CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust

VERSION: 3.2

ADOPTED: SPRING TERM 24

NEXT REVISION: SPRING TERM 26

Blessed Edward Bamber
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Version Control

Date of last review	Spring 2024
Date of next review	Spring 2026
Review period	2 years
Policy Status	Statutory
Owner	Chief Finance Officer
Approved by	CEO
Version	3.2

Previous versions

Version	Author	Date	Changes
3.1	CEO	Spring 2024	Section 2 – added in Legal Frameworks Section 3 – added in clarity over what will **not** be charged Section 5 – section added Section 6 – section added

This is a Trust-Wide Policy which applies to all academies within the Trust

Luke 6:38

"Give, and it will be given to you."

1. Introduction

The Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust is committed to the principle of free education and recognises the valuable contribution that a wide range of activities, including academy visits, residential experiences and clubs, can make towards all aspects of pupils'/students' education. Whilst wishing to promote and provide as broad a range of such activities as possible for the benefit of all pupils/students, the Board of Directors reserves the right to make a charge or request a voluntary contribution for certain activities organised by the academies from time to time.

We believe that all our pupils/students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from academy activities, schemes, programmes, and resources available independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a wide range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some pupils/students taking full advantage of the opportunities. The 1996 Education Act draws a distinction between the term `charges` which are considered to be an obligatory cost which may be levied by the academy and `voluntary contributions` which the academy may request from parents.

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'.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy;
- Debt Recovery Policy;
- Freedom of Information Policy.

3. Educational Charges

Schools/academies in the Trust will **not** charge for:

- Admissions applications;
- 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, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the school, or part of RE;
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups as part of the curriculum, unless provided at the request of the pupil's parent/carer;
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school;
- Examination resits, if the pupil is being prepared for the resits at the school.

The school/academy may charge for:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the parent wishes the pupil to own them;
- Equipment and materials used by a pupil/student where parents/pupils/students indicate that they wish to retain the finished article. Alternatively, parents/pupils/students may wish to provide the equipment/materials themselves;
- Additional music and vocal tuition both inside and outside of academy hours, for individual or small groups, which is not part of the national curriculum or an examination syllabus. Individual or small group lessons are taught by peripatetic music teachers;
- Education provided outside of academy time that is:

a) Not part of the National Curriculum or part of Religious Education syllabus
b) Not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the academy.

(Please note, out of academy time includes lunch times, before or after the academy day and during weekends and academy holidays).

- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered student has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the academy;
- Examination entry fee(s) if students are entered for examinations and for no acceptable reason, do not sit the examinations or fail to complete the coursework;
- Examination entry resit fee(s) where the request is made by the parent/student for the resit and there are no timetabled lessons within the academy day aimed at preparing the student for the resit;
- Transport that is not required to take the student to the academy or to other premises where the local authority/directors have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education;
- Meals for nursery children or provision of supervision during meal times;
- Board and lodging for a student on a residential visit; and
- All or part of the costs of deliberate damage to, careless breakage or loss of books or equipment owned by the trust as well as payment of library fines.

Where activities are arranged through an outside agency, e.g. peripatetic music service or tour operator, the arrangements would be between the individual parents and the operator. The operator would levy charges for the full cost of the services provided. The role of the school would be limited to the collection of monies from pupils and the distribution of information.

4. Voluntary Contributions

The Trust acknowledges the support of parents in being able to provide an extended range of activities, schemes, programmes and resources which extend, diversify and enrich the education offered to pupils/students.

Voluntary contributions may be requested by an academy to assist with the costs of an activity, scheme, programme or resources. The academy will give a clear indication of the average voluntary contribution required for an activity, scheme, programme or resources to go ahead or be purchased. Where a voluntary contribution is requested from parents, and insufficient funds are raised and alternative funding is not available, the academy reserves the right to cancel the activity, scheme, programme or resource that was to be made available. Where an activity, scheme, programme or resources, for which voluntary contributions have been asked for, still takes place, all pupils/students

will be treated in the same manner whether or not their parents have been able to make a contribution.

No pupil will be excluded from an activity simply because their parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal opportunity to take part in the activity.

In some situations, there may be cases of family hardship which make it difficult for pupils/students to take part in particular activities for which a charge is made or voluntary contribution is asked for. When arranging a chargeable activity or asking for a voluntary contribution the headteacher will invite parents to apply in confidence for the remission of charges/voluntary contribution in part or in full.

To qualify for remission (financial help or support), parents must contact the headteacher and if required provide proof of their income or benefit. Parents/carers in receipt of one of the following may be given remission of charges:

- Income Support;
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and they have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190;
- Working Tax Credit run on – paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit;
- Universal Credit – (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods);
- Children who get any of the above benefits in their own right (i.e. They get benefits payments directly, instead of through a parent or guardian).

Children who are included in any of the above groups are entitled to Free School Meals and will attract Pupil Premium Funding into the academy. (Note – not universal infant free school meals).

In addition, remission of charges will be provided for pupils/students who are:

- Children Looked After;
- The academy may provide remission of charges for parents who have more than one child at the academy and seek support for either chargeable activities or voluntary contributions.

The level of support which the academy can offer will be entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher.

5. School Trip Refund

All initial deposits for school trips will be non-refundable. Parents will be informed of this when they are provided with initial information about the trip.

In the event that the school has to cancel a trip due to foreseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded. In the event that a school trip is cancelled by a party other than the school due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents.

In the event that a pupil or their parents cancel the pupil's place on a trip, it is at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school will take into account the reason for cancellation, whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip, and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil. Where a pupil or their parents have previously cancelled a place on a trip and received a full refund, the school has the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future trips and visits.

In the event that a pupil cannot attend a trip at the last minute, e.g. due to illness, it is at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school will take into account whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

In the event that a school trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the school's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.

In the event that the decision is made to postpone a trip due to foreseen circumstances, it is at the school's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.

Once trip arrangements have been booked and confirmed, if contributions exceed the total cost of the trip, a refund will be given where the excess if greater than £1 per pupil.

The school will deal with cancellations and refunds on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all pupils and their families are treated equally. If a parent wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they can do so via the Complaints Policy.

6. Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

The Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme sets out where fees may be charged for the provision of information.