


Charging and Remissions Policy

Monitoring Responsibility	Chief Financial Officer
Next Review Date	September 2023
Approval Body	Finance and Audit Committee
Date Ratified	3/10/22
Chair of Committee Signature	

Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Legal framework.....	3
3.	Equality.....	3
4.	Admissions	3
5.	School meals	3
6.	Public examinations	4
7.	Activities that take place during schools hours (this does not include the break in the middle of the school day)	4
8.	Activities that take place outside of school hours (non residential).....	4
9.	Activities that take place partly during school hours either on or offsite	5
10.	Residential activities	5
11.	Music tuition within school hours.....	6
12.	Extended services.....	6
13.	Damage to property and breakages	7
14.	Refunds	7
15.	Remissions and concessions	7
16.	Voluntary contributions	8
17.	Inability or unwillingness to pay	8
18.	Complaints	8

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out the Voyage Education Partnership (VEP) policy regarding levying of charges for activities, goods and supplies, any remissions that may be applied, and the circumstances under which voluntary contributions can be requested from parents or carers.

VEP recognises the value of providing a wide range of experiences to enrich and broaden learners' learning and to contribute towards learners' personal development and through the application of this policy, seeks to ensure that:

- such opportunities can be offered to learners without placing an unnecessary burden on learners' families' finances; and
- VEP expenditure of its government grant income is done so in accordance with the terms of such grants and with due regard to ensuring probity in the use of public funds, particularly regularity and value of money.

This policy applies to all academies within the Trust.

2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2020) 'Governance handbook'
- Our Funding Agreement

3. Equality

Voyage Education Partnership will do all we can to ensure that this policy does not discriminate, directly or indirectly. We shall do this through regular monitoring and evaluation of our policies.

4. Admissions

There is no charge for admissions.

5. School meals

There is no charge for children who are entitled to free school meals or infant free school meals. Pupils who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged a set amount per meal decided by the individual academy.

6. Public examinations

There is no charge for examinations that are part of the curriculum and on the school's set examinations list, where learners have been prepared for the examinations by the school. However, if the learner fails without good reason to meet an examination requirement, the school may recover the fee incurred from that learner's parents. These principles apply equally to re-sits.

There is a charge of the examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school (see Optional extras under section 8).

7. Activities that take place during schools hours (this does not include the break in the middle of the school day)

There is no charge for activities during school hours except for music tuition (section 11).

There is no charge for transport during school hours to school-organised activities.

We may charge for:

- materials, books, instruments or equipment that the parent wishes their child to keep or own (the cost will be made clear to the parents before charge)
- optional extras (section 8)
- music or vocal tuition (section 11).

8. Activities that take place outside of school hours (non residential)

There is no charge for activities that take place outside of school hours when they are:

- part of the set curriculum
- part of the syllabus for a public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the school
- part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education.

Optional extras

VEP schools may charge for optional extras. 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 learner is being prepared for at the school
 - c) part of religious education
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered learner has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school
- transport that is not taking the learner to school or to other premises where the local authority or governing body has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education.
 - board and lodging for a learner on a residential visit.
- extended day services offered to pupils (e.g. breakfast clubs, after school clubs etc)

The cost of optional extras

The headteacher of each academy will decide when it is necessary to charge for optional activities.

Any charge made in respect of individual learners will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. In no circumstances will there be an element of subsidy required for any learner wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge (section 12).

When 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, including 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.
- The costs of buildings and accommodation.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be based on parental choice and a willingness to pay the charges. The school will need to have the agreement of parents before organising the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

9. Activities that take place partly during school hours either on or offsite

Where most of a non-residential activity takes place during school hours the charging of the activity will be the same as is outlined in section 7.

Travelling time is included in time spent on the activity if the travel itself occurs during school hours.

In cases where most of a non-residential activity takes place outside of school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those learners who do not wish to participate. So, no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying learners on a visit.

In this case the charging of the activity will be the same as is outlined in section 8.

10. Residential activities

Schools within VEP will not 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 learner is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying learners on a residential visit
- travel costs where the residential activity is classed as being within school hours
- residential activities that take place during school hours.

Our schools will charge for:

Board and lodging

When any visit has been organised by the school where there may be a cost for board and lodging, parents will be informed of this before the visit takes place. We will charge anything up to the full cost of board and lodging on residential visits, whether it is classified as taking place during school hours or not. The charge will not exceed the actual cost. Parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits may be exempt from paying the full cost (see section 14 for more guidance on remissions).

Travel

Travel charges may apply when the residential activity takes place outside of school hours. The amount charged will be calculated to cover the unit cost per pupil. These charges may not apply to those pupils entitled to remissions, but no other pupils will be charged extra to cover those costs.

Activities

The school may charge for residential activities that fall outside of school hours (see section 8).

11. Music tuition within school hours

VEP schools follow government legislation that states that all education provided during school hours must be free; however, music lessons are an exception to this rule.

Charges will be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil(s).

The school may charge for teaching requested by parents and delivered by specialist tutors given to either an individual learner 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. The cost of these lessons may depend on the size and duration of the class as well as the type of instrument.

The school will not charge if the music tuition is part of the National Curriculum or public examination syllabus being followed by the student. This includes instruments, music books and exam fees.

VEP is dedicated to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils including access to specialised music tuition, therefore charges made for music tuition within school hours will be remitted for pupils on free school meals.

There is no charge for vocal or instrumental tuition for a student who is looked after by a local authority. This includes instruments, music books and exam fees.

12. Extended services

VEP provides a well-rounded and extensive education for our learners which includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities (extended services). Extended services enable our school to provide:

- high-quality learning opportunities either side of the school day
- ways of intervening early when children are at risk of poor outcomes
- ways of increasing pupil engagement
- ways of improving outcomes and narrowing gaps in outcomes between different groups of pupils.

The total charge will not exceed the cost of providing the activity and no parent will be asked to subsidise others.

13. Damage to property and breakages

Where school property has been wilfully or recklessly damaged by a learner the school may charge those responsible for some or all the cost of repair or replacement.

Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a learner, and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all the cost to those responsible.

Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the headteacher and dependent on the situation.

14. Refunds

Request for refunds for trips will be considered on an individual basis and may be rejected if the school is unable to recoup the costs incurred.

In all cases of withdrawal, either voluntarily or otherwise, applications should be made in writing to the headteacher. If approved, refunds will be processed via the original method of payment.

The school reserves the right not to refund costs where a learner is withdrawn from an activity by the school because of a learner's breach of the school's behaviour policy.

15. Remissions and concessions

The school will consider 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 and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed Element of Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on
- 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 headteacher will authorise the remission of charges.

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

16. Voluntary contributions

VEP schools may ask for voluntary contributions to the school for general funds and/or to fund activities that will enrich our learner' education.

In any case where an activity cannot be afforded without voluntary funding, this will be made clear to the parents by the school. If the activity is cancelled all monies paid will be returned to parents.

There is no obligation for a parent or carer to make any contribution and the school will in no way pressure parents to contribute.

17. Inability or unwillingness to pay

VEP is committed to ensuring fair access and treatment of all learners, 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 under any circumstances.

18. Complaints

Complaints about the implementation of this policy or any decisions taken in line with the policy will be considered as part of the Trust's complaints procedures.