



Thinking Schools Academy Trust
“Transforming Life Chances”

Charging and Remissions Policy

This policy was adopted on	July 2023
This policy will be reviewed in	July 2024

Charging and Remissions Policy

TRUST AIMS

Achievement

- To enable all pupils to achieve high standards in all areas of the curriculum, recognising and nurturing individual talents.
- To ensure all pupils make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment.

Quality of Teaching

- To provide all pupils with teaching of high quality that has clear aims, uses effective methods and suitable resources and which is matched to their differing needs.
- To create a curriculum that is broad and balanced and engages, motivates and excites pupils and fosters a life-long love of learning.

Leadership and Management

- To involve parents/carers and the wider community in school life to ensure that all aspects of pupils' progress are fully inclusive, shared and supported.
- To plan realistically, making effective use of each school's resources in order to achieve the best possible learning outcomes for pupils, together with developing effective working relationships with all other agencies.

INTRODUCTION

The Thinking Schools Academy Trust recognise the value of providing a wide range of experiences, including trips, clubs and residential experiences to enrich and extend pupils' learning and to contribute to their personal development. The Leadership of each TSAT Academy aim to promote and provide such experiences for the pupils of the school, both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and as additional optional activities.

However, many of these activities have an associated cost and cannot be provided unless voluntary contributions are received or parents/carers are charged for the cost.

This policy will set out the circumstances in which charges will or will not be made for school activities and when charges may be waived in order to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to benefit from school visits, curricular and extra-curricular activities.

STATEMENT

The policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1996. Where 'parents/carers' is referred to this will include adults with a responsibility for the pupil.

We aim:

- To make school activities accessible to all pupils regardless of family income.
- To encourage and promote external activities which give added value to the curriculum.
- To provide a process which allows activities to take place at a minimum cost to parents/carers, pupils and the school.
- To respond to the wide variations in family income while not adding additional unexpected burdens to the school budget.

LEGISLATION – EDUCATIONAL DURING SCHOOL HOURS

The DfE in its guidance to School Governors states that “education provided during school hours must be free. The definition of “education” includes materials, equipment and transport provided in school hours by the school to carry pupils between the school and an activity.” It goes on to advise that “although schools cannot charge for school time activities, they still invite parents/carers and others to make voluntary contributions (in cash or in kind)”.

When additional costs are incurred by a TSAT Academy to enhance the curriculum opportunities for the pupils, parents/carers may be requested to make voluntary contributions. However, no pupil will be left out of an activity because his or her parents/carers cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind.

EDUCATION OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS

The DfE in its guidance to School Governors states that “parents/carers can only be charged for activities that happen outside school hours when these activities are not a necessary part of the national curriculum or religious education. No charge can be made for activities that are an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination. Charges may be made for other activities that happen outside school hours if parents/carers agree to pay. The Education Reform Act 1996 described activities, which can be charged for as “optional extras”.

REMISSIONS

To ensure that access to activities reflects intentions, TSAT academies will implement the following Remissions Policy. The fundamental aim of this policy is to ensure that all pupils gain fully from everything that the school is able to offer them and is based on an understanding of the relationship between low income, entitlement and access. This policy takes into account the very real and persistent difficulties which people on low income have in meeting the costs of educational activities for their children.

Where parents/carers are in receipt of benefits meeting eligibility criteria for free school meals they will be exempt from the cost of board and lodgings for any residential activity that the school organised for the pupil if the activity is deemed to take place within school hours.

There may be cases of family hardship which make it difficult for pupils to take part in other particular activities for which a charge is made. When arranging a chargeable activity the Leadership of the academy will invite parents/carers to apply in confidence for the remission of charges in part or in full. Authorisation of remission will be made by the Head Teacher/Principal.

