

Charging and Remissions Policy

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1.0 Policy statement

Dixons Academies Trust is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all students, regardless of financial circumstances, and has established the following policy and procedures to ensure that no child is discriminated against by our offering of school trips, activities and educational extras.

In addition, we are committed to adhering to legal requirements regarding charging for school activities and meeting all statutory guidance provided by the DfE.

We promise:

- not to charge for education provided during school hours
- to inform parents on low incomes, and in receipt of relevant benefits, of the support available to them when asking for contributions

2.0 Scope and purpose

The policy explains our legal and moral obligation to provide a free education to all children and to ensure all provision is fully inclusive. It is our mission to challenge social and educational disadvantage and this policy supports this. The policy explains all types of charges that a child and or parent may incur and how we support families who may encounter financial difficulties. The legal framework and statutory guidance that underpins this policy is;

- Education Act
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations
- DfE 'Charging for School Activities'
- DfE 'Governance Handbook'
- ESFA Financial Handbook
- Our Funding Agreement (see Trust website)
- Other associated Trust policies such as our Finance policy

3.0 Charging for education

3.1 We will not charge parents / carers for:

- admission applications
- education provided during school hours
- education provided outside school hours (if it is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for by the academy, or part of religious education)
- instrumental or vocal tuition (unless provided at the request of the student's parents / carer through our peripatetic service)
- entry for a prescribed public examination (if the student has been prepared for it at the academy)

3.2 We may charge parents / carers for the following:

- materials, books, instruments or equipment (where they desire their child to own them), for example mathematical equipment
- wilful damage to academy property, equipment and furniture
- lost or damaged text or exercise books, lost locker keys and badges, planners etc.
- ingredients and materials for practical subjects (including design technology, food technology etc.)
- use of community facilities

4.0 Optional extras

4.1 We may charge parents / carers 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 student is being prepared for at the school
 - religious education
- examination entry fees (where the student has not been prepared for the examinations at the academy)
- transport for trips, other than that arranged by the council for the student to be provided with education
- board and lodging for a student on a residential visit
- extended day services offered to students

- 4.2 When calculating the cost of optional extras, the academy will only take into account the following:
- materials, books, instruments or equipment (provided in relation to the optional extra)
 - the cost of buildings and accommodation
 - the employment of non-teaching staff
 - the cost of teaching staff (including teaching assistants) 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
- 4.3 The academy will not charge in excess of the actual cost of providing the optional extra (divided by the number of participating students). The academy will not charge a subsidy for any students wishing to participate but whose parents / carers are unwilling, or unable, to pay the full charge. If a proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the academy will not charge for the cost of alternative provision for those not participating.
- 4.4 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 pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra.

5.0 Examination fees

We may charge for examination fees if:

- the examination is on the prescribed list but the student was not prepared for it at the academy (eg a language not offered by the school)
- the examination is not on the prescribed list, but the academy arranged for the student to take it
- Peripatetic examinations that the parent requests the child to undertake
- a student fails, without good reason, to complete the requirements of any public examination where the school agreed to pay the original fee (for example a former Post-16 student re-sitting as an 'external' candidate)

6.0 Examination re-sits and re-marks

- 6.1 It will be at the academy's discretion if a student is entered for a second, or subsequent, attempt at an examination. Payment of fees will be discussed and agreed on an individual student basis.
- 6.2 If a student, or their parents / carer consider it to be in the best interests of the student to request that an examination is re-marked, any fees involved must be covered by the student or their parents. If the awarding body changes the overall grade of the result, the academy will not be charged by the awarding body and the parents / carer / student will have their fees refunded.

7.0 Voluntary contributions

- 7.1 We may, from time-to-time, ask for voluntary contributions towards the benefit of the academy or academy activities. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, we will make this clear to parents / carers at the outset. We will also make it clear whether assistance is available.
- 7.2 If a parent / carer is unwilling, or unable, to pay, their child will still be given an equal opportunity to take part in the activity. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity, and the academy cannot fund it via another source, the activity will be cancelled.
- 7.3 We will strive to ensure that parents / carers do not feel pressurised into making voluntary contributions.

8.0 Music tuition

- 8.1 Music tuition is the only 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 – if the tuition is at the request of the student's parents / carers.
- 8.2 The charges will not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff providing the tuition.

9.0 Transport

We will not charge for:

- transporting registered students to, or from, the academy premises, where the council has a statutory obligation to provide the transport
- transporting students to meet an examination requirement at another school when they have been prepared for the examination at the academy

10.0 Residential visits

- 10.1 We 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, 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 teachers accompanying students on visits
- 10.2 We may charge for board and lodging – but the charge will not exceed the actual cost.
- 10.3 Parents / carers will be exempt from all or part of board and lodging costs if they can prove that they are in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:
- Universal Credit
 - Income Support
 - Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
 - support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) did not exceed the government limit in the previous financial year
 - the guarantee element of State Pension Credit
 - an income related employment and support allowance
 - or the child is classed as pupil premium

11.0 Education partly during school hours

- 11.1 If 50%, or more, of the time spent on an activity is during school hours (including time spent travelling if the travel occurs during school hours), it is deemed to take place during school hours and no charge will be made.
- 11.2 If less than 50% of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours and we may charge for the activity; however, we will not charge if the activity is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the academy, or part of religious education.

12.0 Damaged or lost items

The academy may charge parents / carers for the cost of replacing items broken, damaged or lost due to their child's behaviour. Parents / carers will not be taken to court for failure to pay such costs, except in cases of criminal damage.

13.0 Remissions

- 13.1 We have set aside a fund from pupil premium income (see plan on each academy website) to enable children classed as 'Ever 6' to access school trips
- 13.2 Parents / carers in receipt of any of the following benefits may request assistance with the costs of activities:
- Universal Credit
 - Income Support
 - Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
 - support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - the guarantee element of State Pension Credit
 - an income related employment and support allowance
- 13.3 To request assistance, parents / carers should contact the academy.

14.0 Refunds

Most trips will require a non-refundable deposit. This deposit will only become refundable if the trip is cancelled by the academy. If a student pulls out of the trip through medical grounds, then this will be reviewed on an individual basis.

