

Charging and Remissions Policy

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Context

This Charging and Remissions Policy sets out the conditions and method by which BMAT academies will apply charges for school activities and provides an explanation of when charges might be reduced or waived.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- BMAT Behaviour Policy

We are committed to the promotion of community cohesion in our Trust, local, national and global levels, comparing our Academy Trust community to its local and national context and implementing all necessary actions in relation to:

- ethnicity,
- religion or belief, and
- socio-economic background.

In accordance with the values of BMAT we pledge:

- to respect the equal human rights of all our pupils;
- to educate them about equality; and
- to respect the equal rights of our staff and other members of the Academy community.

We will assess and analyse our current Academy practices and implement all necessary resulting actions to ensure pupils are not discriminated against because of their:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity

These 'Protected characteristics' have been set out in law in the Equality Act 2010.

BMAT is committed to eliminating practices, which could result in unfair or less favourable treatment for persons with a protected characteristic.

Key definitions used in this policy

TERM	DEFINITION
The Trust	BMAT
The Board/Directors/ Trust Board	The Board of Directors of BMAT

BMAT School Abbreviations

BMA	Burnt Mill Academy
CS	Cooks Spinney Primary Academy and Nursery
ESJ	Epping St John's
FHS	Forest Hall School
FW	Freshwaters Primary Academy and Nursery
LP	Little Parndon Primary Academy
MC	Magna Carta Primary Academy
RDA	Royal Docks Academy
RY	Roydon Primary Academy
SFG	Sir Frederick Gibberd
STEM	BMAT STEM

Each BMAT school is legally defined as an Academy, regardless of whether the term 'school' is used to describe it in the policy.

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Introduction

At BMAT, we recognise the value of providing a wide range of experiences to enrich and extend pupils' learning and to contribute to their personal development.

We aim to have a clear process in place for charging and remissions, which sets out the types of activity that can be charged for, and when charges will be made.

Legislation & Guidance

This policy is in line with legislation and guidance from the Department of *Education on Charging for school activities (May 2018)* and sections 449-462 of the *Education Act 1996*.

Definitions

Charge: a fee payable for specifically defined activities

Remission: the cancellation of a charge which would usually be payable

Roles & Responsibilities

The Academy Trust

BMAT Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for approving the Charging and Remissions policy and can delegate this to a committee, the CEO or CFO.

BMAT also has overall responsibility for monitoring and implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the Charging and Remissions policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

Staff

Our staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the Charging and Remissions policy consistently
- Notifying the Headteacher of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies

Parents/Carers

Parents and carers are expected to notify staff or the Headteacher of any concerns or enquiries they have regarding the Charging and Remissions policy.

Where charges cannot be made

The school will not charge for:

- admission applications
- education provided during school hours
- education provided outside of school hours if it is part of the Curriculum, or syllabus for prescribed public examination being prepared for at school, or part of religious education
- books, materials, equipment and instruction in connection with the Curriculum or Religious Education taught at school, except where parents have indicated in advance their wish for their child to own the product
- music tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent
- school meals for pupils registered as eligible for Free School Meals
- swimming or sports coaching, although a voluntary contribution may be requested by the school towards the cost of transport to venues
- transport in relations to education, however voluntary contributions may be asked for in some cases

Where charges can be made

The school may charge for:

- educational materials, books, instruments or equipment where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them
- music tuition if provided at the request of parents, including any related examination entry fees
- community facilities
- wrap around care such as Breakfast and/or After School clubs
- board and lodging for residential visits, not exceeding the actual cost
- damage of loss of school property

Remissions

Parents wishing to have a remission of charges for any activity must apply to the Headteacher in writing prior to signing permission documents.

Where the activity takes place wholly or mainly during school hours, pupils whose parents are in receipt of the following support benefits, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, may also be entitled to the remission of charges:

- 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 Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're 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 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Voluntary Contributions

BMAT values the experiences that off site visits, and visitors to school provide to the pupils. The school try to include as many experiences as possible to broaden the pupils' learning. In order to overcome the financial difficulties that exist in doing so, the Headteacher may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

- Any activity which takes place during school hours
- School equipment
- School funds generally

The contribution will be genuinely voluntary, and the pupils of the parents who are unable or unwilling to contribute will not be discriminated against.

If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the Headteacher will make this clear to parents at the outset.

Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, and there is no way to make up the shortfall, (i.e., school funds, contribution from the PTA) then it will be cancelled, and all contributions returned.

There is no limit to the level of voluntary contributions which parents or others can make to school activities, nor is any restriction placed upon the use which can be made of such contributions.

The contribution can include an amount towards the cost of subsidising pupils from low-income families or the cost of travel for accompanying teachers. Where contributions are made in excess of the requested sums, a clear determination must be made to all parents about the disposal of surplus money.

Residential Visits

BMAT will charge for the cost of board and lodging during residential school trips. This cost will not exceed the actual cost of the provision.

Where the trip takes place wholly or mainly during school hours, pupils whose parents are in receipt of the certain benefits, in addition to having a free school lunch entitlement, may also be entitled to the remission of these charges. Please see the section on Remissions.

A similar entitlement applies where the trip takes place outside of school hours, but it is a necessary part of the Curriculum, forms part of the syllabus for a prescribed examination that the school is preparing the pupil to sit, or the syllabus is religious education. If the trip takes place outside school hours and does not form part of the above, the school can make a charge for transport.

Where more than 50% of the visit takes place during school hours, no charge will be made. If residential accommodation is involved, a charge will be made for that accommodation.

Application of 50% rule:

Where the 50% rule is applied to residential visits, calculations are based on “sessions”. Sessions are defined as from 0.00 to 12.00 and 12.00 to 24.00. If the number of sessions outside Academy hours exceeds the number of sessions inside Academy hours, charges can be made.

e.g. A visit taking place from a Friday (if it is a full school day) through to Sunday evening would involve two sessions in school hours and four out of school hours. Charges can therefore be made.

Education Partly During Academy Hours

Charges will be made for visits that occupy more than 50% of the time out of normal school hours. This includes travelling time.

Where more than 50% of the visit takes place during school hours, no charge will be made. If residential accommodation is involved, a charge will be made for that accommodation.

Music Tuition

A charge will be made for instrumental music tuition **unless** the tuition forms part of the syllabus for a prescribed examination that the school is preparing the child to sit, or is part of the Curriculum, or is the syllabus for religious education.

Public Examinations

No charge will be made for entering pupils for public examinations that are set out in regulations. However, an examination entry fee will be charged to parents if:

- The examination is on the set list, but the pupil was not prepared at the school

- The examination is not on the set list, but the school arranges for the pupils to take it
- A pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the requirements of any public examination where the school or LEA originally paid, or agreed to pay, the entry fee

Charges will not be made for any cost associated with preparing a pupil for an examination. However, charging is allowed for tuition and other costs if a pupil is prepared outside school hours for an examination that is not set in regulations.

Optional Extras

This kind of activity will be charged for where the activity takes place **outside** school hours. Such charges will not exceed the cost of providing the activity, divided equally between the pupils participating.

Prior written agreement will be obtained from the parents or carers of pupils involved in an optional activity for which a voluntary contribution can be charged. This can include:

- pupil's travel costs
- pupil's board and lodging
- materials, books and other equipment
- non-teaching staff costs
- entrance fees to museums, theatres etc.,
- insurance costs
- the cost of engaging a teacher, who is already employed by the Trust, on a contract for service, as distinct from a contract of employment, specifically for the activity.

Activities not organised by the Trust or Academy

When an organisation acting independently of the school arranges an activity to take place during school hours, and parents want their children to join the activity, such organisations may charge parents. Parents must then ask the school to agree to their children being absent, just as they would if they wanted to take the children out of school for a family holiday.

However, where an activity is organised by a third party, and is approved by the school, is educational or is supervised by someone authorised by the school, then it should be treated as if it were provided by the school. Such an activity, if it takes place outside the school premises is an 'approved educational activity'. In this situation a request for a voluntary contributions from the parents can be made.

Clothing

Although no charge will be made for school equipment for use in school hours, clothing is specifically excluded from the definition of equipment. Parents will therefore be asked to provide their children with such things a PE kit and sports kit.

Damage and Replacement

Compulsory charges will be made for damage to property or other financial losses resulting from a breach of the Behaviour Policy. This includes, but is not limited to, replacement of broken doors, windows or fittings, broken or damaged furniture and IT equipment, or defaced or damaged textbooks. The school is empowered to recover this loss and resultant costs as a civil debt.

Those unpaid charges which are legally recoverable will be recouped, together with resultant costs, as a civil debt.