



# Charging and Remissions Policy

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Vale of Evesham School  
a specialist school for cognition and learning - making inclusion in the classroom

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## Statement of intent

Advance Trust is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of financial circumstances, and has established the following policy and procedures to ensure that no child is discriminated against by our offering of school trips, activities and educational extras.

In addition, we are committed to adhering to legal requirements regarding charging for school activities, and meeting all statutory guidance provided by the Department for Education (DfE).

We promise:

- Not to charge for education provided during school hours.
- To inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of relevant benefits of the support available to them when asking for contributions.

The Advance Trust Academies aim to provide for all the pupils the best possible educational opportunities within the resources of its Annual Budget.

There are, however, many highly valuable activities, which enhance the educational programme, that remain dependent on voluntary financial contributions in whole or in part from parents. Without some financial support, Advance Trust Academies would be quite unable to offer the very wide range of educational visits and activities that are such an important part of our offer to students. We are determined that any financial contributions are kept to a reasonable minimum and to ensure, wherever possible, that all pupils are able to take part irrespective of their circumstances.

In compliance with the law, charges may be made in certain defined circumstances. It is necessary for Advance Trust Academies to identify those activities for which charges will be made and explain the basis on which charges may be reduced or waived for certain pupils

## **1. Legal framework**

1.1. This policy will have consideration for, and be compliant with, the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Education Act 1996
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for School Activities'
- DfE (2019) 'Governance Handbook'
- 'Our Funding Agreement'

## **2. Charging for education**

2.1. We will not charge parents for:

- Admission applications.
- Education provided during school hours.
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of our curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the school, or part of religious education.
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, unless provided at the request of the pupil's parents.
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school.
- Examination re-sits, if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sits at the school.

We may charge parents for the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment, where they desire their child to own them
- Optional extras (see Section 3)
- Music and vocal tuition (see Section 7)
- Use of community facilities

## **3. Optional extras**

We may charge parents for the following optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
  - Part of our curriculum.
  - Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school.
  - Religious education.
- Examination entry fees where the pupil has not been prepared for the examinations at the school
- Transport, other than that arranged by the LA for the pupil to be provided with education
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit

- Extended day services offered to pupils e.g. breakfast club, after-school club, holiday clubs etc.

When calculating the cost of optional extras, the school will only take into account the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in relation to the optional extra
- The cost of buildings and accommodation
- The employment of non-teaching staff
- The cost of teaching staff (including teaching assistants) under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra
- The cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide vocal tuition or tuition in playing a musical instrument

The school will not charge in excess of the actual cost of providing the optional extra divided by the number of participating pupils. We will not charge a subsidy for any pupils wishing to participate but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge. If a proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, we will not charge for the cost of alternative provision for those not participating.

Participation in any optional activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Therefore, parental agreement is a pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra.

#### **4. Examination fees**

We may charge for examination fees if:

- The examination is on the prescribed list (which includes SATs, GCSEs and A levels), but the pupil was not prepared for it at the school.
- The examination is not on the prescribed list, but the school arranged for the pupil to take it.
- A pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the requirements of any public examination where the governing board or LA originally paid or agreed to pay the fee.

#### **5. Examination re-sits**

Where a pupil is entered for a second or subsequent attempt at an examination, we will pay the fee. Once pupils have left the school, re-sits must be taken at the school.

If a pupil or their parents consider it to be in the best interests of the pupil to request that an examination is re-marked, any fees involved must be covered by the pupil or their parents. If the awarding body changes the overall grade of the result, the school will not be charged by the awarding body and the parent/pupil will have their fees refunded.

#### **6. Voluntary contributions**

We may, from time-to-time, ask for voluntary contributions towards the benefit of the school or school activities. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, we will make this clear to parents at the outset. We will also make it clear that there is no obligation for parents to make a contribution, and notify parents whether assistance is available.

No child will be excluded from an activity simply because their parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal opportunity to take part in the activity. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity, and the school cannot fund it via another source, the activity will be cancelled.

