Charging and Remissions Policy

Reviewed September 2025

The Stour Academy Trust

Purpose

Legislation allows schools to charge for certain activities which take place outside normal classroom practice. The Stour Academy Trust's Policy applies to charges made to parents/students.

Under the terms of the Education Act 1996, the Board of Trustees of The Stour Academy Trust must have a policy on charging students to participate in school activities. By law, students may not be charged for taking part in activities that take place during the school day. Parents may be asked for voluntary contributions but if they are unable to 'contribute', their child should not be prevented from participating should the activity go ahead. In any request for voluntary payments it must be clear from the terms in which it is made that:

- There is no obligation to make any contribution and
- That pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have contributed towards the planned activity

Procedure

1. Admissions – no charge shall be made in respect of admission unless it is for the purpose of:

- part-time education for persons over compulsory school age
- full-time education for persons over compulsory school age

2. Provision of education – no charge shall be made in relation to the education of registered pupils where education is provided during school hours. Where education is provided outside of the normal school hours, no charge shall be made provided it is required as part of the curriculum. E.G. planetarium visit. The provision of swimming does not fall into this category and a contribution can be requested.

3. Musical Instrument tuition – The Stour Academy Trust will review on an annual basis whether or not to charge a contribution towards musical instrument tuition either individually or for a group of not more than four pupils where the lesson is not considered to be part of the National Curriculum or is not preparation for a public exam. Tuition will be provided free of charge and during the school day where it is considered to be an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus. Any private tuition on Academy premises will be at the expense of the parent.

4. Visits during the school day – A voluntary charge will be requested to cover the cost of educational visits and related costs. However, as detailed at the outset, charges cannot be enforced where this forms part of the curriculum. Where the level of non-payment renders a trip financially unviable consideration will be given to cancellation.

5. Residential visits – Where at least half of the time away from home is not normal school time or where the work undertaken is not an integral part of the examination course, the trip can be classified as optional. Any charge in respect of an optional extra requires parental agreement and willingness to meet the charges. Parents should be

made aware that the activity might be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received. If the visit is deemed to have taken place during the school day, or is part of the national curriculum then only the cost of board and lodging can be passed onto parents and this cannot exceed the actual cost.

6. Public examinations – No charge shall be made in respect of the entry of a registered pupil at the Academy.

7.Optional extra visits – Visits that take place beyond the school day or as part of an extra-curricular activity can be charged and parents are expected to meet the full cost of the trip.

8. Breakages – The financial cost relating to breakages/damage/fines are recoverable from parents and can be pursued as a civil debt. A charge will also apply for loss or damage to Academy property which is placed under the responsibility of the student and may be taken off the premises.

9. Dinner Money - The Stour Academy Trust operates a zero tolerance policy on non or late payment of school dinners as this is not a positive example of the good financial management that we are trying to teach our pupils through the curriculum. Parents are expected to pay for school meals in advance directly with the contactor. Should the school meals account fall into arrears in excess of two weeks meals, debt collection processes can commence together with the withdrawal of access to school meals. Parents will therefore be required to provide a packed lunch for their child(ren) until the debt is cleared unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances that have been shared in confidence, with the Head Teacher.

The financial cost relating to this provision are recoverable from parents and can be pursued as a civil debt.

10. Wrap Around Care – Wrap Around Care Clubs e.g. Breakfast Club and After School club are deemed as chargeable to ensure adequate pupil supervision and to allow for an engaging club to be provided.