



# WIGSTON ACADEMIES TRUST

## CHARGING FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES POLICY

<b>DATE APPROVED:</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	Board of Trustees
<b>REVIEW FREQUENCY:</b>	Every 3 years
<b>DATE FOR REVIEW:</b>	January 2028

Signed by Chair of Trustees:

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. M. M.', is written over the date.

- Any charges made by the Trust must meet the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1988. The governors endorse the guiding principles contained in the Act, in particular that no child should have access to the curriculum limited by charges.
- Our aim is to make a broad programme of trips and activities accessible to as many pupils as possible. Also to establish and maintain a fair and coherent system of charges within the constraints of the Trust budget. The Trust, as a matter of policy, significantly subsidises all trips and visits.
- Charges will not be made for any activities which form part of a prescribed examination syllabus, or are in fulfillment of National Curriculum requirements.
- In cases where charges are to be levied, parents must be advised in advance and monies collected prior to the activity. Any insurance costs will be included in charges for trips and activities.

## Summary

The following is a summary of the regulations. When considering charging for any activity the Trust should, however, consult the appropriate section in Section 1 as appropriate.

- The Trust **may not** charge for any activities which take place in school time except for musical instrumental tuition for individuals or groups of up to four.
- The Trust **has drawn up a Charging Policy**.
- The Trust may **invite** parents and others to make **voluntary** contributions towards any aspect of the school's work.
- The Trust **may charge** for activities that are provided wholly or mainly outside school hours **as long as these are 'optional extras'** (for example after school recreational or sporting clubs).
- The Trust **may charge** for board and lodging on residential courses (except for pupils whose parents fall within certain categories).

## 1. Education During School Hours

No charge can be made for admitting pupils to maintained schools. **Education provided during school hours must be free.** This includes materials, equipment and transport provided during school hours by the Trust to carry pupils between school and an activity. "School hours" are those when the school is actually in session and do not include the break in the middle of the school day.

## 2. Musical Instrument Tuition

The provision of tuition in the playing of a musical instrument is an **exception** to the above rule. Therefore charges may be made by schools for the provision of instrumental tuition to **either an individual pupil or a group of up to 4 children** but only if the teaching is not an essential part of either the national curriculum or a public examination syllabus.

## 3. Voluntary Contributions

Whilst schools cannot, as a matter of course, charge for activities during school time they may still **invite** parents and carers (and others) to make voluntary contributions in cash or in kind to make school funds go further. All requests to parents for voluntary contributions **must** make it clear that the contributions are **voluntary**. The Board of Trustees should also make it clear that children of parents who do not contribute voluntarily will not be treated differently from children of parents who do make voluntary contributions and that **the child will not be excluded from the activity if a contribution is not made**. If a particular activity cannot take place without some help from parents, that should be explained at the planning stage. Where voluntary contributions are insufficient to make the activity possible and the school is unable to make up a shortfall then the activity must be cancelled. The intent of the legislation is that no pupil may be left out of an activity because his or her parents or carers cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind. It is possible, within the legislation, to fund pupils whose parents or carers will not make a voluntary contribution from funds raised through general fundraising.

## 4. Activities not run by the Trust

When an organisation acting independently of the Trust arranges an activity to take place during school hours and parents want their children to join the activity such organisations may charge parents. Parents would then need to ask the school to agree to their children being absent from school just as they would if they wanted to take the child out of school for a family holiday. An example of this would be tuition provided off-site by the Dyslexia Association.

When an activity is arranged by a third party and is approved by the Trust, is educational (or is supervised by someone authorised by the Trust) then it should be treated as if it were being provided by the school. No compulsory charge should therefore be made to parents or pupils. Such an activity if it takes place outside the school premises is an "approved educational activity" within the meaning of Regulation 4A(a) of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (as amended). An example might be a performance by a

reputable Theatre in Education Group.

## 5. Education Outside School Hours

Parents may only be charged for activities that happen outside school hours where these activities are not a necessary part of the National Curriculum or they form part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education, such as a visit to a place of worship after school. In addition, no charge can be made for activities that are an **essential** part of the syllabus for an approved examination. A visit to a theatre to see an examination set text in performance may be advantageous but is unlikely to be 'essential' or a requirement of a literature syllabus.

Charges may be made for other activities that happen outside school hours if parents agree to pay. The Education Act 1996 describes activities which can be charged for as "optional extras". These might include a recreational visit to a pantomime.

