



Charging and Remissions Policy

Policy Owner:	CFO
Policy Date:	September 2023
Policy Review Date:	June 2024

Introduction

The Trust Board at SHINE Academies recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including trips, clubs and residential experiences can make towards pupils' education. The Trust Board aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

SHINE Academies adheres to Department for Education guidance outlined in the DfE document 'Charging for School Activities, May 2018'.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

1. Definitions

- Charge – a fee payable for specifically defined activities
- Remission – the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

2. Charging for visits

a) All Visits

The group leader should always ensure that parents are notified as early as possible as to the total cost of the visit, contributions required from parents, spending/pocket money allowances (particularly for residential trips) and how any surplus funding will be used.

Early notification of the above is important as this allows parents to make financial preparations. We appreciate that many parents find it helpful to gauge the value of the visit if they have information relating to the constituent costs of the visit, i.e., transport, accommodation, food, etc.

b) During Normal School Hours

When organising school trips or visits which enrich the curriculum and educational experience of the children, the school invites parents to contribute to the cost of the trip. All contributions are voluntary. If we do not receive sufficient voluntary contributions, we may have to cancel a trip. If a trip goes ahead, it may include children whose parents have not paid any contribution. We do not treat these children any different from any others.

If a parent wishes their child to take part in a school trip or event but is unwilling or unable to make a voluntary contribution, we do allow the child to participate fully in the trip or activity. Sometimes the school pays additional costs in order to support the visit. Parents have a right to know how each trip is funded. The school provides this information on request.

The following is a list of additional activities organised by the school, which often require voluntary contributions from parents. These activities are known as 'optional extras'. This list is not exhaustive. Contributions are often requested for the cost of travel to and from trip locations.

- Visits to museums
- Sporting activities
- Outdoor adventure activities
- Visits to the theatre
- School day trips
- Musical events
- Visits requiring transport

The Trust Board at SHINE Academies currently subsidise a number of events throughout the year, for all children regardless of financial circumstances. This policy is reviewed annually.

Parental permission should be obtained in one of two ways:

- i) By paying for the trip on ParentPay parents give consent for their child to attend the relevant trip and adhere to the terms and conditions outlined in the trip letter.
- ii) Signed Slip received back from parents:

A letter about the visit is sent out to parents and contains a reply slip (with space for parental signature) and also a section on meeting the costs of the visit.

c) Outside Of Normal School Hours / Optional Extras

The Trust Board can charge parents for board and lodging on residential visits as well as the full cost when a visit is deemed to be an 'optional extra'. An optional extra:

- falls wholly or mainly outside school hours, i.e., a residential trip during the school holidays is an optional extra.
- does not form part of the National Curriculum or the statutory requirements for religious education.

The stated cost of an optional extra visit must not include an element of subsidy for pupils whose families do not meet the full charge.

Parental permission should be obtained as follows:

i) By paying for the trip on ParentPay parents give consent for their child to attend the relevant trip and adhere to the terms and conditions outlined in the trip letter.

ii) Signed Slip received back from parents:

A letter about the visit is sent out to parents and contains a reply slip (with space for parental signature) and also a section on meeting the costs of the visit.

Parents in receipt of certain benefits are exempt from the charge of board and lodgings for residential visits. The list of benefits is detailed below. Please contact the school office if you have queries regarding your entitlement.

- Universal credit (provided you have a net income of £7,400 or less)
- Income support
- Income-based jobseekers' allowance
- Income-related employment and support allowance
- Support under Part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of state pension credit
- Child tax credit, provided that you are not also entitled to working tax credit and have an annual gross income of £16,190 or less

Children who are or have been in care, and children who have a parent who is or was in the armed forces, are also entitled to pupil premium.

Please note: Any pupil wishing to go on a residential visit, should not have an outstanding debt against unpaid school meals. In such cases, any monies paid towards the residential visit will be offset by any school meals charges owing to the school. The full amount of the residential visit should be paid before the start of the activity, otherwise the pupil will forego their place on the residential visit and any monies, less any deposit monies, payments made to companies and outstanding debts, will be refunded.

3. Where charges cannot be made

- Admission applications
- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment)
- Education provided outside of school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that a pupil is being prepared for at the school.
- Religious education.

4. Transport in a minibus

If any payment is requested / made towards the cost of passengers being carried in a minibus, then a public service vehicle (PSV) licence is required by the relevant school. A licence is required if the school owns or rents the minibus. There are two types of PSV:

- restricted (for up to two vehicles);
- standard national (more than two vehicles).

