



Charging and Remissions Policy

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Statement of intent

Synergy Multi Academy Trust is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of financial circumstances, and have created this policy to ensure we adhere to legal requirements regarding charging for school activities and meet all statutory guidance provided by the DfE.

The School will ensure that this policy is published on its website and provides the school community with details of activities for which the School will charge parents, and the circumstances in which they will waive any charge parents would otherwise expect to pay.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Academies Act 2010
- DfE 'Academy trust handbook 2025'
- DfE 'Academy trust governance guide'
- DfE 'What academies and further education colleges must or should publish online'
- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 1989
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- DfE 'Charging for school activities'
- The Trust's Funding Agreement.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will be used:

- **Charge:** a fee payable for specifically defined activities.
- **Remission:** the cancellation of a charge, partly or wholly, which would normally be payable.

Roles and responsibilities

Trustees will be responsible for:

- Reviewing and updating this policy.
- The management of the School's delegated finances
- Ensuring the School acts in accordance with this policy at all times.
- Ensuring money is spent for the educational benefit of pupils attending the School and for the benefit of pupils in other schools.
- Recognising its legal requirements regarding charging for school activities under the Education Act 1996 and meeting all additional guidance provided by the DfE.

The Headteacher will be responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is effectively implemented.
- Prioritising and allocating financial resources appropriately, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and probity in the use of public funds.
- Informing parents on low incomes and in receipt of specific benefits of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.
- Liaising with parents and staff regarding any charges being applied and making decisions regarding appropriate remissions on a case-by-case basis.

The School with the Trust Finance Team will:

- Process and record payments for activities, taking into account any remissions applied.
- Ensure that the correct invoices are sent to parents and that payment is received.

Charging for education

The School will not charge for:

- Admission applications.
- Education provided during school hours, including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment.
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the School, or part of RE.
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless provided at the request of the pupil's parent.
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the School.
- Examination resits, if the pupil is being prepared for the resits at the School, with the School's approval.

The School may charge for:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes their child to own them.
- Optional extras.
- Music tuition.
- Certain early years provision.
- The use of community facilities and other commercial activities.
- Provision of information within the scope of freedom of information.

Optional extras

The School may charge for the following optional extras:

- 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 fees where the pupil is being entered as a private candidate or at the request of the parent / carer
- Transport, other than that required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the Trust Board has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
- Extended day services offered to pupils, e.g. after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions.

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

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in relation to the optional extra
- The cost of buildings and accommodation
- Non-teaching staff, including TAs
- Teaching staff under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra
- The cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide vocal tuition or tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Charges applied will not include an element of subsidy for any pupils wishing to participate but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the School will not charge for the cost of alternative provision for those not participating.

Participation in any optional activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Therefore, parental agreement is a prerequisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

- If a charge is to be made for a particular activity, such as optional extras, parents will be informed of how the charge will be calculated.

Examination fees and resits

The School may charge for examination fees if:

- The examination is on the set list (which includes SATs, GCSEs and A-levels) but the pupil was not prepared for it at the School.
- The examination is not on the set list but the School arranged for the pupil to take it.
- The School will charge if a pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the requirements of any public examination Eg GCSE examinations.
- The School may charge for changes to entries such as late fees caused by pupils, parents / carers.

If a pupil or their parent considers it to be in the best interests of the pupil to request that an examination is re-marked, any fees involved will be covered by the pupil or their parent. If the awarding body changes the overall grade of the result, the School will not be charged by the awarding body and the parent or pupil will have their fees refunded

Music tuition

The School is aware that instrumental and vocal music tuition is an exception to the rule that all education provided during school hours must be free. The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 allow for charges to be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of any size – provided that the tuition is at the request of the pupil's parents. The charges will not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff providing the tuition.

There will be no charges applied if the music tuition is an essential part of the national curriculum. Charging will also not be made if the teaching is provided under the first access to the KS2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme.

Transport

The School will not charge for:

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the LA has a statutory obligation to provide the transport.
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the Governing Board or LA has arranged for pupils to be educated.
- Transporting pupils to meet an examination requirement, when they have been prepared for the examination at the School.
- Transport provided for an educational visit.

Residential visits

The School may 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, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of RE.
- Supply teachers to cover for teachers accompanying pupils on visits.

Damaged or lost items

The School may charge for the cost of replacing items that are damaged or lost due to the negligence or poor behaviour of pupils or their parents.

Parents will only be charged the replacement cost to purchase the same or equivalent item. The School will consider waiving costs in exceptional circumstances.

Remissions

The School will enable parents in financial difficulty to send their children on visits and activities when possible and appropriate. The funding will be limited and there is no guarantee that all requests can be met. Assistance will be allocated on a needs basis and, if the full cost of the trip or activity cannot be met through assistance funding and voluntary contributions, the trip or activity will be cancelled.

Parents with genuine financial challenges and those in receipt of any of the following benefits may request assistance with the costs of activities:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's 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, provided that they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and they have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run on – paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit – if they apply on or after 1 April 2018, their household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive)

To request assistance, parents should contact the School.

School trip refunds

- All initial deposits for school trips will be non-refundable unless stated otherwise when they are provided with initial information about the trip.
- In the circumstances in which the School takes the decision to remove a pupil from a school trip due to poor behaviour and it is deemed unsafe for that child to participate there will be no refund.
- In the event that the School has to cancel a trip due to foreseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded. In the event that a school trip is cancelled by a party other than the School due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the School's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents.
- In the event that a pupil or their parents cancel the pupil's place on a trip, there will be no refund unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Where a pupil or their parents have previously cancelled a place on a trip and received a full refund, the School will have the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future trips and visits.

- In the event that a pupil cannot attend a trip at the last minute, e.g. due to illness, it will be at the School's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The School will take into account whether the School will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.
- In the event that a school trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it will be at the School's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The School will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.
- In the event that the decision is made to postpone a trip due to foreseen circumstances, it will be at the School's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The School will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.
- Once trip arrangements have been booked and confirmed, if contributions exceed the total cost of the trip, a refund will be given where the excess is greater than £20 per pupil.
- The School will deal with cancellations and refunds on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all pupils and their families are treated equally.
- If a parent wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they will be able to do so via the Complaints Procedures Policy.

Income generation

In line with the Academy Trust Handbook 2024, the Trust will set fees for chargeable services at full cost and reserves, taking into consideration the educational benefits for pupils, and retains the right to apply an additional rate of return when in a commercial environment.

Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

The School's Freedom of Information Policy and Freedom of Information Publication Scheme will set out where fees may be charged for the provision of information.