

# Excalibur Academies Trust

## Charging & Remissions Policy



The purpose of the policy is to ensure that there is clarity over those items which the academies will provide free of charge and for those items where there may be a charge or a request for a voluntary contribution.

### A) Summary

All activities and resources that are provided during the school day and considered a necessary part of the curriculum will be provided free of charge.

No pupil will be prevented from participating because his / her parents cannot or are not willing to make a voluntary contribution. However if insufficient funds are available to run an activity it may be necessary to curtail or cancel activities.

### B) Charges relating to the Provision of Education during the school day

Charges are not made for activities that take place during school hours. However voluntary contributions may be sought for trips and opportunities during the school day which entail additional costs.

Non chargeable activities include:

- admissions to any Excalibur academy;
- anything required as part of the specification for a prescribed examination;
- examination entry fees for public examinations for which registered students are being prepared at the academy;
- the provision of books, equipment, materials or transport. However, parents may be asked to contribute voluntarily towards the costs of materials or ingredients where the student will then own the finished product and are able to take it home  
Note: The cost of travelling to and from home when students are on work experience or educated at an alternative location is met by the parents.
- non-residential trips that take place substantially (50% or more) during the school day. A contribution towards the costs will be requested but parents are under no obligation to contribute;
  - In these circumstances no pupil will be prevented from participating because his/her parents cannot or will not make a contribution, but if insufficient funds are available it may be necessary to curtail or cancel activities.

### C) Activities and Resources that incur charges

Charges will be made for optional extras, including:

- Musical instrument tuition;
  - The instrument tuition fees charged constitute a private arrangement between the tutor and the student. As such, fees are payable to the tutor direct and no charges are made by the school. Where the Local Authority Music Service is used then an invoice will be raised against parents to cover that cost.
- Public examinations;
  - If a student, parent or guardian requests a re-mark, re-sit or a copy of an examination script, an amount will be charged to the parent to cover costs. This amount shall correspond to any relevant fee levied to the academy by the examining body plus a small administration fee to cover costs.

- All normal costs associated with prescribed public examinations are borne by the academy. This includes any costs associated with re-marks and re-sits where the academy has requested that these take place;
    - Charges may be made if a student fails to meet the requirements of the examination without good reason.
  - Residential trips;
    - The board and lodging element of residential trips will always be charged for, irrespective of whether the trip has occurred within the school day or not, or whether the trip has taken place to fulfil the requirements of the curriculum or syllabus. If more than half the trip takes place outside of school hours the remaining costs will be charged for in full.
    - Students who are entitled to Free School Meals are exempt from paying for the board and lodging element of the trip.
  - Photocopying for private use;
    - The costs of private photocopying will be levied but at minimal cost (All photocopying costs associated with provision of the curriculum are borne by the academy)
  - Compulsory elements of school uniform;
  - Cost of damages;
    - These include any damages to the fabric of the academy premises (such as a broken window) and the defacing, loss or breakage of books or classroom equipment. In such cases, especially where the damage is due to unacceptable behaviour on the part of the student, parents will be asked to pay the cost of repair or replacement. Such charges may be reduced or waived on an individual basis if this is deemed to be appropriate on educational grounds, for example, in circumstances where a student has owned up to a misdemeanour or the damage was accidental.
  - After School Clubs and Holiday Clubs;
    - Charges will be made for after school clubs if it is run by an external instructor or club; and / or additional staffing or resources are required to run the activity.
  - Materials, books, uniform and equipment;
    - When parents indicate they wish students to retain ownership of resources a charge may be levied;
    - Sixth Form students will be provided with details regarding reading lists, text books, equipment and field trips prior to starting their courses.
  - School Meals (except for pupils entitled to free school meals)

## **D) Voluntary Contributions**

Each Excalibur Academy can ask for voluntary contributions to subsidise particular activities or for a non-specified purpose that will benefit the students at the academy. These contributions are purely voluntary and a student will not be excluded from any activity because parents have not contributed.

Examples of requests for voluntary contributions include: swimming fees, contributions to materials in DT & Art, day trips, and residential trips taking place mostly in school time.

Certain activities, particularly school trips, need to be funded through voluntary contributions if they are to be financially viable. If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions and not enough voluntary contributions are made the activity / trip may be cancelled. There is no obligation on parents to make a contribution. Students will not be excluded from the specific trip any activity due to their parents/guardian/carer being either unable or unwilling to pay.