5. Individual instrumental tuition

No charge is made for instrumental music tuition at the present time. Each school does request a voluntary contribution of £10.00 per annum towards the upkeep of instruments, including replacement strings. Each school reserves the right to request a contribution towards the cost of damaged items where it is understood instruments have not been sufficiently cared for.

The cost to the pupil for providing any instrumental tuition is not part of normal school peripatetic provision but that of the Trust Board at SHINE Academies.

Parents are asked to contribute to music exams for children who meet the required standard.

6. Ingredients / materials / equipment (in kind)

The Trust Board reserves the right to charge for ingredients, materials, or equipment (or the provision of them by parents) or require them to be provided if the parents have indicated in advance that they wish to own the 'finished product'.

This is particularly relevant for the cost of materials/ingredients for Design & Technology.

7. Broken Equipment (Replacement)

The Trust Board allows the Headteacher to ask pupils and / or their parents to contribute towards the cost of replacement items where these were damaged or broken as a direct result of misconduct on the pupil's part. This does not in any way detract from the teaching staff's duty to brief pupils thoroughly and to manage a calm and safe working environment for the pupils.

8. Breakfast Club

Where schools offer a breakfast club, these are heavily subsidised by the schools and include childcare and breakfast. Payment must be made in advance via ParentPay. Failure to pay for breakfast club in advance will result in your child being unable to attend. Charges for breakfast club are available by calling the school office.

9. Lettings

There are currently no lettings offered by the school.

10. School Meals

Charges

- School meal charges are defined by each school within the MAT and the school office are able to confirm the daily cost.
- Options can be changed each half term and should not be changed weekly.
- All children are invited to attend themed lunch days regardless of their regular meal pattern. This should be paid for via ParentPay.

Payments

- All payments must be made via ParentPay, using either online access or a barcoded letter unique to your child and supplied by the office.
- The minimum online payment for meals is £10.00.
- Meals must be paid for in advance and there is a facility for advance payments.

Free School Meals (FSM)

- All free school meals entitlements have to be renewed prior to the expiry date where necessary.
- It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that forms are completed and submitted to the Local Authority on time.
- Where forms are not completed on time, you will be liable for the meals taken at the standard school charge per day whilst waiting for approval.
- Delays in completing the relevant forms and obtaining approval can result in substantial arrears which you will be liable for, so it is important to ensure that these are completed promptly.

Universal Free School Meals (UFSM)

- All children in Year Reception, Year One and Year Two are entitled to a free school meal.

11. Arrears

- All payments for school meals, breakfast club and school trips are due in advance of the event.
- If sufficient payment is not received, the school will cease access to the specified facility. Where this relates to school meals, children will need to bring a packed lunch to prevent the arrears from escalating. Access will not be allowed to breakfast club where outstanding debt is higher than 2 sessions.
- If arrears become substantial, formal debt collection proceedings will commence.
- We ask all parents to discuss matters of financial hardship with the Headteacher in confidence before issues arise, in order to reach a resolution.
- Residential trips are considered 'optional extras' to a child's education and therefore any payment that is made towards the cost of a residential trip, will be used to offset any outstanding debt.

- Where a child leaves SHINE Academies with arrears on their account, debt will be passed to siblings where applicable. SHINE Academies reserves the right to inform a child's new school of existing debt if asked.

12. Milk

There is provision to provide 1/3 pint (189ml) free milk per day to children under the age of 5 years attending approved day care facilities for 2 or more hours per day, until the term after their 5th birthday.

Children aged 5 and over that are registered to receive free school meals are also entitled to receive free school milk.

For pupils aged 5 and over, not in receipt of free school meals, there is a current charge per term, payable at the beginning of each term. Please contact the school office for further information on pricing.

We encourage those parents whose children are in receipt of Universal Free School Meals (YR, 1 & 2) to check their eligibility for free school meals as there may be an entitlement for free milk.

13. Payments

SHINE Academies no longer accepts cash in the school office and parents are asked to pay for items via ParentPay. Transactions can be made securely online or via any PayPoint store – a full list of stores is available on the ParentPay website. PayPoint cards can be ordered via the school office and can be used to pay for school meals. All other payment items will be requested on an individually barcoded letter which is unique to each child.

Please note that by making a payment via ParentPay, you are confirming that you consent to terms outlined in this policy and in any letters.

14. Remissions

The Trust Board may remit in full or in part the cost of any activity for particular groups of parents, for example, in the case of family hardship. When arranging a chargeable activity such parents will be invited in confidence for the remission of charges in full or in part. Authorisation for such remission will be made by the Headteacher in consultation with the Executive Leadership Team.

15. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust Board.