

Charging and Remissions Policy- Draft

Purpose

Legislation allows schools to charge for certain activities which take place outside school hours. Lamptons School's policy applies to charges made to parents/students, for facilities used by private individuals and to third party organisations that rent school premises.

Under the terms of the Education Act 1996, the Governing Body of Lamptons School Academy Trust must have a policy on charging students to participate in school activities. By law, students may not be charged for taking part in activities that take place during the school day. Parents may be asked for voluntary contributions but if they are unable to 'contribute', their child should not be prevented from participating should the activity go ahead. In any request for voluntary payments it must be clear from the terms in which it is made that:

- There is no obligation to make any contribution and
- That pupils will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have contributed towards the planned activity

Procedure

1. Admissions – no charge shall be made in respect of admission unless it is for the purpose of:

- part-time education for persons over compulsory school age
- full-time education for persons over compulsory school age
- teacher training

2. Provision of education – no charge shall be made in relation to the education of registered pupils where education is provided during school hours. Where education is provided outside of the normal school hours, no charge shall be made provided it is required as part of the syllabus/curriculum. The Academy may charge persons who are not registered pupils at the Academy for education provided or for facilities used by them belonging to the Academy.

3. Musical Instrument tuition – the Academy will review on a yearly basis whether or not to charge a contribution towards musical instrument tuition either individually or for a group of not more than four pupils where the lesson is not considered to be part of the National Curriculum or is not preparation for a public exam. Tuition will be provided free of charge where it is considered to be an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus. Please see the Music department policy.

4. Musical Instrument purchase

The school will run an assisted purchase scheme for pupils. We will purchase instruments for pupils and then parents can reimburse the school and this makes the purchases cheaper without the need to pay VAT

5. Practical subject charge – charges will be made for materials and ingredients for practical subjects where parents indicate they wish to receive the finished articles. The policy however is to blanket charge all eligible students and to only allow those that have paid to take work home. Any student involved in projects where materials are uniquely expensive pay for materials in advance, based on prices obtained beforehand from the Subject Leader. The Academy classes such income as class sales.

6. Visits during the school day – When arranging school trips, visits, or activities which enrich the curriculum and student experience, the Academy will invite parents/careers, by way of a letter, to return a signed slip of interest in the trip and if appropriate the voluntary contribution towards the cost. The returning of the signed slip is deemed a pre-requisite before a student can be considered for the trip.

A voluntary charge will be made to cover the cost of educational visits and other activities. However, as detailed at the outset, charges cannot be enforced where this forms part of the curriculum. All contributions are voluntary. Where the level of non-payment renders a trip financially unviable consideration will be given to cancellation unless the Academy is able to cover the shortfall. If the event does proceed each student would be allowed to participate without discrimination irrespective of whether their voluntary contributions are received or not.

7. Residential visits – Where at least half of the time away from home is not normal school time or where the work undertaken is not an integral part of the examination course, the trip can be classified as optional. Any charge in respect of an optional extra requires parental agreement and willingness to meet the charges. Parents should be made aware that the activity might be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received. If the visit is deemed to have taken place during the school day, or is part of the national curriculum or is preparation for a public examination then only the cost of board and lodging can be passed onto parents and this cannot exceed the actual cost.

8. Public examinations – No charge shall be made in respect of the entry of a registered pupil at the Academy. Charges are applied for the entry of a student for an examination for which he/she has not been prepared by the Academy. Entry for resit examinations is also subject to charge after the first retake. Where a student has paid for an examination re-mark and the new grade exceeds the original, then a refund is made for the fee. The examination officer will hold the funds supplied and then either refund or charge accordingly. Please see exams policy for greater detail.

9. Optional extra visits – Visits that take place beyond the school day or as part of an extra-curricular activity can be charged and parents are expected to meet the full cost of the trip. This would include transportation costs. Such costs will be based on the actual cost with no profit element

10. Breakages – The financial cost relating to breakages/damage/fines are recoverable from parents and can be pursued as a civil debt. A charge will also apply for loss or damage to Academy property which is placed under the responsibility of the student and may be taken off the premises

Remission of Parent/Student charges

Parents who find themselves in financial difficulties and who are in receipt of income support, income based job seekers allowance, receive support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, or are in receipt of child tax credit provided that working tax credit is not also received and

that the family's income does not exceed £15,860 (financial year 2011/12) may apply to the Academy for financial support. Reference to the free school meals list is made and proof (e.g. DSS letter) is required to validate claims.

Terms & Conditions for Educational Trips & Visits

Surcharges

Please be aware that travel companies often reserve the right to apply a surcharge for a trip after payment has been received. This tends to be for expenses such as increase in fuel costs, airport taxes etc. This very rarely happens, however if this is the case Lampton School may pass this cost on to parents/carers in order that the trip remains financially viable.

Insurance

Students and staff going on trips are automatically covered by Lampton School insurance and on residential trips additional insurance is often included through the travel company the school have booked with. For details of the Lampton insurance please see the school website (parents section) for further details or alternatively please contact the school directly if you would like a paper copy. Should a claim need to be made against the insurance for any reason, it is the parents/carers who are responsible for paying the excess that applies to the policy.

Cancellations

Please note that refunds for trips & visits will automatically be made should a trip be cancelled by Lampton School. If a parent chooses to withdraw a student from a trip or visit then any refund is awarded on a discretionary basis by AHT - Trips and parents will need to write directly to the AHT - Trips to request the refund. Refunds cannot be dealt with by other members of school staff without the AHT – Trips first having received the written request. There may be some instances where deposits are non-refundable and an admin fee for cancellation may apply. The school may have incurred direct costs which are non-recoverable in including the child on the trip (for example, purchase of a ticket which cannot be returned) then any such refund will be discretionary.

For further information about the Lampton School Trips & Visits or Charging and Remissions Policy, please see the school website (parents section) for further details or alternatively please contact the school directly if you would like a paper copy.

Oversubscribed Activities

The information letter will include a deadline by when the reply should be received by the school. In the event that the activity is over subscribed (and the school is unable to increase the number of participants) the following criteria will be used, in the order given, to select successful applicants:

- Students who have not taken part or have had less participation in other activities in this academic year
- Random selection of students with payment attached to their application.
- The remaining unsuccessful students who had payment attached to their application will be placed in random order on the reserve list.
- Students, with payment attached to their application, but received by the Student Services after the deadline will be placed next on the reserve list.
- Students, without payments attached to their application, will go last on the reserve list.

Misbehaviour before an activity

At the sole discretion of the Headteacher, a student who has applied for a planned activity and has been accepted may be barred from attending if his or her behaviour in the period before the activity is unacceptable. Any returned contribution, as set out above, will be at the discretion of the school.

Contact Telephone Numbers and Medical Information

It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the school has received correct and current telephone contact and medical data which is relevant for overnight trips as well as day only trips.