

18. Charging Policy

The MAT is committed to the general principle of free education and recognizes the valuable contribution that a wide range of activities, including school visits and residential experiences, can make towards all aspects of students' education. It also believes that all our students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from academy activities and visits (curricular and extracurricular) independent of their parent's financial means.

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The MAT recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- where possible we shall publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the school year so that parents can plan ahead
- we have established a system for parents to pay in instalments
- when an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip
- we acknowledge that offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

The 1996 Education Act requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities, which will be kept under regular review. The Trust will approve all charging policies annually.

The policy identifies activities for which:

- voluntary contributions may be requested
- charges will be made
- charges will not be made
- charges may be waived

18.1 Voluntary Contributions

Separately from the matter of charging, schools may always seek voluntary contributions in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to pupils. All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that pupils of parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have.

The Law states:

- if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the Headteacher will make this clear to parents from the outset
- no child will be excluded from an activity because his or her parents are unable or unwilling to pay
- if insufficient contributions are received, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled
- if a parent is unwilling or unable to pay their child will still be given an equal chance to on the visit

18.2 Charges will be Made

The MAT reserves the right to make a charge for the following activities which may from time to time be organised by the school:

- activities outside school hours - the school will endeavour to provide a range of such activities from time to time. These will sometimes include day and residential experiences, and are known generally as 'optional extras'.
- Charges may be made for these activities EXCEPT where they are provided to fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus of a prescribed public examination or are required in order to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to religious education in which case they are not regarded as optional extras as such and charges cannot be made.
- residential activities held during school hours - charges may be made for the board and lodging element of those residential activities during school hours. Parents will be

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notified in advance of any such activities which the school proposes to organise and the estimated cost. Parental consent will be obtained for their children's participation in any such activities for which a charge may be made. However pupils whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (see remissions policy below) may not be charged for board and lodging costs

- music tuition - music tuition for individuals or groups of up to 4 pupils
- home to school student transport - costs incurred by the school in providing home to school transport for students who live outside of the school's designated catchment

area

Parents will be notified in advance of any 'optional extras' which the school proposes to organise and the estimated cost. Parental consent will be obtained if their children are to participate in any activities for which a charge may be made.

Any charge for a particular activity will be dependent upon the type of activity and its cost and the number of participants. This charge will not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity, divided equally by the number of pupils willing to participate. The cost of other pupils participating in the visit will not be included in the charge. The charge may however include an appropriate element for such things as:

- the pupil's travel costs
- the pupil's board and lodging costs
- materials, books, instruments and other equipment
- non-teaching staff costs
- entrance fees to museums, castles, theatres, etc.
- insurance costs
- the expenses only of participating teachers engaged on a separate contract for services to provide the 'optional extra'

If the number of school sessions on a residential trip is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the trip it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A "half day" means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

18.3 Charges will not be made

Charges will not be made for the following:

- an admission application
- 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, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education
- tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required

as 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

- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school

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- examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school. However, if a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus a charge will be made
- education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours
- education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours, 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 the school's basic curriculum for religious education
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip
- transport provided in connection with an educational trip

18.4 Remissions

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the MAT has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances. This remissions policy sets out the circumstances in which such charges will be waived.

Families will qualify for remission or help with charges if they are in receipt of:

- 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 £16,190 in the previous financial year
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit

- An income related employment and support allowance
- 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

Additional categories of parents may claim help with some costs in the following circumstances:

- specific individual circumstances that have caused temporary hardship
- recently moved into hardship but not yet receiving the benefits mentioned above
- made a specific request to the Head Teacher for any other justifiable reason. The remission is at the Head Teacher's discretion in these circumstances based on any evidence provided