

The Good Shepherd Multi Academy Trust

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY



**The Good Shepherd
Multi Academy Trust**

Date of Adoption	Jan 2016
Reviewed	Apr 2019
Date of Next Review	Apr 2022

1 Values

Every member of the Trust family of schools will be valued and encouraged to fulfil their potential. In our Trust we believe:

- Everyone has something to offer
- Trust, honesty, empathy and social responsibility are the Christian values that frame our work
- We are here for the whole person, spiritually, morally, educationally and socially
- In working with transparency and openness

2 Principles

Being able to enjoy a wide-range of extra-curricular activities and trips help children within the Trust experience 'Life in all its fullness' and the position of the Trust is clear, that no child's education should be in anyway compromised by their family's financial means. Parents are encouraged to discuss their individual circumstances in confidence with the Headteacher.

This policy sets out our approach to charging and remissions. It has been informed by adherence to the law and by following statutory DfE guidance.

This policy does not apply to charges made and determined by external organisations offering activities and services on the school premises or a community/ sports club that hires the school hall to meet in etc.

This policy does not apply to any charges individual schools make for the hire of school facilities. For details of facilities hire charge and process etc. please see the relevant school website for information.

3 Definitions

Where this policy refers to:

- "parents" we mean any person with parental responsibility for a child.
- "charge", this is an amount of money that must be paid in order for a child to participate in an opportunity e.g. the cost of board and lodgings on a residential visit where the family are not on the prescribed benefits listed in Section 5.2.
- "voluntary contribution", this is an amount of money that the school would like families to contribute towards the cost of an opportunity in order to make it financially viable. There is no obligation to pay a voluntary contribution but without enough contributions, an activity might be cancelled entirely.
- "remission", this is an amount of money that the school will or might agree to provide to fund an opportunity for a child. Each school Local Governing Body (LGB) *will* make provision for all statutory remission requirements e.g. using the relevant Pupil Premium funding to pay for a residential experience for a child with a legal entitlement. LGB members *might*, if funding allows, agree to provide financial support to pupils who are not legally entitled to remission, but do so entirely at their discretion.

4 Admissions

No charge will be made for any aspect of the admissions process to this school.

5 In School Activities

No charge will be made for 'education' provided during normal school hours. 'Education' is defined as including all activities related to the National Curriculum and religious education as well as the materials, equipment and transport required to provide it. 'Normal school hours' are equivalent to the usual school day excluding lunchtime. Our schools determine their own start and end times and details can be found on their websites. A school session is equivalent to half a day i.e. either one morning session before lunch or one afternoon session afterwards.

Parents will be asked for voluntary contributions to help school fund the range of opportunities our schools offer, but no young person will be excluded from an activity on the basis of an inability or unwillingness to pay this contribution. The school's LGB reserves the right however, to cancel an activity in its entirety if insufficient voluntary contributions are received.

From time to time our schools may invite a non-school based organisation to deliver an activity during the school day. Such organisations may charge for the activity and this may be passed on to parents. Parents can choose not to pay such a charge and can instead ask the headteacher to agree to their child being absent/taught elsewhere in the school for that period. In many cases, however, parents will be asked for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the activity.

A charge will be made to cover the cost of ingredients or materials where parents have confirmed in advance that they wish to own the finished product.

5.1 Trips and Visits (non-residential)

No charge will be made for education provided outside of normal 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 this school or part of religious education.

Where the majority of time spent on a non-residential activity is *within* normal school hours, the charging regime will be as if it happens *fully within* school hours. The majority of time is defined as 50% or more. This will cover the majority of trips and visits.

Where the majority of the time spent on a non-residential activity is *outside* of normal school hours, the charging regime will be as if it happens *fully outside* school hours i.e. the activity becomes an 'Optional Extra' unless 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 religious education. The majority of time is defined, in this case, as more than 50%.

Travel time is included when considering the time spent on an activity only when it occurs during school time.

5.2 Residential Trips

A residential visit may be wholly chargeable if it is considered an Optional Extra. Please see Section 6 for more information about charging for Optional Extras.

