

Bedford College Academies Trust

Charging and Remissions Policy

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Our Vision

“The BCAT vision is to support students to achieve their absolute best whatever their ability or background. We aim to:

1. Work collaboratively to deliver an inclusive and outstanding education to all students, thereby driving up local standards.
2. Maximise social mobility and life chances, through the highest expectations of and aspirations for all students.
3. Encourage and support a range of high performing and distinctive educational establishments for local communities.”

Our Values

Student focus - We will seek to achieve a high quality learning experience for every student

High performance - We will strive for consistently high levels of performance in all aspects of our work

Respect, openness and honesty - We will treat everyone with respect, encourage openness and honesty, and recognise each other’s contribution and achievements.

Introduction

Purpose and Background

Bedford College Academies Trust (BCAT) wishes to make a broad programme of activities, experiences and opportunities accessible to as many students as possible, regardless of background and means. This policy is intended to maintain a fair and coherent system of charges and remissions within the constraints of the Academy’s budget. It also defines other circumstances when the Academy may wish to ask for voluntary contributions, how these charges will be worked out and who might qualify for help with the costs.

The policy has been established with the framework of legislation, rules and guidance laid down by the Department for Education (DfE). Any legislation and binding DfE rules within that framework will always take precedence over this policy.

The most current guidance note from the DfE at the time of drafting this Academy policy is “Charging for School Activities – October 2014”. Since the Academy is bound by any legislation and rules within that

guidance this is not restated in this policy document, which focuses on those activities where the Academy may charge.

Charging

No student should have his/her access to the curriculum limited by charges. However, BCAT reserves the right to levy a charge in any circumstances permissible under statute as detailed in the following pages.

When charges are to be made the School/Academy reserves the absolute right to determine whether the activity has to be cancelled if an insufficient number of families are prepared to pay for the activity to take place.

Parents may apply to the School/Academy for special consideration regarding financial support.

SUMMARY

What Can and Cannot be Charged for

BCAT **will not** charge for:

- The admission to 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 Curriculum [1], or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school.
- 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 examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school.
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school [2].
- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport.
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local education authority 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 school.
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

BCAT **may** charge for:

- Materials and Equipment – any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wish to own them;
- Optional Extras;
- Music and Vocal Tuition, in limited circumstances;
- Board and Lodging.

Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents the Trust's Governing Body from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the School/Academy or any School/Academy activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the Governing Body or Principal / Head Teacher will make this clear to parents at the outset. The Governing Body or Principal / Headteacher will also make it clear to parents that there is **no obligation** to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child will be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, then it may be cancelled. The School/Academy will make sure that this is made clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. The School/Academy will make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

CHARGEABLE ACTIVITIES

Material and Equipment

Parents may be expected to provide materials, or be charged for materials where, the parents wish to own the end product, for example, ingredients and or materials for items produced during food technology, textiles, design technology and art classes. Also, should a parent wish to own the books or equipment, such as revision guides, text books and musical instruments, these items will be chargeable.

Optional Extras

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

Optional extras are:

- Education provided **outside of school** time that is **not** part of:
 - a) The National Curriculum.
 - b) A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school.
 - c) Religious education;
- Examination entry fees and re-sits if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination 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.
- 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.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It will not 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.

No charge will be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

The Governing Body agrees that the Academies within the Trust may make charges for providing “optional extras” as defined above, with participation in the related activity being dependent upon meeting the charge. The Academies may not derive any element of profit from such charges, but may levy an administration charge of 10% of cost.

An administration charge is appropriate for exam entries falling within the definition of “optional extras”, and a guide of £10 per block of entries per student seems reasonable.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges.

Music Tuition

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

BCAT may charge for teaching either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing. 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, may be charged.

Board and Lodging

Where a school activity requires pupils to spend nights away from home, the school may make a charge for board and lodging.

REMISSIONS

Criteria for Exceptions

No charge will be made for board and lodging in respect of students whose parents are receiving:

- Income Support;
- Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit;

Additionally any student entitled to Free School Meals will also be entitled to full remission of any charges for board and lodging.

The Governing Body may, from time to time, agree to remit charges for other 'chargeable activities' involving particular students. Authorisation for such decisions is delegated to the Principal/Headteacher. Details of any remission arrangements will be made clear when parents are informed of charges for individual activities.

[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.