



Charging and Remissions Policy

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Version History

December 2020, version 1	
January 2022	No changes made
January 2023	Legislation and regulation updated
January 2024	Legislation and regulation updated
January 2025	Legislation and regulation updated Added 'Damaged or lost items'

Purpose

This is a statutory policy which sets out Northern School Trusts obligations in relation to charging and remissions.

It details the type of activity our schools can charge for. It explains when and how the charges will be applied and who might qualify for help with the cost. The policy also details any exemptions which can be applied to the charges.

Introduction

Northern Schools Trust recognises the valuable contribution that a wide range of activities, including clubs, trips, and residential experiences, can make towards students' personal and social education.

Northern Schools Trust aims to promote and provide activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the students and as additional optional activities.

While wishing to promote and provide as broad a range of activities as possible for the benefit of all students, Northern Schools Trust reserves the right to make a charge for certain activities organised by the schools from time to time.

Scope

This policy applies to schools and should be also be read by parents/carers.

Legislation and regulation

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Academies Act 2010
- Children Act 1989
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'
- ESFA (2024) 'Academy trust handbook 2024'.
- DfE (2024) 'Academy trust governance guide'
- DfE (2024) 'What academies and further education colleges must or should publish online'
- Education Act 1996
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010
- The Trust's Funding Agreement

Charging

Optional Extras

Optional extras can include:

- education provided outside of school time not part of the curriculum, part of religious education or in preparation for a public examination a student is being prepared for by the school;
- examination entry fees if the subject is not offered at the school;
- transport that is not taking a student to the school;

- board and lodging on a residential visit; extended day services such as breakfast and after school clubs.

The school endeavours to provide a range of activities which are held outside the compulsory curriculum.

Parents/carers will be notified in advance of any such activities and their estimated cost.

Parent/carer consent will be obtained for a child's participation in any such activity for which a charge is made.

Any charge will depend upon the type of activity, its cost and the number of participants.

This charge will not exceed the total cost of providing the activity.

Where such an activity is provided to fulfil any requirements specified by a public examination syllabus, or to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or to Religious Education, then it is not regarded as an 'optional extra' and only board and lodging charges will be made.

Charging for residential activities

If the activity is during school hours, charges will be made for the board and lodging element of such activities.

Parents/carers will be notified in advance of any such activities and their estimated cost and parent/carer consent will be obtained for a child's participation in any such activity for which a charge is made. Charges will be calculated by reference to the total cost of providing the trip for each student.

All such charges will be made in line with government guidelines and will take into account the circumstances of parents.

The school reserves the right to cancel trips if they become economically unviable.

Adequate notice will be given to notify parents of such decisions.

Materials, equipment and ingredients

Northern Schools Trust reserves the right to ask for a contribution towards the cost of materials, equipment and ingredients relating to activities taking place in school hours, for example during design and food technology lessons for students. This will be at the discretion of the school.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to cover the cost of purchase or hire of instruments, materials, equipment or clothing for activities which take place outside school hours and which are purely voluntary and optional. (It remains the parent/carer's responsibility to supply school uniform including PE Kit).

Examination Fees

No charge will be made for the first attempt at a prescribed public examination for which the student has been prepared by the school. If a student fails without reasonable cause to complete the examination requirements of any second attempt of a public examination for which the school has paid the entry fee, the fee involved will be recovered from the student's

parents/carers. Where this is the case, in exceptional circumstances, such as the illness of the student, the fee payable by parents/carers may be remitted by the school.

Where a student and their parents/carers wish to enter a public examination for a subject/course not delivered by the school, a charge for the cost of entering the student for the examination may be made if previously agreed by the parent/carer.

The school will review which students did not reach their potential grade and decide which students should be re-entered for exams. This will be paid for by the school.

Parents/carers can request to pay for a re-sit if the school has not already recommended for this to take place. In this circumstance, and where the school has not prepared the student for the examination, the school will have the right to charge for the exam entry fee.

Music Tuition

The school can charge for individual tuition in the playing of a musical instrument, including vocal tuition, 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, the student is defined as looked after, or previously looked after.

Any such tuition must be delivered at the request of the parents/carers. The costs of music tuition will not exceed the cost of providing it, including, amongst other things, the cost of providing a music teacher.

Community Users

The school may arrange to let its premises and facilities to members of the local community, other organisations with the Local Authority, businesses, charities and sports clubs.

General

Northern Schools Trust may from time to time amend the categories of activity for which a charge may be made, within the confines of the legislation.

Nothing in this policy statement precludes Northern Schools Trust from inviting parents/carers to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of providing education for students.

Damaged or lost items

The trust may charge for the cost of replacing items that are damaged or lost due to the negligence or poor behaviour of pupils or their parents. Parents will only be charged the replacement cost to purchase the same or equivalent item. The trust will consider waiving costs in exceptional circumstances, e.g. financial hardship.

Remissions

Parents/carers providing proof of being in receipt of one of the following may be given remission support for chargeable activities:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's 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 that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's annual gross income does not exceed £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (this is paid for 4 weeks after an individual stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- 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)

Chargeable activities include:

- The cost of board and lodging on residential visits which are covered by the following criteria:
 - where the purpose is to fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus for a prescribed public examination
 - where the purpose is to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum imposed by Section 88 of the Education Act 2002
- A proportion of the costs associated with individual tuition of the playing of a musical instrument, whether in or out of academy hours.

No charge may be made for individual music tuition provided in school hours in respect of a student who is looked after by the local authority (within the meaning of section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

Income generation

In line with the ESFA's ATH, the trust will set fees for chargeable services at full cost, and reserves the right to apply an additional rate of return when in a commercial environment.

Responsibilities

The following responsibilities apply in relation to this policy:

- Board of Trustees – has overall responsibility of the application for this policy
- Chief Executive – had responsibility for approval of this policy
- Chief Financial Officer – has the responsibility to ensure the policy is legally compliant and tailored to Northern Schools Trusts circumstances
- Principals – have responsibility to ensure the policy is applied correctly in their school
- Teachers – have responsibility to understand the policy and explain its application to parents/carers as appropriate.