We will strive to ensure that parents do not feel pressurised into making voluntary contributions.

## **7. Music tuition**

Music tuition is the only exception to the rule that all education provided during school hours must be free. The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 allow for charges to be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of any size – provided that the tuition is at the request of the pupil's parents.

The charges will not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff providing the tuition.

## **8. Transport**

We will not charge for:

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the LA has a statutory obligation to provide the transport.
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing board or LA has arranged for pupils to be educated.
- Transporting pupils to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for the examination at the school.
- Transport provided for an educational visit (although voluntary contributions may be requested – see Section 11 for School Minibuses)

## **9. Residential visits**

We will not charge for:

- 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 school curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on visits.

We may charge for board and lodging – but the charge will not exceed the actual cost.

Parents will be exempt from board and lodging costs if they can prove that they are in receipt of one or more of the following 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 guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided that they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit – if they apply on or after 1 April 2018, their household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive)

## 10. Education partly during school hours

If 50% or more of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours (including time spent travelling if the travel occurs during school hours), it is deemed to take place during school hours and no charge will be made.

If less than 50% of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours and we may charge for the activity; however, we will not charge if the activity is part of the school curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education. For example, an excursion might require pupils to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

**Residential visits:** If the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late 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.

**Example 1** Pupils are away from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 9 half days including 5 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place during school hours.

**Example 2** Pupils are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.

The remission of charges for board and lodging payments is the responsibility of the school. These costs will be borne by our contingency funds.

## 11. School Minibuses

Only the school's pupils, staff or parents may travel for a charge in a school's minibus.

The school holds permits for each minibus issued under Section 19 of the Transport Act 1985 by the LA, to enable a charge for transport to be made.

Charges may recover some or all of the costs of running the vehicle, including loss of value. But the service may not make a profit, either directly through the fares charged or incidentally as part of a profit-making activity, even if any profit would go into the school's other running costs or for charitable purposes. A charge is any payment made in cash or kind (for example a club subscription) by or on behalf of a person that gives him or her right to be carried.

## **12. Damaged or lost items**

The school may charge parents for the cost of replacing items broken, damaged or lost due to their child's behaviour according to severity on a scale of £1 to £120 (see Appendix 1). The terms of any request made to parents/carers will specify that the request is for a voluntary contribution and in no way represents a charge. In exceptional cases, the full cost of damages may be charged at the Headteacher's discretion. The level of these charges will be reviewed annually. Parents will not be taken to court for failure to pay such costs.

## **13. Remissions**

We have set aside 'budget' monies to enable families in financial difficulty to send their children on visits/activities. The funding is limited and there is no guarantee that all requests can be met. Assistance will be allocated on a needs basis, and if the full cost of the trip/activity cannot be met through assistance funding and voluntary contributions, the trip/activity will be cancelled.

Parents in receipt of any of the following benefits may request assistance with the costs of activities:

- 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 guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided that they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and they have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run on – paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit – if they apply on or after 1 April 2018, their household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive)

To request assistance, parents should contact the Head Teacher or School Business Manager in the first instance.

## **14. Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust Board.

## Appendix 1: Damages

<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>COST</b>
Small window	£15
Medium window	£25
Large window	£40
Door handle	£10
Door	£60
Computer screen	£35
Plug sockets (due to call-out fee)	£30
Plates/cups/bowls	£5
Child's Chair	£10
Tables	£20
Noticeboard	£25
Stationery	£1
Four slice toaster	£25
Kitchen units	£30
Bin	£10
Fluorescent Lightbulb	£10
Light Fitting (depending on type)	£120
Single Light Switch	£15
Double Light Switch	£20
Computer mouse	£5
First Aid Cool Pack	£5
Radiator	£100
Fire extinguisher	£15
Call-out charge for Electrical, Plumbing & Gas	£75
Sink/wash-hand basin	£100