are unwilling or unable to pay. If there is insufficient funding for an activity, then it will be cancelled. The identity of the child or parents of the child who did not want to make the payment, or could not make the payment, will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

14. Schools within our Trust with Nursery provision

Schools will charge parents for nursery provision and a scale of charges will be approved by the CFO on an annual basis dependent on localised factors to ensure running costs are met. A list of charges can be obtained from individual schools if required.