

Charges and Remissions (Primary & Secondary) Policy 2024-25

Version 3

This policy applies only to New Collaborative Learning Trust Primary and Secondary Schools (including their 6th Forms).



Wingfield Academy



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A separate NCLT Policy, entitled Charges & Fees (Colleges) Policy, is provided for NCLT colleges.

In this document 'academy' has the same meaning as 'school', and 'Headteacher' has the same meaning as 'Principal'.

1.0 Purpose of Policy

- 1.1 We believe that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from Academy activities and visits (curricular and extracurricular) independent of their parents/carer's financial means, in line with our charitable objectives. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.
- 1.2 The policy clearly sets out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will be made.
- 1.3 It adheres to legal requirements regarding charging for school activities, and meeting all statutory guidance provided by the DfE (Department for Education) including the Trusts Funding Agreements and the Academy Trust Handbook.

2.0 Relationship to Other Policies

- 2.1 The policy compliments the Trusts Equality and Diversity Policy, Curriculum Policy, Financial Regulations Policy, Educational Trips and visits Policy, Complaints Procedures Policy and the Teaching for Learning Policy.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities of Headteacher, Other Staff and Trustees

- 3.1 The Headteacher, staff and trustees will ensure that the following applies:

- 3.1.1 No charges will be made for:

- Education provided during Academy hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment), although projects may ask for voluntary contributions e.g. Design & Technology / Art.
- Education provided outside Academy 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 Academy, or part of the Academy's basic curriculum for religious education.
- Tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum unless the tuition is provided as the request of the pupil's parent.
- Education provided on any trip that takes place during Academy hours. However, Trustees have agreed that Voluntary Contributions may be requested.
- Education provided on any trip that takes place outside Academy hours if it is part of the National Curriculum or part of the Academy's basic curriculum for religious education.
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from Academy accompanying pupils on a residential trip.
- Transport provided in connection with an educational trip. However, Trustees have agreed that Voluntary Contributions may be requested.
- Admission applications.
- Marking of statutory testing

- Transport to or from the school premises, where the local authority has statutory obligation to provide transport.

3.1.2 Activities for which charges may be made:

- Activities outside Academy hours (defined in 3.1.3) – Non-residential activities (other than those listed in 3.1.1 above), which take place outside Academy hours, but only if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside Academy hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during Academy hours).
- Residential activities – Board and lodging costs (but only those costs) of residential trips deemed to take place during Academy time. However, pupils whose parents/carers are in receipt of certain benefits (see point 7 below) may not be charged for board and lodging costs.
- Residential trips deemed to take place outside Academy time (other than for those activities listed in 3.1.1 above). When any trip is arranged parents/carers will be notified of the policy for allocating places.
- We may ask for Voluntary Contributions from parents towards the cost of some curriculum visits or projects to support the costs incurred by the Academy.
- Music tuition – for individuals or groups of any appropriate size provided by RMBC requested by the parent. Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff giving the tuition. No charge is made for pupils who are looked after by a local authority.
- Use of community facilities (see Lettings Policy)
- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parents/guardian wishes them to own them.
- Certain early years provision

3.1.3 A charge can only be made for the activity outside school hours. A charge will only be made for an 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 student is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education. 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. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. The following examples illustrate the method of calculation in determining whether an activity is/is not outside school hours:-

- *Outside School Hours* – Pupils are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.
- *During School Hours* – Students are away from 12.00 noon on Wednesday to 9.00pm on Sunday. This counts as nine half days including five school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place during school hours.

3.1.4 Any charge made in respect of individual students will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of students participating. It will not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other students wishing to participate in the activity whose parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

3.1.5 Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of 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.

3.1.6 No student will be excluded from an activity simply because his/her parents/carers are unwilling/unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the school cannot fund it from some other source then it will be cancelled.

3.1.7 Examination Fees and Resits

The school may charge for examination fees if:

- The examination is on the prescribed list (which includes SATs) but the pupil was not prepared for it at the school.
- The examination is not on the prescribed list, but the school arranged for the pupil to take it.
- A pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the requirements of any public examination where the school paid or agreed to pay the fee.
- At its discretion, a former pupil who studied for a particular examination at the school within the prior 12 months, wishes to re-sit that examination at the school.

If the school chooses to enter a current pupil for a second or subsequent examination attempt the school will pay the fee.

If a pupil requests a Review of Marking on one or more of their examination papers, any fees must be covered by the pupil or their parent/carer. If the awarding body changes the overall grade of the result, the school will not be charged by the awarding body and the parent or pupil will have the fees refunded. This does not remove the school's discretion, if the pupil agrees, to request a Review of Marking, at its expense, where:- the examination result is within three marks of the next grade boundary; and, the school considers there is a reasonable prospect a higher grade will be awarded.

School Meals (Primary and Secondary)

3.1.8 From KS2, pupils are required to pay for school meals, unless they are in receipt of Free School Meals.

- The cost for a meal is the amount agreed under the Service Level Agreement/Contract with the catering provider for a 'standard meal' (sometimes referred to as a Meal Deal), and the agreed tariff for other items.
- Payment must be made promptly online via the school's online system
- Balances over £20.00 credit (owing to the school) may incur an extra 10% service charge.
- If a parents' eligibility to free school meals changes this could result in a credit / debit balance. In these case's we will speak to the individual and arrange either a refund or a repayment plan.

4.0 Early Years Provision (Primarys Only)

- The parents/carers of children attending any nursery provision can pay for additional sessions.
- These are available depending on availability, enquiries should be made to the Head Teacher of the relevant school.
- Please refer to the schools websites for up-to-date charges.

5.0 Wrap around Care (Primarys Only)

Charges will be made for the following:

- Breakfast clubs, after-school childcare, after school clubs and sports clubs, wrap-around Care in Early Year Foundation Stage.
- Please refer to the schools websites for up-to-date charges.
- Please refer to the schools websites for payment arrangements.
- Late payments may be charged an extra 10% of the balance owed.

6.0 Families qualifying for remission or help with charges

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the Senior Leadership Team has 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 will be waived. Criteria for qualification for remission are given below:

Parents/carers in receipt of:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income no more than £16,190 as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC))
- Working Tax Credit (run-on) – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 pa

Additional categories of parents/carers may claim help with some costs in some circumstances, which will be decided by the Headteacher, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, taking into account as to whether additional help is justified. To request assistance, parents should contact the school.

7.0 Damaged or lost Items

The school may charge parents for the cost of replacing items broken, damaged or lost due to their child's behaviour.

8.0 School Trip Refunds

- All initial deposits for school trips will be non-refundable. Parents will be informed of this when they are provided with initial information about the trip.
- In the event that the school has to cancel a trip due to foreseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded.
- In the event that a school trip is cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the Head teacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The Head teacher will consult the Advisory Group on the matter, taking into account the cost to the school, including alternative provision cost.
- In the event that a school trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the Head teacher's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The Head teacher will discuss options with the Advisory Group, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.
- In the event that a pupil or their parents cancel the pupil's place on a trip, it is at the Head teacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The Head teacher will consult the Advisory Group on the matter, taking into account the reason for cancellation, whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip, and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.
- Where a pupil or their parents have previously cancelled a place on a trip and received a full refund, the school has the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future trips and visits.
- In the event that a pupil cannot attend a trip at the last minute, e.g. due to illness, it is at the Head teacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The Head teacher will consult the Advisory Group on the matter, taking into account whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

9.0 Additional Considerations

The Trustees 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 try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible we shall publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the Academy year 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.