Horizons Specialist Academy Trust

Charging and Remissions Policy

Policy Reviewed and Adopted by Resources and Audit & Risk Committee: 20 October 2026
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Responsible Officer: Chief Financial Officer

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Introduction

Horizons Specialist Academy Trust believes that all its pupils and students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra curricular) independent of their parents or carers financial means. The Trust recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including trips, clubs and residential experiences can make towards pupils and students education.

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on charging for school activities (May 2018) 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.

CHARGING POLICY

No charges will be made for:

- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum[1], or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent/guardian
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil or student has been prepared for it at the school; and
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school[2]

[1] It should be noted that 'part of the national curriculum' is not restricted to learning outside the classroom experiences that are specifically subject based (e.g. geography or science fieldwork) and include, for example, activities designed to fulfil requirements under the national curriculum 'inclusion statement' (e.g. developing teamwork skills).
[2]However, if a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the fee can be recovered from the pupil's parents/carers

Activities for which charges may be made are:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them;
- Optional extras (see page 3);
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see page 4)
- Community facilities[3]

[3] The powers to provide community facilities are under s.27(1) of the Education Act

- **<u>Optional Extras</u>**

The Trust may charge for activities known as 'optional extras'. In these cases, the Trust can charge for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. The following are optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not part of:
    - The national curriculum
    - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
    - Part of religious education

- Examination entry fees(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;

- Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority/Directors have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education);
- Board and lodging for a pupil or student on a residential visit
- Extended day services offered to pupils or students (such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions)

Where charges are made in respect of any of the above, the cost will be calculated based upon the actual costs incurred, e.g. the additional staffing costs incurred to run an after-school club divided equally by the participants or the board and lodging cost for a residential visit.

- **Residential activities & trips abroad**

  All charges in connection with residential trips including board, lodging, travel and incidental expenses (e.g. passport fees) will need to be met by parents or carers. Actual costs for providing the activity / trip will be divided equally by the number of pupils participating.

  Charges <u>will not</u> be made for the following:

- Education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours[4];

- Education provided on any visit that takes place 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 religious education;

- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

[4] If the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is equal 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). Regardless of 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 ending with noon or midnight on any day.

- **Practical subjects**

  A charge may be made for ingredients and materials needed for some practical subjects e.g. CDT and Food Technology, where parents or carers have indicated that they wish to receive the finished product. The charge will be the actual cost of the ingredients and materials provided for the finished products.

- **Damages / broken equipment**

  Horizons Specialist Academy Trust allows its academies to ask pupils or students and their parents or carers to contribute to the cost of replacement items where the damage or breakage was a direct result of misconduct on the pupil or students part. This in no way detracts from a member of staff's duty to brief pupils and students thoroughly or manage a calm and safe working environment. It is acknowledged that breakages can occur due to certain behaviours which are outside of a pupil or students control. Requests are normally limited to £10 or £20.

Voluntary contributions

Separately from the matter of charging, an individual academy within the Trust may invite voluntary contributions in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to pupils or students. When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils or students participating. There will be no levy on those who *can* pay to support those who are unwilling or unable, to pay.

- All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that pupils or students or parents or carers who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who do.
- If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the parents or carers will be notified of this from the outset.
- No child or young person will be excluded from an activity because parents or carers are unwilling or unable to pay. All children and young people will be given an equal chance to take part.
- If insufficient contributions are raised, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled.

REMISSIONS POLICY

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils and students, some activities and visits where charges can legally be made may be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents or carers in particular circumstances. The remission of charges will apply to those pupils and students whose parents or carers are in receipt of eligible benefits. The criteria for qualification for remission are currently as follows:

- 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 guarantee element of State 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; or
- 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).

Additional considerations

Horizons Specialist Academy Trust 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 adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible we shall inform parents and carers as early as possible when trips/activities need to be paid for so that they can plan ahead.
- Establish a system for parents and carers to pay in instalments.
- When an opportunity for a trip/activity arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip.
- We do not discriminate against pupils and students from families on lower incomes by offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis.
- The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the Trust and/or charges to parents or carers.