## 6. Charging Policies

The Board of Trustees **may not charge for anything unless it has drawn up a statement of general policy of charging.** A policy statement will take account of each type of activity that can be charged for and explain when charges will be made. A copy of the policy is attached as an appendix. If a charge is to be made for a particular type of activity 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 of charge: see paragraph 8). Parents have a right to ask for this information and a summary must be included in the prospectus published by the Trust. **If a charge is made for each pupil this should not exceed the actual cost for that pupil. If further funds need to be raised, for example, to help in hardship cases, this must be by voluntary contributions or general fundraising.**

The permitted charge may include an allowance for the cost of teachers from the Trust who supervise the activity, **but only if those teachers have been given a separate contract to provide the optional extra. A contract need not be formal document. It could be a letter to a teacher asking him or her to provide a service on a particular occasion.**

## 7. Education Partly During School Hours

Some activities may take place partly during outside school hours. If most of the time spent on a non-residential activity occurs during school hours, that activity counts as taking place entirely in school hours and no charges may be made. Time spent on travel only counts as being during school hours if the travel takes place during school hours. For example, a long journey might involve much travel before and after normal school hours but if the time spent at the destination fell mainly within school hours the journey (and the activity) would count as happening in school time and therefore have to be free of charge. By contrast, a visit which involved leaving school an hour or so earlier than usual in the afternoon but then went on until quite late in the evening would be classified as taking place outside school time. Charges would then be allowed.

## 8. Residential Activities

Different rules apply for residential activities. An activity counts as falling within school time if the number of school sessions missed by the pupils amounts to half or more of the number of half days taken up by the activity. Each school day is normally divided into 2 sessions and each 24 hour period divided into 2 half days beginning at noon and midnight. On this basis a term time activity from noon on Wednesday to 9.00pm on Sunday would last for 9 half days including 5 school sessions and would count as taking place in school time. An activity from noon Thursday to 9.00pm on Sunday would count as 7 half days, including 3 school sessions, and would be classified for charging as taking place outside school time. If 50% or more of a half day is spent on a residential activity this should be treated as the whole of that half day spent on the activity.

For a residential activity taking place during school time which meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination or is to do with a national curriculum or religious education no charge may be made either for the education or for the cost of travel. However, charges can be made for board and lodging in these circumstances. Students who are in receipt of the Pupil Premium can apply via the Head of Year to get help with costs.

## 9. Public Examinations

No charges may be made for entering pupils for public examinations that are set out in Regulations. The Board of Trustees must enter a pupil for each examination in a public examination syllabus that the Trust has prepared the pupil for. This does not need to apply if the Board of Trustees thinks there are educational reasons for not entering the pupil or if the pupil's parents or carers ask in writing that the pupil should not be entered.

### **An examination entry fee may be charged to parents if:**

- i) the examination is on the set list but the pupil was not prepared for it at the school;
- ii) the examination is not on the set list but the school arranges for the pupil to take it;
- iii) a pupil fails without good reason to complete the requirements set by the examination board and the Board of Trustees originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

Schools may not, however, impose charges where the requirements of the examination board have been met.

Charges may not be made for any costs associated with preparing a pupil for an examination. Charging is, however, allowed for tuition and other costs if a pupil is prepared outside school hours for an examination that is not set out in the regulations.

## TRUST POLICY FOR CHARGING

1. The provisions of the 1988 Education Reform Act will be followed.
2. In addition to free provision of education during the school day, pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium can apply to the Trust via their Head of Year to get help with costs.
3. Charges will normally be made for the following activities:
  - a) Board and lodging on residential visits
  - b) The proportionate cost for an individual child of activities wholly or mainly outside school hours (“optional extras”) to meet the costs of :
    - Travel
    - Materials and equipment
    - Non-teaching staff costs
    - Entrance fees
    - Insurance costs
  - c) Individual tuition (or tuition in groups of not more than 4) in the playing of a musical instrument.
  - d) Re-sits for public examinations where no further preparation has been provided by the Trust.
  - e) Costs of non-prescribed examinations and preparations for such examinations outside school areas.
  - f) Any other education, transport or examination fee unless charges are specially prohibited.

## **REMISSIONS AND CONCESSIONS**

The Trust will give consideration to the remission of charges to parents or carers who receive the following support payments:

- Income Support
- Income based Job-seekers Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (where the person is not receiving Working Tax Credit as well)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Universal Credit

Children of families who receive these payments are also entitled to free school meals. Parents who are eligible for the remission of charges will be dealt with confidentially.

The Trust may choose to subsidise part or all of the payment of some charges for certain activities and students, and this will be determined by the Board of Trustees and headteacher.

### **Inability or unwillingness to pay**

The Trust is committed to ensuring fair access and treatment of all of its students, and this means ensuring that no child is excluded from an activity because the parents or carers of that child are unwilling or unable to pay. If there is insufficient funding for an activity, then it will be cancelled. The identity of the child or parents of the child who did not want to make the payment, or could not make the payment, will not be disclosed in any circumstances.