



STEP Academy Trust

Charging and Remissions Policy

Publication Date: July 2019

About this Document:

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<p>Date of review: June 2019</p> <p>Policy approved by: Finance & Operations Committee</p> <p>On date: 11 June 2019</p> <p>Frequency of review : 3 years</p> <p>Date of next publication: July 2022</p>	

Introduction

STEP Academy Trust Board of Trustees has agreed this Policy and as such, it applies to all Academies within the Trust.

STEP Academy Trust recognises the importance that a wide range of activities including school visits, after school clubs, residential and other cultural capital experiences can make towards a pupil's education. STEP aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and as additional optional activities. The Trust believe that all pupils should benefit from academy activities and visits (curricular and extracurricular) independent of their parents'/carers' financial means. This policy describes how the Trust will try to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and seek to minimise the barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

The mission of STEP Academy Trust and the principles within applicable legislation is that no charge will be made for:

- Education within school hours including the supply of books, materials; instruments, equipment or transport);
- Education outside school hours which forms part of the school's curriculum;
- Entry for a prescribed public examination or a re-sit prepared for by the school.

Permitted Charges

Charges are permitted to cover certain costs for activities undertaken in the year, these include:

- Education outside or predominantly outside school hours (which does not form part of the school's curriculum);
- Board, lodging and associated costs on residential educational trips (exceptions may be applicable or considered (see remissions section below));
- Music and/or vocal tuition and the hiring of musical instruments where the tuition does not form part of the school's curriculum;
- Books, instruments, or equipment, where the pupil's parent/carer wishes to own them;
- Materials/ingredients required to produce a finished product made in the academy (e.g. in art, design, food or technology lessons), where parents/carers have agreed in advance that the finished article should be owned by the parent/carer or the pupil;
- The proportionate costs for an individual child of activities and optional extras occurring wholly or mainly outside school hours ('optional extras') to meet the costs for; Travel, Materials and equipment, staff costs, Entrance fees, Insurance costs and similar additionally incurred costs.;
- Breakages and replacements as a result of damages caused wilfully or negligently by pupils;
- Extra-curricular activities and school clubs and any other extended school activity;
- Damage/vandalism/loss to and of academy property;
- Lettings;
- Catering.

In all cases where a permitted charge is made, parents/carers will be told the amount in advance. Charges will not be set with the intention of exceeding the actual cost per pupil incurred.

Voluntary contributions

Voluntary contributions may be requested for the benefit of the academy or for any visit and/or activity either inside or outside of academy time. In all cases where voluntary contributions are requested for a visit or activity parents/carers will be told the amount in advance.

The level of voluntary contribution requested will not be set with the intention of exceeding the actual cost per pupil incurred. The school's Pupil Premium funding may be used to support those pupils in respect of which the school receives that funding. No pupil will be excluded from a visit or activity if their parent/carer cannot or chooses not to pay the voluntary contribution. However, the visit or activity may have to be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received.

Parents will usually be invited to make a voluntary contribution for the following;

- Educational visits that are non-residential;
- Educational visits taking place during school time that are residential;
- Special events involving visiting artists or experts to school (e.g. theatre groups, musicians) where there is a cost to the school;
- Material or Ingredients for baking/cooking or building where the product will be taken home by the pupil.

Any request made to parents will specify that it is a voluntary contribution and in no way represents a charge. The Trust confirms:

- That the contribution is genuinely voluntary and a parent is under no obligation to pay;
- That registered pupils at the school will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request.
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The amount of voluntary contributions will be determined by the Head teacher of the academy,

Remission

In order to reduce financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, some activities and visits, where charges can legally be made, may be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents or carers in receipt of the benefits set out below.

Where charges are to be made to parents/carers, or voluntary contributions sought, these will be advised in advance and collected prior to the activity.

Requests for help from parents/carers on eligible benefits will be considered and assistance provided within the limits of any support fund that may be available. Complete confidentiality will be observed in all such matters.

Eligible benefits:

- Universal Credit (in certain prescribed circumstances);
- Income Support;
- Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based);
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income as assessed by HMRC does not exceed certain limits;
- Support under part VI of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999;
- The 'Guaranteed Element' of Pension Credit.

Where a parent does not receive an eligible benefit, the Trust will nonetheless consider sympathetically requests for assistance, especially in the phasing of contributions, provided that all such phased contributions have been made by the time the trip or event takes place.