

Charges and Remissions Policy

The Rivers C of E Academy Trust

Committee:	Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee
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Associated documentation:

Finance Policy and related documents

This document sets out the regulations for the MAT and member academies

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Introduction

The Rivers C of E Academy Trust (the Trust) is required by law to adopt a policy on charging and remission arrangements for each school's activities. The Trust wishes to provide for all pupils the best possible educational opportunities available within the funds allocated by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. The law states very clearly that education during normal academy hours is to be free of any compulsory charge to parents/carers, and the Trust is committed to upholding these legal requirements. However, educationally valuable activities have been and will continue to be dependent on financial contributions in whole or in part from parents/carers. The Trust's concern is to keep financial contributions to a reasonable minimum, and to ensure as far as possible that all pupils can take part, irrespective of their circumstances. The law recognises that charges may be made to parents/carers in certain defined circumstances - provided that each school has identified the activities for which charges will be made and has explained the basis on which charges may be reduced or waived for certain pupils. The agreed policy is below.

1 Admissions

- 1.1 There is no charge for admissions.

2 School meals

- 2.1 There is no charge for children who are entitled to free school meals or universal infant free school meals. Pupils who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged as per the prices communicated to parents by the school and/or caterer.

3 Public examinations

- 3.1 There is no charge for examinations that are part of the curriculum, where children have been prepared for the examinations by the school.

4 Activities that take place during school hours

- 4.1 There is no charge for activities during school hours except for music tuition (section 8).
- 4.2 The school may ask for a voluntary contribution for transport and/or activities during school hours (section 12).
- 4.3 The school may charge for:
- books and materials that the parent wishes the child to keep (the cost will be made clear to the parents before charge)
 - optional extras (section 5)
 - music or vocal tuition (section 8).

5 Activities that take place outside of school hours (non-residential)

- 5.1 There is no charge for activities that take place outside of school hours when they are:
- part of the set curriculum, including sports matches against other schools
 - part of the syllabus for a public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the school
 - part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education.

5.2 Optional extras

The school will charge for optional extras. Optional extras are:

- 5.2.1 education provided outside of school time that is not:
- a) part of the National Curriculum
 - b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
 - c) part of religious education
 - d) for pupils under the age of school admission, hours that pupils attend the setting where these are not government funded.
- 5.2.2 transport that is not taking the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education.
- 5.2.3 Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.
- 5.2.4 Extended and community services such as after school clubs, wrap around and holiday care, providing breakfast, tea and snacks.

5.3 The cost of optional extras

The headteacher will decide when it is necessary to charge for optional activities, and the levels of charge will be set annually by the headteacher on the recommendation of the trustees. The charges, when determined, will be communicated in a timely manner via newsletter, letter, email or website and available on the school's online payment service.

- 5.4 Except for extended and community services, any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. In no circumstances will there be an element of subsidy required for any pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge (section 12).
- 5.5 Charges for extended and community services may exceed the direct cost of providing these services; any profits generated will be reinvested in the service or the school.
- 5.6 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
 - staff time
 - 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.
- 5.7 Participation in any optional extra activity will be based on parental choice and a willingness to pay the charges. The school will need to have the agreement of parents before organising the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

6 Activities that take place partly during school hours either on or off site

- 6.1 Where most of a non-residential activity takes place during school hours the charging of the activity will be the same as is outlined in section 4.
- 6.2 Travelling time is included in time spent on the activity.
- 6.3 In cases where most of a non-residential activity takes place during school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. So no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a visit.
- 6.4 In this case the charging of the activity will be the same as is outlined in section 5.

7 Residential activities

7.1 Our schools will not charge for:

- 7.1.1 education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours although a voluntary contribution may be sought, see section 12
- 7.1.2 education provided on any visit that takes place outside 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 the school, or part of religious education
- 7.1.3 supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit
- 7.1.4 Alternative Provision during school hours for pupils choosing not to go on the visit.
- 7.1.5 Travel charges however a voluntary contribution may sought, see section 12

7.2 Our school will charge for:

7.2.1 Board and lodging

When any visit has been organised by the school where there may be a cost for board and lodging, parents will be informed of this before the visit takes place. We will charge anything up to the full cost of board and lodging on residential visits, whether it is classified as taking place during school hours or not. The charge will not exceed the actual cost. Parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits may be exempt from paying this cost (see section 11 for more guidance on remissions).

7.2.2 Activities

The school may charge for residential activities that fall outside of school hours (see section 5).

8 Music tuition within school hours

- 8.1 The Trust follows government legislation that states that all education provided during school hours must be free; however, music lessons are an exception to this rule.
- 8.2 Charges will be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil(s), or the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme (Wider Opportunities).
- 8.3 The school may charge for teaching requested by parents and delivered by specialist tutors given to either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing. The cost of these lessons may depend on the size and duration of the class as well as the type of instrument.
- 8.4 The school will not charge if the music tuition is part of the National Curriculum or public examination syllabus being followed by the student. This includes instruments, music books and exam fees.

9 Extended services

- 9.1 The Trust is dedicated to providing a well-rounded and extensive education for our pupils which includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities (extended services). Extended services enable our school to provide:
 - 9.1.1 high-quality learning opportunities either side of the school day
 - 9.1.2 ways of intervening early when children are at risk of poor outcomes, e.g. by providing access to study support, parenting support or to more specialist services (such as health, social care or special educational needs services)
 - 9.1.3 ways of increasing pupil engagement
 - 9.1.4 ways of improving outcomes and narrowing gaps in outcomes between different groups of pupils.
 - 9.1.5 Wrap around care before and after school may be offered which provides breakfast before school and/or tea and snacks after school. This will be charged as per the published prices available from the school office or website, payable via the school's online payment service.

10 Damage to property and breakages

- 10.1 Except pupil and staff devices, where school property has been wilfully damaged by a pupil or

parent, the school may charge those responsible for some or all of the cost of repair or replacement.

- 10.2 For pupil and staff devices, a contribution to some or all of the cost of repair or replacement may be sought in the event of loss, malicious damage or accidental damage on more than one occasion, as stated in the Acceptable Use Agreement.
- 10.3 Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a pupil, and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible.
- 10.4 Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the Headteacher and dependent on the situation.

11 Remissions and concessions

- 11.1 The school will consider the remission of charges to parents or carers who receive the following support payments:
 - Universal Credit - your household earned annual income must be less than £7,400 after tax and not including any benefits
 - 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 guarantee element of Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than the limit for those entitled to receive Child Tax Credit only)
 - Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- 11.2 Children of families who receive these payments are also entitled to free school meals. Parents who are eligible for the remission of charges will be dealt with confidentially.
- 11.3 The Headteacher will authorise the remission of charges.
- 11.4 The school may choose to subsidise part or all the payment of some charges for certain activities and pupils, and this will be determined by the Headteacher.

12 Voluntary contributions

- 12.1 The Trust may ask for voluntary contributions to the school for general funds and/or to fund activities that will enrich our pupils' education.
- 12.2 In any case where an activity cannot be afforded without voluntary funding, this will be made clear to the parents by the school. If the activity is cancelled all monies paid will be returned to parents.
- 12.3 There is no obligation for a parent or carer to make any contribution and the school will in no way pressure parents to contribute.

13 Inability or unwillingness to pay

- 13.1 The Trust is committed to ensuring fair access and treatment of all pupils, and this means ensuring that no child is excluded from an activity because the parents or carers of that child are unwilling or unable to pay. If there is insufficient funding for an activity, then it will be cancelled.
- 13.2 The identity of the child or parents of the child who did not want to make the payment, or could not make the payment, will not be disclosed under any circumstances.