



# CHARGES AND REMISSIONS POLICY

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Reviewed by the SLT MAT Board

“The Trustees of the Southport Learning Trust are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at every opportunity and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment”

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## **1 Introduction**

The Southport Learning Trust Board recognises that, in general, the provision of education is free but as permitted by the Education Act 1996, some charges are permissible. This policy sets out where charges may be applied at schools within the Trust and each school will display it on their website..

The Trust Board recognises that the Act prohibits charges for school activities which take place within school hours and/or are part of the school curriculum. This Policy reinforces that principle, whilst setting out those school activities for which a charge may be made or a voluntary contribution requested, and those circumstances in which charges may be remitted.

## **2 Where no charging applies**

This policy provides that no charge will be made for:

- an admission application
- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any necessary materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- education provided outside school hours if it forms part of the Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at a school in the Trust.
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school; and
- examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school. However, if a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the fee can be recovered from the pupil's parents.

## **3 Where charges may be applied**

Unless specifically identified and exempted in the section above, charges may be applied to:

- Trips, visits, residential and off site activities
- Exam Fees
- Musical Instrument Tuition
- Sales to pupils
- Loss or damage to school property
- Transport
- Lettings
- Other charges

### **3.1 Trips, visits, residential and off-site activities**

Voluntary contributions may be requested to enable the school to run extra activities, including visits, which are educationally desirable. The School will make it clear in its communication to parents that these contributions are voluntary, and that no pupil will be treated differently according to whether or not the parent/carers has contributed.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will cover only the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupil wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the charge in full.

Where a charge for an external activity is made, the charge will be set to cover the cost of transport/ travel, residential fees, entrance fees, insurance, materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the activity and other incidental expenses incurred. The charge will be sufficient to cover the cost whether the activity is part of other curriculum or not.

A pupil's participation in the activity is dependent on the agreement of their parent/carers to meet the cost of the activity, and this agreement will be a pre-requisite to the pupil's inclusion.

Any remission of charges for individual pupils would be met by the school. Participation in any optional extra activity is on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made. If insufficient support is received from parents to cover the cost of the activity, it may be cancelled.

### **3.2 Exam fees**

- 3.2.1 No charge will be made for a pupil's first entry to a prescribed public examination for which the pupil has been prepared at the school, whether during or outside school hours.
- 3.2.2 A charge will, however, be made for:
- Re-sit examinations, unless entered at the request of the school.
  - Re-marks and clerical checks requested by pupils;
  - Requests for scripts;
  - An examination for which the pupil has not been prepared by the school;
  - Where the pupil fails without good reason (in the judgement of the Governing Body) to meet the requirement of any public examination, e.g. by non-attendance, and where the school originally paid the entry fee;
- 3.2.3 The charge will comprise the fee levied by the examinations Board, plus an administration fee to be retained by the academy.
- 3.2.4 Where a pupil insists on being entered to a specific exam against the school's advice, then the whole cost of the exam entry will be charged to the pupil. All discussions in respect of this will include the parents or carers of the pupil. Parents / carers will be invoiced for the full cost of the exam entry plus an administration charge.

### **3.3 Musical Instrument Tuition**

A charge will be made for teaching a pupil to play a musical instrument either individually or in a group.

The charge will include the cost or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument. Charges will not be made for class musical tuition during school hours or out of school hours where it forms part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or is required as part of the national curriculum.

Where a charge is made for musical instrument tuition, the parent/carer will be requested to pay in advance by the school and the 'contract' underlying that activity will be between the school and the parent. The parent must provide advance written notice of one term to withdraw their child from musical instrument tuition.

### **3.4 Sales to pupils**

- 3.4.1 The school holds a small stock of extra exercise books and stationery equipment that is available to pupils to purchase. No surplus is gained in the sale of these items.
- 3.4.2 The school also permits the sale of any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes her to own them. This includes resources bought specifically for an individual Art or Design piece of work.

### **3.5 Loss or Damage to School Property**

Loss of, damage to, or breakage of school property, e.g. books, windows, furniture, scientific equipment etc. will be charged for if caused by negligence or deliberate act. The charge will be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide.

Similarly a charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of property belonging to a third party, where the cost has been recharged to the School.

### **3.6 Transport**

Parents/carers may be required to meet the cost of transport from home to an activity sanctioned but not provided by the School e.g. travel to Work Experience.

### **3.7 Lettings**

The school permits the use of the school facilities to external groups and organisations in accordance with its Lettings Policy.

### **3.8 Charges for other services**

3.8.1 Where the school permits its staff to work at other establishments and there is a cost to the school for the provision of this service, then the school will invoice for the full cost incurred. This will include where teachers, leaders or other professionals are requested to advise or provide other services to other educational establishments, government bodies or private companies. The charge will include all reasonable costs including travel, subsistence, accommodation and cover. A reasonable charge can be made for the cost of administration. Where the service provided is outside of the public sector then an additional charge can be added.

3.8.2 The school may levy a charge for miscellaneous services up to the cost of providing such services, e.g. for providing a copy of an Ofsted Report.

## **4 Voluntary Contributions**

Parents/carers are invited to make financial contributions to the school to fund building or capital works. This is on a purely voluntary basis. Where a voluntary contribution is made, the donation will be recorded and acknowledged appropriately.

## **5 Remission of Charges**

The school recognises that home circumstances may be difficult and not all family situations may be able to afford the cost of some events and activities. Parents/carers may apply to the school for remission of charges in whole or part towards the charges for activities. To qualify for help, parents/carers must contact the Headteacher in the first instance. If requested, parents/carers may be required to provide proof of their income or benefit. Parents/carers in receipt of one of the recognised state benefits may be considered for a remission of charges. Each request is considered on its own merits and the final decision is made by the Headteacher.

## **6 Pupil Premium**

Each school receives pupil premium funding to ensure pupils eligible make good progress. Each school uses the money to fund trips, providing equipment, offering intervention support to help eligible pupils achieve their potential. Additional monies are allocated upon application by the parent/carer where financial support is required. Each application is reviewed on an individual basis and allocated accordingly.

All pupils listed as pupil premium are entitled to support from the funds received, however this is not allocated as a set amount per child. The money is distributed based on the needs of the individual pupil and the support that they need to achieve their potential.

## **7 Debts**

Whilst payment in advance is the preferred arrangement, there may be occasions where a debt may occur. In this instance, the school will make every effort to recover the debt. The following methods will be used for the collection of outstanding debts:

- Suspension from future activities / events until the debt is cleared.
- Verbal reminder to pupil.
- Note to pupil.

- Verbal or telephone conversation to parent / carer.
- Letter or electronic communication to parent / carer.
- Debt recovery agency
- Legal proceedings for recovery.

The Trust Business and Finance Director will decide on the most appropriate method and on any escalation necessary. The value of the debt will be considered in the decision to escalate. Only when all appropriate avenues have been exhausted shall the debts be considered for writing off. The writing off of any debt shall be the recommendation of the Trust Business and Finance Director and reported to the MAT Board for approval. If the debt is greater than the value set out in the Funding Agreement, prior approval of the ESFA is required before being written off.

## **THE LAW & GUIDANCE**

Education Act 1996: sections 449 - 462

[DFE Charging for School Activities \(October 2014\)](#)