## **E) Non Specific Contributions from Parents**

Individual academies may ask for contributions to a general fund. These funds will be ring fenced and used for additional opportunities for students. Schools will decide locally how to spend the money.

### **St John's School Fund**

Any donations to this fund are used to contribute towards the cost of guest speakers, clubs, performances, concerts, affiliation fees for sports teams, unforeseen occurrences on trips, the improvement of student facilities within St John's, tuition that falls outside the scope of the curriculum, workshops, seminars and coach hire.

## **F) Remission of Charges**

If a residential, curriculum based activity takes place largely during academy time, a remission of charges is available for students who are entitled to Free School Meals.

Students who are entitled to Free School Meals benefit from a 50% reduction on the compulsory elements of school uniform provided through the school. Parents should contact their school office for more information. At Burbage Primary School parents of children entitled to Free School Meals are given a school uniform voucher worth up to £50 which is used when ordering uniform through the school office.

Individual academies will financially support families. Parents should write to the Principal requesting support. All requests will be treated sympathetically and in confidence.

### **Fairfield High School**

In order to ensure that pupils are not excluded from enrichment opportunities because of financial difficulties Fairfield has a fund (Fairfield High School Trips Budget) to which eligible parents/carers can apply for help with the cost of activities and visits.

Parents/carers of students entitled to Free School Meals are eligible to make individual applications to the Head Teacher on each occasion for which financial support is required. Where children are in the care of the local authority eligibility to apply for remission of costs is automatic.

When the school informs parents/carers about a forthcoming visit/activity/trip, staff will set a clear deadline for applications and include a simple application form on which eligible parents/carers can make their application for reduced costs. The amount of financial help available for each applicant will be at the Head Teacher's discretion subject to demand and funds available at that time. No remission will therefore set a precedent for any future remission. Funds budgeted for remission of charges for activities/trips in one term may be rolled over for use in subsequent terms in the same financial year.

### **St John's, Marlborough**

Students in Years 7-11 at St John's can apply to the St John's Opportunity Fund. This fund is there to ensure that students who live in economic hardship can take advantage of the range of opportunities open to the wider student population. The Opportunity Fund is neither a right nor a benefit – it is a discretionary fund and awards are made on the merit of each individual request with £250 per year being the maximum financial support available. As a general guide The Opportunity Fund provides between 50-100% of the cost of After School Clubs, Uniform, Day Trips and up to 50% or up to £250 towards the cost of Residential Trips.

### **G) Additional Financial Support**

- Individual schools may partially or fully subsidise trips and opportunities using school funds.
- Parents and students are encouraged to access funding that will support them. Local Trust Funds, The Rotary Club and Lions often will support individuals.
- Parents can write in confidence to Academy Principals to apply for financial support. All requests will be dealt with in strictest confidence.
- No financial support will be made to contribute towards the cost of transport to or from school.
- Sixth Form students from low income families may be entitled to support from the Sixth Form Bursary Fund.

### **H) Calculating Charges & Refunds**

All charges and requests for voluntary contributions will be calculated on a break-even basis. Charges will not include subsidies for pupils whose parents do not pay.

Occasionally once all the expenses have been paid, a trip may have a surplus. If the surplus is greater than £10 per pupil on a day trip or £15 per pupil on a residential trip it will automatically be refunded to parents.

## Appendix A

### **Communication with parents regarding Voluntary Contributions for Trips and Activities**

Where charges are not made but contributions need to be requested to ensure financial viability of the trip or activity, information sent out to parents should include a form of words such as:

#### Years R to 11 (Trips in School Day)

*“In order that the trip may take place, it is necessary to ask for a voluntary contribution. There is no obligation to contribute, and no student in the group will be omitted from the trip if their parents do not contribute. It is true, however, that the trip will not take place if sufficient voluntary contributions are not forthcoming, as there is no other source of funding for the trip. In case of financial hardship, support may be available and a letter to the Principal will be dealt with confidentially and sympathetically”*

#### Years R to 11 (Trips Outside of the School Day) & Years 12 & 13 (All Trips)

*“In order that the trip may take place it is necessary to ask for a contribution. In cases of financial hardship, support may be available and a letter to the Principal will be dealt with confidentially and sympathetically”*

*“Under the Education Reform Act some of the costs involved with this trip are voluntary, however I have to emphasise that this visit cannot go ahead unless parents are willing to make a contribution of £xxx. By making the deposit payment of £xxx you are agreeing to make the full contribution of £xxx.”*