Charging and Remissions Policy

Policy Owner	Chief Operating Officer
Review Frequency	

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1. Principle

The overriding principle of the Trustees of New College Durham Academies Trust (NCDAT) is to provide free education to all students attending one of the Trust's schools.

The Academy Trust cannot make any charges unless a Charging and Remissions Policy outlining details of any optional extras or board and lodging that they intend to charge for is in place. This policy aims to:

- Have a robust, clear processes in place for charging and remissions
- Clearly set out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will and will not be made
- Offer a range of activities and visits whilst minimizing financial barriers that may prevent some students from taking full advantage of these opportunities,

The Academy Trust Board of New College Durham Academies Trust recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of activities, including clubs, out of Academy trips, residential and experiences of other environments, can make towards students' all round educational experience and their personal and social development. (Throughout this policy the term "parents" means all those having parental responsibility for a child).

2. Background Information

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE)on charging for schools activities and the Education Act 1996, sections 449 to 462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England. The Academy Trust is required to comply with this Act through their funding agreements. It is also based on guidance from the DfE on statutory policies for schools and academy trusts. This policy complies with the Academy Trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

The following definitions will be used throughout this policy:

- Charge: a fee payable for specifically defined activities
- Remission: the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Academy Trust Board has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy. The monitoring of the implementation of this policy has been delegated to the Chief Operating Officer. The Chief Executive Officer/Head Teachers/Chief Operating Officer are responsible for ensuring that staff are familiar with the charging and remissions policy and that it is being applied consistently.

Staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently

- Notify the Head Teacher / Chief Operating Officer of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies.
- Attending appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation

Parents are expected to notify staff or the Head Teacher of any concerns regarding the charging and remissions policy.

4. Where charges cannot be made

The Academies will not charge for the following: -

- admission to the Academies;
- education provided during Academy hours, including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment;
- education provided outside Academy hours if it is part of the national curriculum or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the Academy, or part of religious education;
- instrumental or vocal tuition, for students learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the student's parent;
- entry for a prescribed public examination if the student has been prepared for it at the Academy;
- examination re-sit (s) if the student is being prepared for the re-sit (s) at the Academy;
- where there is a large number of candidates with results that are unsatisfactory in a specific subject, and Head Teacher supports the request, the Academy will pay for an appeal;
- transport costs during Academy hours, including transporting registered students to other premises where the Academy Trust has arranged for students to be educated, transport that enables a student to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school, or transport provided in connection with an educational visit.
- Education provided on a residential visit that takes place during school hours. Education provided on any visit that takes place outside of school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, a syllabus prescribed public examination that the students is being prepared for at the Academy. Or for supply teachers, covering the teachers who are absent from the Academy, accompanying students on a residential visit.

5. Where charges can be made

Charges will be made for the following:

- Education
    - Any materials, books, instruments or equipment where the child's parent wishes him or her to own them
    - Optional extras, (See option extras section below)

- Music and vocal tuition in limited circumstances (See Music and vocal tuition section below)
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities
- Examination re-sits if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school and the student fails, without good reason, to meet examination requirement for a syllabus

- Optional extras
  - The Academy Trust will charge for activities known as optional extras. In these cases, the Academy Trust may charge for providing materials, books, instrument or equipment. The following are option extras
    - Education provided outside of school time that is not part of the national curriculum, religious education or a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school.
    - Examinations entry fee(s) if the registered student has not been prepared for the examination (s) at the Academy
    - Transport (other than transport that is required to take the student to school or to other premises where the local authority or governing body has arranged for the student to be provided with education).
    - Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
    - Extended day services offered to pupils (such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions)

  When 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
    - The cost of buildings and accommodation
    - Non-teaching staff
    - Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra (including supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra)
    - The cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not be greater than the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating.

Any charge will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils who wish to take part in the activity but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. No charge will be made for supply teachers to cover those teachers who are absent from school accompanying students on a residential visit.

Parental agreement is necessary for the provision of an optional extra which is to be charged for.

- Music tuition

The Academy Trust may charge for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of pupils, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff giving the tuition.

- Charges cannot be made:
  - If the teaching is an essential part of the National Curriculum
  - If the teaching is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 instrumental and vocal tuition programme
  - For a pupil who is looked after by a local authority

- Residential visits

The Academy Trust can charge for board and lodging on residential visits, but the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

6. Voluntary Contributions

As an exception to the requirements set out in section 4 of this policy, the school is able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents to fund activities which would not otherwise be possible. Some activities for which the school may ask parents for voluntary contributions include:

- Academy trips (including transport) during Academy time where they are being used to enrich and support the curriculum, e.g. coursework/ controlled assessment.

There is no obligation for parents to make any contribution, and no child will be excluded from an activity if their parents are unwilling or unable to pay.

If the school is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit then it will be cancelled.

Nothing in legislation prevents an Academy from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. These may be requested for any activity, whether during or outside Academy hours, residential or non-residential. The following conditions will be applied for voluntary contributions:

- there will be no obligation to contribute;
- students will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have contributed;
- if any activity/visit cannot be funded without certain voluntary contributions and if these indicated contributions are no forthcoming the activity will be cancelled. This will be clear to parents/carers at the outset;
- Parents will not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory.

7. Activities we charge for

The Academy Trust will charge for the following activities: -

- School trips
- Sports Activities

In relation to the above activities' charges will be based on a full cost recovery method, including any transportation costs. For any regular activities the charges for each activity will be determined by the Chief Operating Officer and reviewed in June each year. Parents will be informed of the charges for the coming year, in July each year. Should a regular activity be introduced mid-way through the year, parents will be informed in advance of the activity commencing.

- Ingredients or Materials for Practical Subjects

Parents are encouraged to provide ingredients, materials, etc. needed for practical subjects such as Technology. The Academy Trust may charge for, at cost or less, or require the supply of, ingredients/materials, if parents have indicated, in advance, their wish to own the finished product.

- Academy Equipment, Books etc.

Parents will be expected to replace or pay for the cost of lost items of Academy property. Breakages and damage to Academy buildings, furniture or property must also be paid for by parents. Parents will be charged for damage caused as a result of a student's inappropriate behaviour.

- Extra-curricular activities and clubs

Charges to cover the additional costs incurred by the Academy, beyond any element covered by public funding.

- Nurseries

The nurseries are able to charge additional costs as part of a free entitlement place – this includes but is not limited to School trips, lunch meals and snacks and nappies and wipes. Where charges are made, parents are expected to pay for these, however payments are voluntary. Where parents are not wiling to provide costs for the above they will be permitted to provide their own supplies to the nursery. The nursery may also consider waiving or reducing costs of meals or snacks particularly for disadvantaged parents.

8. Remissions

In some circumstances, the Academy Trust may not charge for items or activities set out in paragraph 5 & 7 of this policy. This will be at the discretion of the Head Teacher based on the activity in question.

- Remissions for residential visits

When informing parents about forthcoming residential visits, the Academies will make it clear that parents who are in receipt of certain benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging. Universal Credit is currently replacing Housing Benefit, Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance and Income related Employment and Support Allowance. Therefore in time these benefits will be replaced by Universal Credit. Until such time that the transition is complete the Academy Trust will remit charges if parents are in receipt of the following:

- Income Support;
- Income based Jobseekers' Allowance;
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance

- Support under Part VI of the immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit;
- Child Tax Credit (provided to entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more that ££19,995);
- Working Tax Credit run-on paid 4 after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit;
- Universal Credit if applied on or after 1st April 2018 and household income must be less than £16,000 per year.