

Charging Policy

Introduction

This policy has been formulated to comply with the Trust's Articles of Association and the Academy Trust Handbook.

In line with the Trust's Equal Opportunities and Special Educational Needs policies, we aim to give all students equal opportunities to take part in all aspects of school life, as far as is appropriate, practicable and compatible with giving regard to health and safety and the efficient education of other students.

This policy takes account of the Government's aim for children to have the support they need under Every Child Matters:

- to be healthy
- to stay safe
- to enjoy and achieve
- to make a positive contribution
- to achieve economic well-being

The policy will follow the five principles of the Children's Plan:

- to support parents and families
- to allow children to reach their full potential
- to enable children to enjoy their childhood whilst preparing for adult life
- to provide services in response to children and family needs
- to use preventative measures to help students avoid the possibility of failure

Foreword

Tithe Academy is comprised of Earlsmead Primary School, a mixed 4 to 11 year old primary school with specialist SEN unit and attached nursery (for 3 -4 year olds), and Rooks Heath School which is a mixed 11 to 18 multicultural comprehensive in the London Borough of Harrow. The policy is formulated by the Finance Manager in consultation with the CFO. The policy is monitored by the Audit and Risk Committee. The policy is subject to annual review by the Audit and Risk Committee and is subject to approval by the Trustees.

Objectives of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all Tithe Academy students have full and free access to a broad and balanced curriculum. It replaces any previous policy on Charging and was informed by DfE advice on charging for school activities, and Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 which sets out the law on charging for activities in maintained schools, and which all academies must comply with through their funding agreements. Furthermore, guidance is provided by the DfE “Charging for School Activities” updated in May 2018.

This policy complements the Trust policies on Equal Opportunities, Off Site Activities, Curriculum and Teaching and Learning. This charging policy has been formulated to sit within the Trust development plan and reflects the Government’s statutory policy.

General

Wherever charging is permitted, the charge will not exceed the actual cost of the provision of the activity. The calculation of all charges will be available to those with parental responsibility. In any case where charging is permitted (see below), the charge will not exceed the actual cost of the activity.

Activities Provided Free of Charge

- 1) All activities that are a necessary part of the school curriculum and provided during school hours* will be provided free of charge for students up to and including Year 11. This includes materials, equipment and any transport to take students to and from a timetabled activity;
- 2) Activities provided outside school hours if it is part of the curriculum, or a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school;
- 3) Instrumental or vocal tuition for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil’s parents;

- 4) All fees for approved examinations will be provided free of charge, at Rooks Heath School. One GCSE home language examination will also be provided free of charge. Any subsequent GCSE home language examination and all A-Level home language examinations will be chargeable. Students will be required to pay for re-sit entries except in exceptional circumstances or where the current legislation in force require Rooks Heath School to pay.

**"School hours" are defined as being those hours during which the school is in session, but excluding the breaks. Day visits and non-residential activities are deemed to take place during school hours if 50% or more of the time spent on the activity, including any connected travel, occurs during school hours.*

Activities where a charge may be applied

The Trust may charge for the following activities. Participation in any of these activities will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges.

- 1) Non educational trips;
- 2) Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent/carer wishes him/her to own them;
- 3) Curriculum resources - when curriculum departments make resources such as revision booklets available to students; charges may be made to cover net costs only. Income is collected via ParentPay;
- 4) Music Tuition - where the tuition does not form part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination (see section on music tuition for further details);
- 5) A student being entered for an examination against the professional advice of the school;
- 6) Re-marking an examination paper where the re-mark is requested by the parent or student but against the professional advice of the school;
- 7) Re-sits of prescribed public examinations against the professional advice of the school;
- 8) Optional extras provided outside of school hours* (or mainly outside school hours);
- 9) Board and lodging on residential educational trips. Residential educational visit is defined as being one which involves pupils spending one or more nights away from home. Such an activity is deemed to take place during school hours if the number of school sessions taken up by the

activity is 50% or more of the number of half days (12 hours) involved (in this connection a 'half day' is defined as any period of 12 hours ending at noon or midnight of any day);

- 10) Activities during the Trust school day that entail additional costs. Examples of such activities include visiting artists and theatre groups;
- 11) Only Rooks Heath students and staff may travel in the mini- buses when used for a school trip. Charges are applied and will only cover actual costs incurred, including depreciation. In special circumstances the Headteacher may agree to allow the transportation of students at other schools. In these circumstances, the Finance Manager must agree the charges with the school concerned beforehand.
- 12) Earlsmead Primary school charge students for after school clubs such as French, Philosophy and board games. Students are charged to cover the cost of resources;
- 13) Medical costs abroad - parents and carers will be held accountable for any additional medical fees incurred on an offsite activity that are not covered by the Trust insurance scheme.

Music Tuition

A charge will be made for individual and small group music tuition provided parental agreement is obtained before a pupil is given the tuition. The charge contributes towards the cost of the teacher. Parents/carers are asked to make a term's commitment in advance to tuition. Should a pupil decide not to attend tuition at any time during a term period, no reimbursement of fees will be given. Tuition will be cancelled if payment is not received in advance.

How Charges are applied

Voluntary Contributions

Minimum voluntary contributions may be sought from those with parental responsibility to enable extra activities to take place. In all cases where voluntary contributions are requested, parents will be told the amount in advance. No student will be omitted from an activity because the person with parental responsibility is unwilling or unable to pay. However, if an activity/event fails to raise sufficient voluntary contributions to cover costs, the activity/event will be cancelled.

Other Charges

Some optional items such as stationery and items to support the curriculum are available to purchase through the school.

A charge may be required for photocopying and/or printing above the allocated amount to students.

Those with parental responsibility will be asked to pay for any damage to any form of school property resulting from a student's misbehaviour or negligence.

