



CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

January 2021

Introduction

The Academy of Woodlands believes that all pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents' financial means.

This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities while not adding additional unexpected burdens to the school budget.

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on charging for school activities and the Education Act 1996, sections 449-462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England. Academies are required to comply with this Act through their funding agreements.

Definitions

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

The policy identifies:

- **activities for which charges will not be made**
- **activities for which charges will be made**
- **activities for which charges may be waived (Remissions)**
- **activities for which voluntary contributions may be sought**
- **charges for nursery provision**

No charges will be made for:

- 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, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;
- Tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum;
- Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours;
- Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours
 - A. if it is part of the National Curriculum, or
 - B. part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school,
 - C. part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip;

Activities for which charges may be made:

a) Activities outside school hours

Non-residential activities (other than those listed in 1 above) which take place outside school hours but only if the majority of time spent on that activity takes place outside school hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours).

b) Residential activities

Board and lodging costs (but only those costs) of residential trips deemed to take place during school time.

However pupils whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (see remission policy below) may not be charged for board and lodging costs. Residential trips deemed to take place outside school time (other than for those activities listed in 1 above).

c) Music tuition

Music tuition for individuals, or groups of up to 8 pupils.

d) Public examination

- The Head Teacher has the delegated responsibility to decide whether pupils are entered into Any specific examinations.
- The Head Teacher has the authority to charge for examination entries in certain circumstances
- The Head Teacher is authorised to request payment for wasted examination fees

e) Loss and damage to school property

Parents of a pupil who damages or loses any item of school property or equipment, including, for example,

Musical instruments etc. are liable for the costs of repair or replacement. Whilst this formal statement is required to be made available to all parents, in reality, any problems are usually resolved very amicably.

It is the policy of The Academy of Woodlands that charges will (or may) be made as indicated below.

Parental agreement will be obtained before a charge is made.

Charges will not exceed the actual cost (per pupil) of provision

Activity or Item which will or may be charged for

Charges will/may be made for any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where a parent wishes their child to have ownership of them;

(E.g. A clay model – a charge to cover the cost of the clay)

Charges will/may be made for **music tuition** including cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument or singing, where the tuition is an optional extra for an individual pupil or groups of up to eight pupils

Charges will be made for the **board and lodging** component of residential trips. The charge is not exceeded by the actual cost

Loss and damage to school property, a charge made will be for the full cost of repair or replacement

Remissions

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the governing body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances. This remissions policy sets out the circumstances in which charges will be waived.

Families qualifying for remission or help with charges

Criteria or qualification for remission are given below.

Category A

Parents in receipt of:

- Universal credit in prescribed circumstances
- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008
-

Parents should make a request for remission of fees to the School Business Manager or Head Teacher who may request evidence to support the request if the child has not already been identified as being in receipt of FSM. All remission of fees will be dealt with in the strictest of confidence.

Additional considerations

The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible 6 weeks advance notice will be given for all trips (and their approximate cost) so that parents can plan ahead
- We have established a system for parents to pay in instalments
- When an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip
- We acknowledge that offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection
- Offer parents the facility to pay funds to be held 'On Account' to enable them to budget funds for use against future activities their child may wish to partake in

Residential Visits

When any trip is arranged parents will be notified of the policy for allocating places.

Is a residential trip in or out of school time?

If the number of school sessions on a residential trip is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the trip it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place in the evening).

Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A 'half day' means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

If the number of sessions outside of school time is 50% or more, the activity is deemed to have taken place outside of school time and is classified as an Optional Extra for which full charges may be made and no remissions are available.

A day or residential visit may be made up of a combination of both charges and voluntary contributions.

Voluntary Contributions

Separately from the matter of charging, in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to pupils, voluntary contributions may be sought to support an activity which incurs costs that cannot be recovered by charges. In this instance all requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that pupils of parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have.

The Law Says:

If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the parents will be notified of this from the outset.

No child will be excluded from an activity because parents are unable to pay.

If insufficient contributions are raised, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled.

If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay their child will be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

Combination of Charges and Voluntary Contributions

On occasions activities may comprise of elements which are 'charges' and elements which are 'Voluntary Contributions'. The Academy will advise the amount which relates to charges and the amount which relates to Voluntary Contributions.

Charging for Nursery Provision

The Academy of Woodlands will provide Nursery Places for children aged 2, 3 & 4 accessing their free entitlement of up to 15/30 hours per week in accordance with the 'Code of Practice for Local Authorities on Delivery of Free Early Years Provision for 2, 3 & 4 year olds'.

The school will make a charge for nursery provision under the following circumstances:

Parents wishing to access nursery sessions over and above their 15/30 hour free entitlement (regardless of where the free entitlement is used) may purchase additional sessions if there are surplus places within the nursery setting.

No refunds can be given for sessions paid for and not taken unless the Nursery is closed due to unforeseen circumstances.

Late Payment Charges

Invoices must be paid promptly, terms and conditions of payment will be clearly stated on the invoice. Also reserve the right to charge a late payment fee of £25 for invoices that are still outstanding after the 1st of the month. For every month that the invoice remains outstanding a further £25 charge will be added.

Session Overrun Charges

Collecting children late at the end of a nursery sessions causes major disruption to the running of the nursery; therefore a late collection fee of £10 for the first 15 minutes and a further £10 for every 15 minutes thereafter the end of the child's pre-booked nursery session will be charged for morning session only pupils. Children who attend for afternoon only sessions or full days will be taken to our after school provision if parents are late to collect and charged accordingly.

Withdrawal of a Nursery Place

There may be circumstances when the school needs to review a child's right to a place within the nursery. These instances include:

- a. where there is a pattern of regular non-attendance at nursery
- b. non-payment for a 'surplus' place
- c. pattern of late arrival / late collection of children

In these instances the academy will discuss the situation with the parents/guardians of the child involved and make a decision based on each individual circumstance. The review could lead to the loss of the child's session at the nursery.

There are no remissions for nursery places.

Policy: Reviewed January 2021

Next Review January 2022

Head Teacher:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Viney', written over a horizontal line.A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and strokes.

The Academy of Woodlands Chair of Gov's: