



Charging Policy

Date of Review: February 2022
To be Reviewed: September 2024

Policy on Charging for and Remissions for School Activities

1. Introduction

The Arden Forest C of E Multi Academy Trust (MAT) and Academies within the MAT believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents'/carers' financial means.

The Arden Forest C of E MAT policy on charging for activities aims to ensure that no child is excluded from an activity because of the inability or unwillingness to pay on the part of the parent/carer.

The Arden Forest C of E MAT states that no profit is made on any trips or residentials unless otherwise stated and best value is always sought to keep costs as low as possible.

The 1996 Education Act requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities, that is kept under regular review. The review date for this policy is recorded at the start of the document.

Education wholly or mainly within school hours (not including break times) will be provided free of charge. We do not charge for any activity undertaken related to the National Curriculum or to Religious Education, with the exception of individual or group music tuition.

2. Voluntary Contributions

Separately from the matter of charging, Academies within the MAT may seek voluntary contributions in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to pupils. All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that pupils of parents/carers who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently to those who have. If we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, we may cancel the trip. This will be made clear to parents/carers in the letter advising details of the activity.

If a parent/carer wishes their child to take part in a school trip or event but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, we do allow the child to participate fully in the trip or activity. Sometimes the school pays additional costs in order to support

the visit. Parents have a right to know how each trip is funded. The school provides this information on request.

The following is a list of additional activities organised by the school, which require voluntary contributions from parents. These activities are known as "optional extras". This list is not exhaustive:

- visits to museums;
- sporting activities which require transport expenses;
- outdoor adventure activities;
- visits to the theatre;
- school trips, and;
- musical events.

The law says:

If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the parents will be notified of this from the outset.

No child will be excluded from an activity because parents are unable to pay.

If insufficient contributions are raised, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled.

If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

3. School Meals

Currently meals for children in Key Stage 1 are free of charge as part of the Universal Infant Free School Meal initiative.

Parents can apply for free school meals if they meet one of the following criteria:

- Income Support Income-based Jobseekers Allowance;
- Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance; (Contribution-Based JSA AND ESA only qualify if receiving equal amount or lower of Income-Related JSA/ESA).
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit;
- Child Tax Credit, with an annual income assessed by HMRC of less than £16,190 and provided the parents are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit (if either parent are entitled to Working Tax Credit they do not qualify for free school meals regardless of income).
- Working Tax Credit run-on – [aid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax credit, and;
- Universal Credit.

To apply, parents can either call 01926 359189 or visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals and receive an instant decision regarding eligibility.

Regardless of whether a student is entitled to Free School Meals or not, the MAT/ individual Academy reserves the right to make a contribution to a student for a school trip etc. if the parents / carers are experiencing financial difficulties.

Where students are charged for a trip, an amount determined by the Local Governing Body of the individual academies within the MAT, which will be communicated to parents at the beginning of each academic year. Information regarding up-to-date costs of school meals can be found on the individual academy school website.

4. Residential Trips

Each Academy within the MAT will charge for board and lodging for those pupils involved in the residential trips, e.g. KS2 PGL (which is not compulsory, though children are encouraged to attend as part of the inclusion policy of the school). In addition, voluntary contributions will be requested to cover the cost of travel. Where available, sponsorship will be provided for children of families in special circumstances to enable them to take part in the activity. This is stated clearly on letters and is dealt with discretely and in confidence by the Headteacher/Head of School. Parents/carers will be given the option of a payment plan to spread the costs of the residential visit.

5. Music Tuition

Each Academy will charge for music tuition for individuals or groups which is not required as part of the National Curriculum but requested by parents/carers and delivered by specialist tutors within school hours. Charges will be determined by the Headteacher/Head of School and the appropriate local governing body or Resources Committee of the local governing body (where applicable). This may vary depending on the size of group, length of lesson and type of instrument. The charge is paid to the individual academy concerned. We give parents/carers information about additional music tuition at the beginning of the summer term ready for the start of the next academic year.

Materials/Ingredients for Practical Subjects

The cost of ingredients, materials, equipment, etc. needed for practical subjects such as food technology or design technology is budgeted for and borne by each Academy within the MAT. However, the individual Academy may charge for or require the supply of ingredients and materials if the product is to be owned and taken home by the child afterwards e.g. food products, models containing electrical equipment or batteries. The Academy will inform parents/carers prior to activities, giving them the choice to pay for materials or purchase their own materials for the activity.

Loss and Damage to Academy Property

Parents/carers of a pupil who wilfully damages or loses any item of school property or equipment including for example windows or computer software, are liable for the costs of repair or replacement. This formal statement has to be made available to parents/carers. In reality, any problems are usually resolved very amicably.

Activities not run by the Academy

When an organisation acting independently of any of the academies within the MAT, arranges an activity during school hours, such organisations may charge parents/carers should they wish their children to join the activity.

Remissions Policy

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the Arden Forest C of E MAT Trust Board have agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents/carers in particular circumstances. This remissions policy sets out the circumstances in which charges may be waived.

- Additional Considerations

The Arden Forest C of E MAT and Academies within the MAT recognise their responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits do not place unnecessary burden on parent/carer finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

Where possible a list of visits will be published by each Academy (and their approximate costs) at the beginning of each term so that parents/carers can plan ahead

We have established a system for parents to pay in instalments.

When an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip

We acknowledge that offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.