

EQUITAS ACADEMIES TRUST



EQUITAS
— ACADEMIES TRUST —

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Review Date: September 2021
To be Reviewed: September 2023
Agreed: F & GP
Policy Lead: CEO & CFO

1. INTRODUCTION

Equitas Academies Trust is committed to providing quality education based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. In practice, this means the students have an entitlement to benefit from all educational activities and to:-

- Participate fully in school curriculum;
- Contribute to all aspects of Academy life; and
- Be a valued partner in the process of education.

These objectives must be seen to inform educational activities, whether in or outside the Trust's academies and are therefore integral to the process of charging for school activities and to the remission which is available to parents/guardians who are on low income. We aim:-

- To make the Academies' activities accessible to all students regardless of family income;
- To encourage and promote external activities which give added value to the curriculum;
- To provide a process which allows activities to take place at a minimum cost to parents, students and the Trust; and
- To respond to the wide variations in family income while not adding additional unexpected burdens to the Trust budget.

The development of a range of activities forms part of the Trust's forward planning process and is linked to the annual budget cycle with a particular emphasis on the identification on specific resources to support such activities.

It includes a number of key factors:-

- The value of certain activities in relation to age / needs of students;
- The cost of activity set against their educational value;
- How the activity will be paid for;
- The appropriate process for raising funding;
- An assessment of whether the educational aims can be met in any other way;
- An understanding of the various types of activities involved – for example, education visits, music tuition, materials for practical work;
- An assessment of local facilities.

2. LEGISLATION – EDUCATION DURING SCHOOL HOURS

The DfE in its guidance to the Trustees states that “education provided during school hours must be free. The definition of ‘education’ includes materials, equipment and transport provided in school hours by the school to carry pupils between the school and an activity.” It goes on to advise that “although schools cannot charge for school time activities, they may still invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions (in cash or in kind)... the essential point is that no pupil may be left out of an activity because his or her parents cannot or will not make a contribution of any kind.”

3. LEGISLATION - EDUCATION OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS

“Parents can only be charged for activities that happen outside school hours when these activities are not a necessary part of the national curriculum or religious education. A contribution can be made for activities that are an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination. Charges may be made for other activities that happen outside school hours if parents agree to pay. The Education Reform Act 1988 described activities, which can be charged for as ‘optional extras’. It is up to the trust providing the activities to decide whether to make a charge.”

4. RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITY

“For a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or essential to the education provided at the school, a contribution can be made by parents for the costs of the travel. However full charges can be made for board and lodging in these circumstances. Parents who can provide evidence that they are in receipt of certain benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging.

Guidance is contained in the DFE’s Circular Charges for Schools Activities May 2018.

5. REMISSIONS POLICY

To ensure that access to activities becomes an opportunity and that outcomes reflect intentions, the Trust will implement the following Remissions Policy. The fundamental aim of this policy is to ensure that all students gain fully from everything that the Trust is able to offer them and is based on an understanding of the relationship between low income, entitlement and access. This policy takes into account the very real and persistent difficulties which people on low income have in meeting the costs of educational activities for their children.

Teachers will ensure that these children are not publicly identified and stigmatised. This is particularly important as the fear of stigmatisation is often a key element in the non-take up of Free School Meals. This will be accomplished by developing methods of collecting voluntary charges and the Trust funds via an appointed person or electronic system, rather than in the classroom; by annualised or term time single payments to the Trust at the start of each term and for example, by arranging for all students to receive a packed lunch when on a visit.

6. INFORMING PARENTS

Equitas Academies Trust will follow the DfE Guidelines which states that “The LA or governing body may not charge for anything unless it has drawn up a statement of General Policy on Charging A Policy Statement will take account of each type of activity that can be charged for, and explain when charges will be made... Parents need to know how the charges will be worked out and who might qualify for help with the costs (or even get it free). A summary of this information must be included in the prospectus published by the school.”

“If a charge is made for each pupil, this should not exceed the actual costs. If further funds need to be raised ... this must be by voluntary contributions or general fund raising.”

7. IMPLEMENTATION

Equitas Academies Trust

Planning, as a part of the process of budget building, is essential to developing a charging policy at the Trust which recognises equality of access. We will endeavour therefore to produce a programme of activities based on a clear set of priorities identified by the Trust and taking into consideration the projected number of children (including known remissions), cost per head and a breakdown of transportation costs, entry fees, discounts, teacher costs etc.,

Such a process however, should not inhibit flexibility and the capacity of the Trust to take advantage of opportunities which arise during the course of the year.

Reviewed and approved by:	Date approved:	Next review date:
F&GP Committee	29 th November 2021	September 2023