If a residential visit is **not** an Optional Extra, **charges** will be made to the parents of pupils who wish to participate in residential activities for the cost of board and lodging with the exception of those in receipt of certain benefits. Details of appropriate benefits can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

In order to cover any other costs associated with a residential visit e.g. activity tuition, for which charges cannot be made, parents will be asked to make **a voluntary contribution**. No child will be denied the opportunity of attending a residential (when it is not an Optional Extra) if the parents do not wish to or cannot contribute voluntarily. Parents will be informed of this when they are asked for money. It is possible however, that unless sufficient voluntary contributions are received to cover the cost, the experience will not go ahead. The LGB reserves the right, to cancel an activity in its entirety if insufficient voluntary contributions are received.

Other charges will be made to cover associated costs only where the visit is an Optional Extra.

6 Optional Extras – After School Clubs and Related Activities

The LGB reserves the right to charge parents for activities deemed to be Optional Extras. Such activities will include, for example, an evening visit to a theatre which does not fit the definition of 'education' in Section 5.

Lunchtime and after school activity clubs do not operate during normal school hours and to cover the costs of offering such opportunities a charge **may be made** to the parents of pupils who wish to participate in them.

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

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- Non-teaching staff;
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically for this; and
- The cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

7 Music Tuition

No charge will be made for tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum or forms part of religious education.

A charge will be made for vocal and musical instrument tuition for either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size, where it does not fall into the category of teaching described above.

National charging guidance is followed and no charge will be made in respect of a pupil who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(l) of the Children Act 1989).

8 School Meals

Each school has a responsibility to provide a hot meal for all children attending it. The provision of these meals is outside the educational requirement and therefore the cost will be recharged to parents for those children opting to have a meal. The per-meal charge is set by each school depending on the costs associated with the provision. Further information on the price charged is available on individual school websites.

School meals for children in reception, year 1 and year 2 are available free of charge through the current government Universal Infant Free School Meal scheme. If this is changed or is scrapped then school meals for these children will be charged at the standard meal rate operating in the school.

9 School Milk Scheme

Up to one third of a pint of milk is available to all children free of charge, regardless of their family circumstances up to the age of 5. When a child has reached the age of 5 a school may choose to follow one of these options:

- A) Make a small charge per day for the provision of milk during the school day. Those children whose family is in receipt of one of the prescribed benefits listed in Section 5.2 will still receive free school milk.
- B) The school can choose to provide milk as part of the school meals provision.

10 Before and/or After School Care

Charges will be made for any childcare services offered to pupils before school, after school and during school holidays, with the level of fees and any remissions to be set and reviewed regularly by the LGB e.g. Breakfast Club and After School Club. For information about current childcare charges please see the school's website.

This section about childcare services does not apply to extra-curricular after school activities. Please see Section 6 to understand any charges we might make from time to time, such as for ingredients used in Cooking Club.

11 Damage to Property and Breakages

The school will attempt to recover some or all of the costs incurred repairing wilful or culpably negligent damage or breakage of school property or such damage or breakage

of property belonging to a third party where the school has been charged. The actual amount will be determined by the headteacher.

12 Calculating Charges

When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who can't. Support for cases of hardship will come through applicable funding such as pupil premium monies, specified voluntary contributions and fundraising.

Parents who would qualify for support are those in receipt of benefits as described in Section 5.2. The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to school and/or charges to parents.

13 Debt Recovery

It is the financial management policy of this Trust that all services provided by the school are paid for in advance and therefore it is expected that no debts will be accrued. In the unlikely event that debts are accrued, the LGB has a responsibility to take all reasonable measures to collect debts as part of its delegated management of public funds.

A debt will be written off only after all reasonable measures (commensurate with the size and nature of the debt) have been taken to recover it. Only debts below that allowed for in the annual funding letter issued by the Secretary of State may be written off. The recovery of any sums above this amount will be referred first to the Trust's Board of Directors and then to the Secretary of State for approval. If any debtor has a number of debts that together exceed the write-off limit then these will be treated as a total amount.

Unless a decision to write-off a debt is demonstrably a reasonable course of action authorisation is in place to initiate legal or other action to recover debts.

A formal record of any debts written off will be maintained and this will be retained in line with the Trust's Data Protection Policy and Document Retention Schedule.