Calculating Charges

When charges are made for any activity covered by this policy, they will be based upon costs incurred, divided by the total number of students participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who cannot. Any charge made in respect of individual pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating.

In calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- 1) any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- 2) the cost of accommodation;
- 3) teaching staff engaged to provide cover, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra or cover.

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the Trust and/or charges to those with parental responsibility.

For optional activities held outside of the school day voluntary contributions may be sought from those with parental responsibility. Alternatively, the department organising the activity has the option of using department funds to cover the costs.

Support with Charges

Wherever possible the Trust will include all students in such events, regardless of the contribution made, to ensure that financial hardship does not have a negative impact on student participation.

Those who may qualify for support are those who are entitled to a Free School Meal or where the School received Pupil Premium funding. Those with parental responsibility will be told of the right to remission of charges for board and lodging if their child is entitled to a Free School Meal. The cost must be borne from any contingency fund.

It should be noted that Looked after Children can usually have the cost of an educational activity paid for from funds received from the Local Authority.

Where a parent/carer does not receive an eligible benefit the school will consider requests for support from its Hardship Fund in exceptional circumstances. Requests for support should be put in writing to the Director of Business or Headteacher.

The Trust will consider requests for assistance in the phasing of contributions, provided that all such phased contributions have been made by the time the trip or event takes place.

Refunds

The following principles apply to refunds:

- When a trip or event is cancelled (as above), parental contributions will be refunded
- Refunds are not permitted once financial commitments are made
- All refunds must be authorised by the Finance Manager
- Payments made via ParentPay are refunded to the payee's card
- In cases where payments more than 12 months old or the payment card has expired, refunds are issued in the name of the payee.

Earlsmead Nursery

Nursery Childcare is available from 8.50am to 3.15pm (charges apply). The nursery is open term time only, and is closed for Inset days, bank holidays and school holidays.

Free Funded places

Children are entitled to a FREE Government place for 15 hours per week from the term after their third birthday. The funded sessions are available from 8.50am until 11.50am or 12.15pm until 3.15pm, Monday to Friday.

The free entitlement will be delivered consistently so that all children receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether they choose to pay for optional hours, services or consumables.

Free 30 hour funded places

The Government provides free 30 hour placements for families where both parents work and earn a minimum amount. To access this funding the parent/carer needs to apply before each term starts and a tax code needs to be obtained from HMRC. An eligibility code must be provided to the school office every 3 months by the parent in order for this entitlement to continue. It is the responsibility of HMRC to notify parents that they are required to re-apply for eligibility and the parent's responsibility to notify the Nursery of the new code.

If a child joins the nursery and a code has not been received or if the child is registered elsewhere, normal charges apply until funding can be accessed for the following term.

Relevant Dates

The latest cut-off dates for parents to apply by, to ensure funding is received is as follows:

31st August – for birthdays from 1st April to 31st August, funding begins in September.

31st December – for birthdays from 1st September to 31st December, funding begins in January.

31st March – for birthdays from 1st January to 31st March, funding begins in April.

Additional sessions

Children who receive the universal 15 hours funding but are not eligible for the 30 hours funding entitlement, can book and pay for afternoon sessions from 12.15pm-3.15pm, Monday to Friday, term time only. This is subject to availability.

Once booked, these sessions cannot be cancelled. One month's notice is required to cancel sessions. However additional sessions can be added if required with agreement of Headteacher. Charges will be raised half termly once sessions are confirmed and payment is via our ParentPay within 14 days. No cash is accepted at the school.

Payment of additional ad hoc sessions booked during the half term will be charged at the end of each week and payable within 14 days on ParentPay.

Lunch sessions

Government funding does not include the cost of meals, if a child stays for the whole day, a packed lunch will need to be provided.

Snacks

Nursery children currently receive a free portion of milk funded by the school during each session. Nursery children also receive a free funded portion of fruit.

Late Collection Charge

Parents/Carers are required to inform the school as early as possible if they are going to be late collecting their child. This is to ensure that sufficient staff cover can be arranged.

If a child is not collected before the standard finish time of a session, then the school reserves the right to charge a late collection fee of £5.00 per every 15 minutes.

Payment Terms

If we charge parents / carers for unfunded childcare fees, payment must be made within 14 days.

A reminder will be sent if payment is not received after this time period. Unfunded afternoon sessions will be stopped if payment is not received. If there are any issues with making payments, please speak to the Earlsmead school office.

Nursery Closure

The Nursery is closed for Inset days, bank holidays and school holidays. Should the Nursery be closed for reasons beyond our control, such as adverse weather conditions, parents/carers will still be charged for any pre-booked unfunded sessions as the Nursery will still need to cover staffing costs. Funded sessions will not have any additional charges for parents as the school can claim Local Authority funding for short term school closures.

Trips and activities

The Nursery may run a small number of trips and activities throughout the year. Due to additional costs to the school, parents will be asked for a voluntary donation towards the activity for additional resources or trip costs such as coaches and entrance fees. This donation should be made via ParentPay.

Termination or Cancellation

If a parent/carer wishes to remove a child or wishes to reduce the number of sessions attended, one month's notice of the change must be given in writing. Fees for unfunded places will be payable, until that date, whether the child attends the sessions or not.

Notice of increase in fees

If we need to increase prices, we will give notice of one month.

Summary Pricing Structure

Morning session 8.50am – 11.50am £7 per hour (£21 per day)

Afternoon session 12.15pm -3.15pm £7 per hour (£21 per day)

Monitoring and evaluation

The Audit and Risk Committee of the Local Governing Body will monitor the impact of this policy by receiving on an annual basis a financial report on those activities that resulted in charges being levied, the subsidies awarded (anonymous) and the source of those subsidies.

The same group will be responsible for ensuring the annual review of this policy.