Woodham Academy
Policy Document

Charging and Remissions Policy

Summary

Academies are required through their funding agreement to comply with the law on charging for school activities.
Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 sets out the law on charging for school activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England. Academies (including free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges) are required through their funding agreements to comply with the law on charging for school activities. This advice has been written to provide at-a-glance information and complements the information given in section 7.5 of the Governors Handbook. This advice accurately reflects the terms of the Education Act 1996, but it is not a substitute for those terms.

Date first adopted: June 2011

Last review date: January 2020

Review date: May 2025

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
Business Manager	D. Coates

1. General

Woodham Academy (Woodham) recognises that governing bodies and local authorities **cannot** charge for:

- an admission application to any maintained school;
- 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, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education. 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).
- tuition for students 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 student is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;

- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school; and
- examination re-sit(s) if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school. However, if a student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus, the fee can be recovered from the student's parents.

Schools and local authorities **can** charge for:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him to own them;
- optional extras (see below); and
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see below).
- community facilities

2. Optional Extras

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

A policy statement will take account of each type of activity that can be charged for and explain when charges will be made. If a charge is to be made for a particular type of activity, for example optional extras, parents need to know how the charge will be worked out and who might qualify for help with the cost (or even get it free). This information should be made available to parents.

The remissions policy must set out any circumstances in which the school or local authority propose to remit (wholly or partly) any charge which would otherwise be payable to them in accordance with their charging policy. For example, the school may decide to provide an Italian language evening class as an optional extra. The governing body may decide to reduce the cost for those children whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits

. **Optional extras are**:

- education provided outside of school time that is not:

  a) part of the National Curriculum;

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

  c) part of religious education.
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered student has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- transport that is not required to take the student to school or to other premises where the local authority/governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education; and

- board and lodging for a student 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; and
- 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 will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of students participating. It will not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other students wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

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

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

3. Educational Visits and Other Trips

Woodham Academy (Woodham) will ensure that they inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of the qualifying benefits of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.

4. Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body or local authority from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. The responsibility for determining the level of voluntary contributions is delegated to the Headteacher. If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, Woodham will make this clear to parents at the outset. Woodham 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. Woodham will make sure that they make this 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 criteria for allocating places on visits will be made clear in a letter from the person in charge of the visit to parents. In most cases the places will depend upon the nature of the visit. (e.g. Leadership Academy has set criteria)

When making requests for voluntary contributions to the school funds, parents will not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and **not compulsory**.

5. Residential Visits

Woodham **cannot** charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours;
- education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is 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; and
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Woodham **will** charge for:

- board and lodging and the charge will not exceed the actual cost.

When Woodham informs parents about a forthcoming visit, it will make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of qualifying benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging:

6. Music Tuition

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

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a regulation-making power which allowed the Department for Children, Schools and Families to specify circumstances where charging can be made for music tuition. The new Regulations, which came into force in September 2007, provide pupils with greater access to vocal and instrumental tuition.

Charges may now be made for teaching either an individual student 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. Charges may only be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the student(s), or the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme (Wider Opportunities).

7. Transport

Woodham **cannot** charge for:

- transporting registered students to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- transporting registered students to other premises where the governing body or local education authority has arranged for students to be educated;
- transport that enables a student to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school; and

- transport provided in connection with an educational visit *.

* however, Woodham Academy may ask for a contribution

8. Education partly during school hours

Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours.

9. Non-residential activities

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require students to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

10. Residential visits

If the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, Regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A "half day" means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

Example 1: Visit during school hours

Students are away from noon on Wednesday to 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 9 half days including 5 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place during school hours.

Example 2: Visit outside school hours

Students are away from school from noon on Thursday until 9pm on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours.

11. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Governing body will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness.