

AQUINAS Church of England Education Trust

"Life - Transforming - Learning"

Policy Title:	Charging and Remission Policy
Responsibility:	Chief Finance Officer
Review Body:	Board of Trustees
Date:	June 2019
Review:	June 2021

Introduction

The policy of the Aquinas Church of England Education Trust (the 'Trust') is to provide free education for all pupils attending its academies. This policy is implemented within the letter of the law, and also embracing the spirit of it. The Trust has, therefore, set up a charging and remissions policy for certain activities in its academies. It will be reviewed from time to time and will be no less generous than the LA's policy.

The Trust believes that its academies should give pupils as many varied learning experiences as possible and the Trust and its academies shall do their utmost to ensure that all pupils attending a Trust academy have the opportunity to benefit from such experiences.

Purpose

This policy aims to provide robust, clear processes for charging and remissions setting out the types of activity that can be charged and when the charges will be made. This policy is based on an advice from the Department of Education. And complies with the Trust's Funding Agreement and Articles of Association.

For the purpose of this policy, a Charge is defined as a fee payable for specifically defined activities and a Remission is defined as the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable.

Roles and Responsibilities

Trust Board – The Trust Board has overall responsibility for approving this policy; however, this has been delegated to the Trust's finance and audit committee. The Trust's Chief Financial Officer is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

Executive Headteacher and Headteacher – The Executive Headteacher and Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that staff are familiar with this policy and for its implementation.

Staff – Staff must apply this policy consistently.

Charges

Academies can Charge for:

- Education

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him or her to own them.
- Optional extras (see below)
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities
- Transport to work experience except where statemented pupils are entitled to transport.
- Optional Extras - We are able to charge for activities known as 'optional extras'. In these cases, the school can charge for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. The following are optional extras:
 - Education provided outside of school time that is not part of:
 - The national curriculum
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
 - Religious education
 - Examination entry fee(s) for prescribed exams where the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school and those for non-prescribed exams where preparation takes place outside school hours.
 - Examination re-scrutiny fees or wasted exams fees.
 - Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority/governing board has arranged for the pupil 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

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.

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

- Music tuition
 - The school can 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. Parents in receipt of certain benefits could be eligible for a reduction of fees.
 - Examination fees are paid by parents.
 - 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 - We can charge for board and lodging on residential visits, but the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

Remission of charges

Academies will not Charge for:

- Education
 - Admission applications
 - Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
 - Education provided outside school hours if it is part of:
 - The national curriculum
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
 - Religious education
 - Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent
 - Entry for a prescribed public examination if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school
 - Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school
- Transport
 - Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport
 - Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing board or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated

- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he or she has been prepared for that examination at the school
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit
- Residential Visits
 - Education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours
 - Education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of:
 - The national curriculum
 - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
 - Religious education
 - Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit

Parents who are in receipt of the following benefits are exempt from paying charges.

- Universal credit in prescribed circumstances (the government plans to prescribe these circumstances when universal credit is fully rolled out).
- Income support.
- Income-based jobseekers allowance (IBJSA).
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Child tax credit, provided that the family's income as assessed by HMRC does not exceed certain limits.
- The guarantee element of state pension credit.
- An income-related employment and support allowance.

Families eligible for benefits, and others the Executive Headteacher or Headteacher believes are experiencing financial hardship, are not expected or pressured to pay. In the latter case, the Executive Headteacher or Headteacher at each academy has the delegated responsibility to make such a decision and will keep such information confidential to the Trust and handle situations discreetly.

Voluntary Contributions

As an exception to the requirements set out above, academies are able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents to fund activities during school hours which would not otherwise be possible.

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.

In cases of family hardship, parents may apply, in confidence, to the headteacher of the relevant academy for exemption from such contributions.

There may be occasions when an organisation other than the relevant academy arranges an activity during school hours, and parents want their children to take part. Such organisations may charge parents for the services provided, so any parents who do not wish to pay so that their child can attend must seek permission for their child's absence.

Method of Payment

Where payment is to be made by a parent, the method and process for payment shall be determined by each academy and communicated to the parents. The Trust and the relevant academy reserves the right to:

- Have all payments for any activity paid in advance; failure to do so will result in the student being precluded from the activity.
- Request payment of all outstanding sums prior to permitting the pupil to participate in future activities.

In doing so each academy will follow its income management policy.

Monitoring and Review

The Chief Financial Officer monitors and reviews this policy.