

Altus Education Partnership

**Charging and Remissions
Policy**

Approval Body	Finance and Resources Committee
Date Approved	29th June 2022

1. Admission

There is no charge for admissions.

2. School meals

There is no charge for students who are entitled to free school meals or infant free school meals. Students who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged according to each academy's charging system. This will typically be a set amount per meal or per individual item purchased. This will be determined by the Principal/Academy Head and the senior leadership team (SLT).

3. Public examinations

There is no charge for examinations that are part of the curriculum and on the academy's set examinations list, where students have been prepared for the examinations by the academy. However, if the student fails without good reason to meet an examination requirement, the academy may recover the fee incurred from that student's parent/carers. These principles apply equally to re-sits.

There may be a charge for examinations that are not on the set list, but have been arranged by the academy, for example, entrance assessments for higher education courses.

Individual academies may charge an examination entry fee(s) if the registered student has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the academy (**see Optional extras under section 5**). The decision to allow an external candidate to sit an exam at the academy will be at the discretion of the Principal/Academy Head.

Individual academies may charge a fee for student requests for the return of scripts or for Enquiries About Results (EAR).

4. Activities during or outside of school/college hours

There is no charge for activities during school/college hours except for music tuition (**section 8**) or transport during school/college hours to academy-organised activities.

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

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

5. Optional extras

The academy may charge for optional extras. These include:

- education provided outside of academy time that is **not**:
 - part of the National Curriculum
 - part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the academy
 - part of religious education
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered student has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the academy
- transport that is not taking the student to another academy or to other premises where the local authority or governing body has arranged for the student to be provided with education
- board and lodging for a student on a residential visit
- activities which may require the use of specialised equipment
- extended day services offered to students (e.g., breakfast clubs, after school/college clubs etc).
- materials, books, instruments or equipment that the parent/carer wishes their child to keep or own (the cost will be made clear to the parent/carers before charge)

Parents/carers who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits may be exempt from paying full costs (see section 12 for more guidance on remissions)

6. The cost of optional extras

The Principal/Academy Head will decide when it is necessary to charge for optional activities, and the levels of charge will be set annually by the Principal/Academy Head and the SLT of each academy.

Any charge made in respect of individual students will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of students participating. In no circumstances will there be an element of subsidy required for any students wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge (**section 12**).

When calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- any materials (e.g., revision guides), 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
- the costs of buildings and accommodation

Participation in any optional extra activity will be based on parental choice and a willingness to pay the charges. The academy will need to have the agreement of parent/carers before organising the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Individual academies may also charge for specific IT provision, such as the leasing of chrome books or other portable devices. These are available for home use and parent/carers will have the opportunity to purchase the devices at the end of the scheme.

7. Residential activities

An academy will not charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school/college hours
- education provided on any visit that takes place outside school/college 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 academy, or part of religious education
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from academy accompanying students on a residential visit
- travel costs where the residential activity is classed as being within school/college hours
- residential activities that take place during school/college hours.

An academy will charge for the following.

- **Board and lodging**

When a visit has been organised by the academy where there may be a cost for board and lodging, parent/carers will be informed of this before the visit takes place. The charge will be anything up to the full cost of board and lodging on residential visits, whether it is classified as taking place during school/college hours or not. The charge will not exceed the actual cost.

Parent/carers who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits may be exempt from paying the full cost (see **section 12** for more guidance on remissions).

- **Travel**

Travel charges may apply when the residential activity takes place outside of school/college hours. The amount charged will be calculated to cover the unit cost per student. These charges may not apply to those students entitled to remissions, but no other students will be charged extra to cover those costs.

- **Activities**

The academy may charge for residential activities that fall **outside** of school/college hours (**see section 5**).

8. Music tuition within school/college hours

Each academy follows government legislation that states that all education provided during school/college 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 student(s).

The academy may charge for teaching requested by parents/carers and delivered by specialist tutors given to either an individual student or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles and, in the case of tuition in playing a musical instrument, shall not exceed four students) 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 academy will not charge if the music tuition is part of the National Curriculum or public examination syllabus being followed by the student.

Each academy is dedicated to ensuring equal opportunities for all students including access to specialised music tuition. Therefore charges made for music tuition within school/college hours will be remitted for students on free school meals in 11 – 16 academies. For students in 16 – 19 academies, there will be no charge for those in receipt of free meals and a subsidy may be available for those in receipt of the 16 – 19 bursary.

There is no charge for vocal or instrumental tuition for a student who is looked after by a local authority. This includes instruments, music books and exam fees.

9. Extended services

Each academy provides a well-rounded and extensive education for our students which includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities (extended services). Extended services enable our academies to provide:

- high-quality learning opportunities either side of the academy day;
- ways of intervening early when students are at risk of poor outcomes, e.g. by providing access to study support, or to more specialist services (such as health, social care or special educational needs services);
- ways of increasing student engagement;
- ways of improving outcomes and narrowing gaps in outcomes between different groups of students.

Individual academies may provide extended services such as breakfast clubs, after school/college clubs, or childcare which they may charge for. The charge will cover the cost of additional resources, such as non-teaching or teaching staff to provide the activity or to run the club.

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

10. Refunds

Request for refunds for trips will be considered on an individual basis and may be rejected if the academy is unable to recoup the costs incurred.

In all cases of withdrawal, either voluntarily or otherwise, applications should be made in writing to the Principal/Academy Head. If approved, refunds will be processed via the original method of payment.

The academy reserves the right not to refund costs where a student is withdrawn from an activity by the academy because of a student's breach of the academy's behaviour policy.

11. Damage to property and breakages

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

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

Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the Principal/Academy Head will be and dependent on the situation.

12. Remissions and concessions

The academy will consider the remission of charges to parents or carers who receive the following support payments:

- Income Support
- Income based Job-seekers Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (where the person is not receiving Working Tax Credit as well and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Universal Credit

Children of families who receive these payments are also entitled to free school meals. Parent/carers who are eligible for the remission of charges will be dealt with confidentially. The Principal/Academy Head will authorise the remission of charges.

The academy may choose to subsidise part or all of the payment of some charges for certain activities and students, and this will be determined by the Principal/Academy Head and SLT.

13. Voluntary contributions

Academies may ask for voluntary contributions for general funds and/or to fund activities that will enrich our students' education.

There will be some trips or activities which the academy cannot charge for but which the academy considers would be beneficial to the students. In this case the academy may ask for voluntary contributions. No student will be excluded from the activity or treated differently because they do not make a contribution. If voluntary contributions are not sufficient then it may be that the planned activity or trip cannot go ahead. If the activity is cancelled all monies paid will be returned to the parent/carer. There is no obligation for a parent/carer to make any contribution and the academy will in no way pressurise a parent/carer to contribute.

14. Inability or unwillingness to pay

Each academy is committed to ensuring fair access and treatment of all students, and this means ensuring that no student is excluded from an activity because the parent/carer of that student is unwilling or unable to pay. If there is insufficient funding for an activity, then it will be cancelled.

The identity of the student and/or parent/carer who did not want to make the payment, or could not make the payment, will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

15. Complaints

Complaints about the implementation of this policy or any decisions taken in line with the policy will be considered as part of the individual academy's complaints procedures.