DATA PROTECTION OF PUPILS AND FAMILIES

Teachers will ensure that these children are not publicly identified and stigmatised. This is particularly important as the fear of stigmatisation is often a key element in the non-take up of Free School Meals. This will be accomplished by developing methods of collecting voluntary charges or dinner money, which do not identify children who do not contribute. Termly contributions towards School Fund may be requested at the start of every term through the school newsletter.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Voluntary contributions may be requested to help with providing activities even though they may be part of the normal school day or part of the National Curriculum.

If voluntary contributions are requested for an activity it should be clearly understood that there is no obligation to contribute and that if the parents/carers are unable or unwilling to pay, the child will not be excluded from the activity.

If sufficient contributions are not received the activity may be cancelled.

CHARGES

The Leadership of each academy reserves the right to make a charge for the activities and items detailed below:

- Trips which are not part of the school curriculum or are outside the school day (ie weekend residential).
- After school and pre-school clubs.
- Music tuition if it is not required for the National Curriculum and is provided for an individual pupil or for groups of pupils.
- Damage to school property – the cost of replacing any item, such as a broken window or defaced, damaged or lost book, where this is a result of a pupil's behaviour.
- Visits to school by professionals eg authors, storytellers, musicians, dancers, artists etc.
- Damage to school books.
- Electronic devices where ownership is transferred to pupils/parents/carers
- Exam fees, where the pupil fails to attend any component of the examination (exceptions may be made for some unforeseen circumstances or medical grounds, although a doctor's note must be provided).
- Nursery fees, where not covered by nursery hours funding

INDIVIDUAL MUSIC TUITION

- Charges may be made to parents/carers for individual tuition in playing any musical instrument, even if such tuition takes place during school hours. Parents/carers agreement and a signed contract will be obtained before the tuition is provided.

INGREDIENTS OR MATERIALS FOR PRACTICAL SUBJECTS

- Parents/carers are sometimes encouraged to provide ingredients, materials etc. needed for practical subjects such as Technology.

LOST SCHOOL EQUIPMENT, BOOKS ETC.

- Parents/carers will be expected to replace or pay for the cost of lost items of school property.

BREAKAGES AND DAMAGE TO SCHOOL BUILDINGS, FURNITURE OR PROPERTY

- Parents/carers will be charged for damage caused as a result of a pupil's behaviour.

RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITY

- The DfE in its guidance to School Governors states that “for a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or essential to the education provided at the school, no charge may be made for either the education or the costs of the travel.
- However, charges will be made for board and lodging in these circumstances, except for pupils who are receiving any Income Support elements detailed on page 3.. The Head Teacher will tell all parents/carers of the right to claim free activities if they are in receipt of these benefits.” A voluntary contribution will be requested by the school for such activities.

(TSAT academies will follow the relevant legislation as contained in the Charging for school activities October 2014 document published by the DfE).

PHOTOCOPYING

- Any photocopying that is requested by parents/carers relating to their child, under the ‘Freedom of Information Act’, will be charged at ***10p per sheet and 20p for any colour printing.***

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

- Any device purchased where ownership will transfer to the pupil/ parent/ carer, giving the benefit of a personal device which can be used outside of school time.
- Charges will be made at cost, allowing for the device, servicing, and management while on the school site. Recovery of charges to be made via direct debit.

- Loan devices are available should pupils/ families not wish to join the electronic devices programme, which will only be available for use while on the school site.

PRIVATE FEES

- Any report or data that is requested on a child for the purpose of a third party private assessment requested by parents/carers (eg mid-year pupil progress report for solicitors, private psychologist reports or solicitor reports) will be charged at an agreed rate by the Head Teacher/Principal of the academy.. This rate will include a cost for staff time to sort and collate the relevant information (not less than £10 per hour) as well as photocopying charges (not less than 10p per sheet) and postage.

The Leadership of a TSAT academy may, from time to time, amend the categories of activity for which a charge may be made.

Nothing in this policy statement precludes the Leadership of a TSAT academy from inviting parents/carers to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of providing education for pupils.

THE IMPACT OF THIS POLICY

A positive impact is explicitly intended and very likely.