

CHARGING & REMISSIONS POLICY 2024-26

Potteries Educational Trust



Policy Family	Finance
Reference	FIN-08
Responsible Manager	Chief Financial Officer
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Aim

The Potteries Educational Trust (PET) has established a Charging and Remissions Policy with the aim of setting out the charges that may be levied for school / college activities, external lettings and other miscellaneous items, the remissions which may be implemented and the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested from parents/carers.

Parents/carers are entitled to information about the Trust's Charging and Remissions Policy and the Trust will ensure that it is available on the Trust's website.

Scope

This policy and associated Financial Regulations and Procedures apply to the Potteries Educational Trust, which includes a number of member organisations. Collectively, the member organisations within the trust are referred to as the Trust.

Policy

Prohibition of Charges

The Potteries Educational Trust recognises that the legislation prohibits charges for the following:

- an admission application to any state funded school or academy;
- curricular education provided during school / college hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- 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 student is being prepared for at the academy,
- or part of religious education;
- instrumental music or vocal music tuition, for students learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the student's parent;
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for the resit at school / college.

Charges can however be made for:

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment where the student's parent/carer wishes the student to own.
- Optional extras:
- Music and vocal tuition in limited circumstances

Optional Extras Charges

These 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 and associated admin fees. Optional extras are:

Education provided outside of academy time that is not:

a) part of the National Curriculum

b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at school; or

c) part of religious education.

- Examination entry fees if the registered student has not been prepared for the examination at the academy.
- Peripatetic music tuition where that tuition is not required under the National Curriculum and the academy is merely the provider of the facilities for tuition. In such circumstances, charges will be levied by the teacher or organiser providing tuition.
- Transport that is required to take a student to the academy or to other premises where the local authority/governing body/trust have arranged for the student to be provided with education.
- Transport in relation to residential trips where the trip is deemed to take place wholly or partly outside academy normal operating hours.
- Board and lodging for a student on a residential visit taking place wholly, mainly or partly during academy hours. This cost must not exceed the actual cost of the provision.

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.
- 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 students must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity (including all administration costs), divided equally by the number of students participating. It must not, therefore, include an element of subsidy for any other students wishing to participate in the activity whose parent/carer is unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

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

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

Voluntary Contributions

The academy may ask parents/carers for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of:

- Any activity which takes place wholly or mainly during academy hours
- Academy equipment
- School / Academy Fund

The contribution must be genuinely voluntary and the students of the parents/carers who are unable or unwilling to contribute may not be discriminated against. Where there are insufficient voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, and there is not an alternative way of making up the shortfall, then it must be cancelled. In this event, any contributions already received will be returned to the respective contributors.

Teaching staff and accompanying adults, who are required in a supervisory capacity, will not be required to make any payment. Any cost so incurred will be included in the overall cost of running the activity.

Once the decision has been taken to run an activity, all students whose parents/carers wish them to participate will be included, irrespective of whether their parents/carers have made a full, partial or no contribution.

Any shortfall in voluntary contributions will be paid out of school / academy funds.

The responsibility for determining the level and regularity of voluntary contributions is delegated to the Headteachers / Principals.

Clothing

Under the Education Act, clothing is excluded from the definition of equipment required/used in connection with a child's education during academy hours with the exception of a small number of subjects, most notably PE, Science, food technology.

Breakages and fines

If a student is found to be responsible for causing wilful damage to or breakage of property or equipment (the academy or otherwise), the student's parents may be asked to meet the costs of any repairs or replacement in full. The defacement or loss of academy books is included in this respect.

Remission Statement

In order to ensure that financial barriers do not become barriers to opportunity and learning for students, under certain circumstances the Trust academies may elect to meet (wholly or in part) charges payable by parents as set out in the charging policy.

Requests for financial assistance and/or consideration for remission of charges for children of families experiencing financial hardship may be made where parents/carers are in receipt of the following:

- Income Support
- Child Tax Credit provided the parent is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income does not exceed the stated maximum according to current tax office advice.
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Free School / College Meals
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit.
- Income related employment and support allowance

- Universal Credit

Requests may also be made in relation to Looked After Children.

Consideration will be given in relation to:

- Costs associated with residential visits taking place during academy time
- Costs associated with residential visits taking place outside academy time where the visit meets requirements set out in the National Curriculum
- Costs associated with residential visits taking place outside academy time where the visit meets requirements under the academy's provision for religious education
- Costs associated with music tuition

Parents / carers who are eligible for the remission of charges will be dealt with confidentially.

Special consideration may be given for hardship cases at the discretion of the Headteacher / Principal. In such cases, any subsidy will be provided from the academy Voluntary Fund provided there are adequate funds available for this purpose.

Miscellaneous Charges

The Potteries Educational Trust reserves the right to charge back to parents/carers any bank charges which arise due to default on payments e.g. bounced cheques.

- School / College meals will be charged at the levels recommended by the caterers.
- Charge of up to £5 may be made for the issue of replacement security passes.
- Charges for the letting of the academy premises or grounds.
- Private telephone calls made using academy telephones may be charged at cost identified on telephone invoice listings.

Implementation

Implementation of this policy will be the responsibility of the Chief Financial Officer, who will act on behalf of the Trust in all matters relating to charging and remissions.

Communication

This policy will be circulated to appropriate staff across the trusts academies and is also available on the Potteries Educational Trust website.

Monitoring

The responsible manager named on the front of this policy is responsible for ensuring that this document is kept up to date and revised as appropriate, seeking management and/or trustee approval in advance of the review date so that a new version can be communicated to staff and stakeholders in a timely manner.