



Making a Difference

Phoenix Park Academy



Charges, Voluntary Contributions, Remissions and Refunds Policy

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WELLSPRING
ACADEMY TRUST

Charges, Voluntary Contributions, Remissions & Refunds

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the academy ethos, enables consistency and quality across the academy and is related to the following legislation:

- Education Reform Act 1988
- Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) Regulations 1989
- Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991
- Education Act 1996
- Education (Academy Sessions, Charges and Permissions Policies) (Information) (England) Regulations 1999
- Education Act 2002
- Education (Residential Trips) (Prescribed Tax Credits) (England) Regulations 2003
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- School Information (England) Regulations 2008

We are aware that under the Education Reform Act 1988 and the Education Act 2002 that no charge can be made for education in academy hours and that every child has the right to receive free academy education.

We recognise that all activities offered during normal teaching time must be made available to all children regardless of their parents' ability or willingness to help meet the cost.

We recognise the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including clubs, educational visits and residential experiences, can make towards pupils personal and social education.

It is our intention to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and as additional activities.

Therefore, any activity which takes place mainly during academy hours or is an essential part of the curriculum will be provided free of charge.

We are aware that we are able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents when organising educational visits which will enrich the curriculum and the educational experiences of children. Under no circumstances will we pressurise parents when we make a request for voluntary contributions.

We will refund in full all contributions if an activity has had to be cancelled and if a child is absent due to illness.

We will inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of Universal Credit, Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, support under part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, Child Tax Credit, the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit of the support available to them when we ask for contributions towards the cost of academy visits.

We wish to work closely with the School Council and to hear their views and opinions as we acknowledge and support Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that children should be encouraged to form and to express their views.

We as an academy community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

Aim

- To outline what the academy can and cannot charge for.
- To outline the academy policy for voluntary contributions and remissions.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation connected to this policy.
- To work with other academies, Wellspring Trust and the local authority to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body has:

- delegated powers and responsibilities to the Executive Principal to ensure all academy personnel and visitors to the academy are aware of and comply with this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring that the academy complies with all equalities legislation
- responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly;
- responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents;
- the responsibility of involving the School Council in:
 - organising surveys to gauge the thoughts of all pupils;

- nominated a link governor (Finance Governor) to:
 - visit the academy regularly;
 - work closely with the Executive Principal and the coordinator;
 - ensure this policy and other linked policies are up to date;
 - ensure that everyone connected with the academy is aware of this policy;
 - attend training related to this policy;
 - report to the Governing Body every term;
 - annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.
- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy.

Role of the Executive Principal

The Executive Principal will:

- ensure all academy personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- work closely with the link governor and coordinator;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by speaking with pupils, academy personnel, parents and governors;
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

Conditions when charges cannot be made

Charges cannot be made for any books, materials, instruments, equipment or transport for use in connection with education if the education is:

- within academy hours;
- for the National Curriculum programme out-of-academy hours;
- part of a syllabus for an agreed examination for a pupil;
- for statutory religious education;
- for musical tuition as part of the National Curriculum;
- for education provided on any educational visit during the academy day;
- for education provided on any educational visit outside academy hours;
- for the cost of supply teachers substituting for absent teachers on residential visits with pupils;
- for the entry to public examination which is on the prescribed list;
- examination re-sits

Charges for transport cannot be made when:

- transporting pupils to or from the academy premises;
- transporting pupils to other premises where arrangements have been made for them to be educated;
- a pupil needs to sit an examination;
- an educational visit has been planned

Conditions when charges can and cannot be made

Parents must be fully aware that the academy:

- cannot charge for:
 - an admission application to any state funded academy;
 - education provided during academy hours;
 - the supply of materials, books, instruments or other equipment;
 - education provided outside academy hours if it is part of the national curriculum;
 - instrumental or vocal tuition if it is part of the national curriculum or 'is provided under the first access to the KS2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme';
 - entry for a prescribed public examination;
 - examination re-sit;
 - transport in connection with an educational visit;
 - transporting pupils to and from the academy premises when it is the statutory obligation of the local authority;
 - transporting pupils to other premises to be educated where the governing body or local authority has arranged this;
 - transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he/she has been prepared for that examination at the academy.

- can charge for:
 - any materials, books, instruments, or equipment if a child's parents wish him/her to own them;
 - damages to academy property caused by a student
 - vocal or instrumental tuition provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parents;
 - option extras such as:
 - education provided outside academy hours that is not:
 - part of the national curriculum;
 - part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination;
 - part of religious education.
 - examination fees if the pupil has not been prepared for the examination at the academy;

- residential board and lodging fees for an educational visit;
- after-academy clubs.

Support for Parents/Carers

The Governing Body will:

- support any parent/carers in paying for any activity for an individual pupil if they are experiencing financial difficulties;
- inform parents/carers that they will not be charged board and lodging fees for any residential visit if they can prove that they are on state benefits such as:
 - Universal Credit
 - Income Support
 - Income Based Jobseekers Allowance,
 - Support under part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - Child Tax Credit
 - The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- create an academy budget that will support parent/carers who are unable to pay voluntary contributions – this will be funded through fund raising activities at the academy

Voluntary Contributions

We are aware that we can ask for voluntary contributions from parents/carers that will benefit the academy or any academy activity.

We will inform parent/carers:

- if planned activities depend on voluntary contributions for part or all of the cost;
- that there is no obligation on them to make voluntary contributions;
- that an educational visit or activity will be cancelled if sufficient costs are not raised via voluntary contributions;
- that no pupil will be excluded from an educational visit or activity if a parent/carers is unwilling or unable to pay;

Remissions

We will remit any charge wholly or partly if any activity takes place:

- mostly within academy hours or;
- partly within and partly outside academy hours

Refunds

Refunds will be given if:

- a child is absent due to illness;
- an educational visit / academy event has been cancelled;
- contributions to an activity exceed the total cost, that is if the excess amount is over £1 per child

Role of Parents/Carers

Parents must be made fully aware what the academy can or cannot charge for.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- the academy Handbook/Prospectus
- the academy website
- the Staff Handbook
- meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
- academy events
- meetings with academy personnel
- communications with home such as weekly newsletters and end of half term newsletters
- reports such annual report to parents and Executive Principal reports to the Governing Body
- information displays in the main academy entrance

Training

All academy personnel:

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion
- receive training on this policy on induction which specifically covers:
 - Organising an educational visit / academy event
 - Budgeting and Financial Planning
 - Academy Fund
 - Equal opportunities
 - Inclusion
- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this academy.

Monitoring the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Policy

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the coordinator, the Executive Principal and the nominated governor.

A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement.