



North East
Learning Trust

Charging and remissions policy

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Introduction

The North East Learning Trust will provide free education for all pupils and students attending any one of its' Academies.

The Trust will not charge for the following:

- an admission application to any Academy within the Trust;
- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum¹, 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;
- tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as 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;
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil 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 school².

The Trust **may** charge for:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him to own them;
- optional extras (see below); and
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see page 4).

Optional extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as "optional extras". Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge **may** be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment. **Optional extras are:**

- education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - a) part of the National Curriculum;
 - b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school; or
 - c) part of religious education.

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.

- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- transport that is not required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority/governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education; and
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.

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

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- non-teaching staff;
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
- the cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

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. It must not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

Furthermore, in cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. Therefore, no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be based on parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a necessary pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Voluntary Contributions

The Academies within the Trust may ask parents/carers for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the Academy or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, this will be made clear at the outset. The Academy will also make it clear to parents/carers that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

The Trust nor any of its Academies will exclude a child from an activity simply because his or her parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay.

Our Academies when making requests for voluntary contributions to the school funds, will not make parents/carers feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. Our Academies will not send colour coded letters to parents/carers as a reminder to make payments into the school or maintenance funds. Direct debit or standing order mandates will not be sent to parents/carers when requesting for contributions.

Residential Visits

Our Academies 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 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; and
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Our Academies may charge for:

- board and lodging and the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

When an Academy informs parents/carers about a forthcoming visit, they will make it clear that parents/carers who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging:

- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, if Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190 (Financial Year 2013/14);
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit; and
- an income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.

Music Tuition

Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music lessons are an exception to this rule.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a regulation-making power which allowed the Department for Children, Schools and Families to specify circumstances where charging can be made for music tuition. The new Regulations, which came into force in September 2007, provide pupils with greater access to vocal and instrumental tuition.

Charges may be made for teaching either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size (if the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical

instrument or to sing. Charges will only be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil(s), or the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme (Wider Opportunities).

The Trust will not charge for music tuition for a child who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

Transport

Academies within the Trust will not charge for:

- transporting registered pupils to or from the Academy premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- transporting registered pupils to other premises where the Academy has arranged for pupils to be educated;
- transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the Academy; and
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit but may ask for a voluntary contribution.

Education partly during school hours

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, the Academy will use the following guidelines as a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. However, a charge will be made for the activity outside school hours if it is not part of the National Curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education.

Non-residential activities

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. 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.

Damage to property and breakages

Where Academy property has been wilfully damaged by a pupil/student or parent/carer the Trust may charge those responsible for some or all of the cost of repair or replacement. Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a pupil/student, and the Academy has been charged, the Academy may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible.

Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the Executive Principal and dependent on the situation.