

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY



WHERE LEARNING IS UNSTOPPABLE AND ASPIRATIONS HAVE NO LIMITS

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1. Background

The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is to ensure that Orwell Multi Academy Trust ("the Trust") maintains and develops systems of financial control which conform to the requirements both of propriety and of good financial management. It is essential that these systems operate properly to meet the Trust's Funding Agreement with the Department for Education.

The policy covers the approach that the Trust's academies will take to charging parents for certain events and activities provided for their children.

This policy relates to all of the Trust's academies. Adherence to the principles and procedures contained in this policy is mandatory for all staff.

This policy is an appendix to the main Trust *Finance Policy*.

2. General Principles

The Trust is committed to the general principle of free education. The Trust recognises the valuable contribution that a wide range of activities, including school visits, residential experiences and clubs, can make towards all aspects of pupils' education. The Trust would accordingly wish to promote and provide as far as possible such activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the benefit of pupils of the Trust schools.

This policy is based on the Department for Education's guidance on charging for school activities. Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 sets out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England. Academies are required through their funding agreements to comply with the law on charging for school activities.

3. School Charging

Charges will not normally be levied for:

- Education provided during academy hours (including the supply of any key materials, books, instruments or other equipment).
- Education provided outside academy hours which is part of a syllabus at the academy, or part of the academy'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.
- Education provided on any trip that takes place during academy hours.
- Education provided on any trip that takes place outside academy hours.
- No charge will be made for an admission application for a place at an academy in the Trust.

Charges may be levied for

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment where parents want their child to own such items.

- Optional extras - participation in any optional extra activity that is strictly on the basis of parental choice, agreement and their willingness to pay charges. These include board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit or extended day services such as breakfast club (see section 4).
- Tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is not part of the National Curriculum.
- Community facilities such as lettings.
- Certain Early Years provisions such as Nursery fees for non-funded pupils.

4. Voluntary Contributions and Optional Extras

When organising school trips or visits which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the academy invites parents to contribute towards the cost of the trip. All contributions are voluntary.

If the academy does not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, it may be necessary to cancel a trip. If a trip goes ahead, it may include children for whom no voluntary contribution has been paid. These children will not be treated differently from any others.

The following is a list of additional activities organised by our academies which require voluntary contributions from parents. These activities are known as 'optional extras'. This list is not exhaustive:

- Visits to museums
- Sporting activities which require transport
- Outdoor adventure activities
- Residential trips
- Visits to the theatre
- School trips abroad
- Musical events

Any charge for a particular activity or trip will be dependent upon the type of activity and its cost. The charge will not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity. The charge may include an appropriate element for such things as:

- Travel costs
- Board and lodging costs
- Materials, books, instruments and other equipment
- Staff costs
- Entrance fees to museums, castles, theatres etc
- Insurance costs

5. Residential Visits & Activities Outside School Hours

The trust and its academies reserve the right to seek parental contributions for activities deemed to be optional extras, such as residential visits, theatre trips, school discos, sports coaching.

6. Materials & Equipment

The cost of purchase or hire instruments, materials, equipment or clothing for activities, which take place outside of school hours and which are purely voluntary and optional remains the parents' responsibility. It remains the parents' responsibility to supply school uniform including PE kit.

An academy may charge for materials or require them to be provided if parents have indicated that they wish to own any finished product produced in school e.g. Design Technology products.

7. Music Tuition

All children study music as part of the normal school curriculum. There is no charge for this.

Where pupils have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument as part of whole class instrumental tuition there is no charge. Should the child wish to continue beyond this one-year entitlement there will be termly charges for lessons. Charges will be based on the shared cost of the lesson. The loan of the instrument will be free.

Any costs associated with individual or small group tuition in the playing of a musical instrument whether in or out of school hours (unless it is provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or is required by the national Curriculum) remains the parents' responsibility.

Exceptions: No charge will be made for individual music tuition provided in school hours in respect of a pupil who is looked after by the local authority (within the meaning of section 22(1) of the Children act 1989)

8. Breakages and damage to school property or equipment

The Trust reserves the right to seek reparation for parents where their children cause breakages or damage to school property, or equipment.

Deliberate, wilful or negligent loss of or damage to academy resources not only puts an unfair strain on the budget but denies or compromises the opportunity and right to learn.

For those reasons, it is the policy of the Trust that those causing wilful loss or damage shall make good the loss or damage appropriately.

- Loss of / irreparable damage to books, IT equipment, PE equipment, DT tools etc: the school shall claim the 'market rate' for repair or replacement.
- Damage to the structure of the buildings, furniture etc: the school shall claim the cost of repair (e.g. broken window, chair etc) or an appropriate replacement.
- Where damage has been sustained to the fabric of the academy or equipment due to the criminal behaviour of others, the Trust shall actively cooperate with the police authorities with a view to seeking restitution.

- The Trust and / or its representative, will consider in all cases where the costs of replacement have not been met by the perpetrators of the wilful loss or damage or criminal behaviour, action via a Civil Prosecution or the Small Claims Court.

9. Remissions

Where the parents of a pupil are in receipt of Income Support, Income based Jobseekers' Allowance, Support under Part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, or Child Tax Credit (provided that they do not also receive Working Tax Credit and have an annual income assessed by the Inland Revenue that does not exceed an income related employment and support allowance), Universal Credit (if the application was made on or after 1 April 2018, the family's income must be less than £7,400 per year – after tax and not including any benefits) financial support will be made available to cover all or part of the costs via the school budget or in partnership with local charitable organisations. Parents may be asked to provide a supporting letter to help the school raise funds.

The Trust may from time to time decide to remit all or part of the cost of activities involving particular pupils. This will be at the Board's discretion or may be delegated to the relevant Local Governing Committee.

In other circumstances, there may be cases of family hardship, which make it difficult for pupils to take part in particular activities for which a charge is made. Hence, when arranging a chargeable activity, the Trust will invite parents to apply in confidence for the remission of charges in part or in full. Authorisation of remission will be made by the Headteacher of the school on behalf of the Trust.

On occasion year groups may wish to raise funds to support a trip or activity through various fundraising events. This is allocated to support the overall cost of the trip.

Any other remission arrangements for a particular activity or pupil will be entirely at the discretion of the Local Governing Committee of the school. Any subsidy provided by the Local Governing Committee will be met from the funds at its disposal.

Nothing in this policy statement precludes the Trust from inviting parents to make a voluntary contribution for the benefit of the school or in support of any school activity, whether during or outside school hours. Any contributions sought will be entirely voluntary and pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents make a contribution in response to any invitation. However, sufficient contributions will need to be received to enable any trips to be viable.

10. Debt Recovery

The Trust should always try to recover debts owed to preserve its budget for spending on improvements for learning. The Trust academies are thus authorised to pursue bad debts, including the use of outside specialist debt collection agencies, as long as the effect on the academy's budget is at least cost neutral. Further information

surrounding debt recovery can be found in the Trust Finance Policy on the Trust Sharepoint.

11. Review

The Trust reserves the right to review and amend this policy statement from time to time as appropriate.