

Charging and remissions policy

Birchwood Community Academy Trust

Policy Owner:	Alan O'Reilly, School Business Manager
Governing Body Oversight:	Finance and Audit Committee
Date of Approval:	October 2021
Date of next review:	October 2022

Admissions

1. There is no charge for admissions.

School meals

2. 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 can purchase food and drinks from the school canteens. The catering manager will plan the menu using the free school meal value as a pricing point for a full meal.

Public examinations

3. There is no charge for examinations that are part of the curriculum and on the school's set examinations list, where children have been prepared for the examinations by the school. However, if the pupil fails without good reason to meet an examination requirement, the school may recover the fee incurred from that pupil's parents. These principles apply equally to re-sits.
4. There is no charge for examinations that are not on the set list but have been arranged by the school.
5. 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).

Activities that take place during school hours (excluding breaks in the school day)

6. There is no charge for activities during school hours except for music tuition.
7. There is no compulsory charge for transport during school hours to school-organised activities. School may seek voluntary contributions from parents and carers in some circumstances.
8. 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.
- music or vocal tuition.

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

9. There is no charge for activities that take place outside of school hours when they are:
- part of the set curriculum, including sports matches against other schools
 - 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

10. The school will 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 pupil is being prepared for at the school
 - c) part of religious education
- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school
- transport that is not taking the pupil 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 pupil on a residential visit.
- extended day services offered to pupils (e.g. breakfast clubs, after school clubs etc)

11. The headteacher will decide when it is necessary to charge for optional activities, and the levels of charge will be set annually by the headteacher. The charges, when determined, will be published on the school's website and appended to this policy.

12. Any charge made in respect of individual pupils 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 pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

13. 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.
14. 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.

Activities that take place partly during school hours either ON or OFF site

15. Where most of a non-residential activity takes place during school hours the charging of the activity will be the same as is activities that take place during the school day.
16. Travelling time is included in time spent on the activity if the travel itself occurs during school hours.
17. 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 pupils 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 pupils on a visit.

Residential activities

18. Our school 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 pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.
 - travel costs where the residential activity is classed as being within school hours.
 - residential activities that take place during school hours.
19. Our school 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. 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.

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.

Music tuition within school hours

20. The school follows government legislation that states that all education provided during school hours must be free; however, music lessons are an exception to this rule.
21. 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).
22. The school may charge for teaching requested by parents and delivered by specialist tutors given to either an individual pupil 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.
23. The school will not charge if the music tuition is an essential part of the National Curriculum or public examination syllabus being followed by the student.

Extended services

24. School provides a well-rounded and extensive education for our students 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, e.g. by providing access to study support, parenting support or to more specialist services (such as health, social care or special educational needs services).
 - ways of increasing pupil engagement.
 - ways of improving outcomes and narrowing gaps in outcomes between different groups of pupils.
25. Where a charge is made, the total charge will not exceed the cost of providing the activity and no parent will be asked to subsidise others.

Refunds

26. 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.

27. In all cases of withdrawal, either voluntarily or otherwise, applications should be made in writing to the school business manager. If approved, refunds will be processed via the original method of payment.
28. The school reserves the right not to refund costs where a pupil is withdrawn from an activity by the school because of a pupil's breach of the school's behaviour and safeguarding policies.

Damage to property and breakages

29. Where school property has been wilfully or recklessly damaged by a student, parent or carer, the school may charge those responsible for some or all the cost of repair or replacement.
30. Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a pupil, and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all the cost to those responsible.
31. Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the headteacher and dependent on the situation.

Remissions and concessions

32. The school will consider the remission of charges to parents or carers where their child is entitled to free school meals. Parents who are eligible for the remission of charges will be dealt with confidentially.
33. The headteacher will authorise the remission of charges.
34. The school may choose to subsidise part or all of the payment of some charges for certain activities and pupils, and this will be determined by the headteacher.

Voluntary contributions

35. The school may ask for voluntary contributions to the school for general funds and/or to fund activities that will enrich our pupils' education.
36. 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.
37. There is no obligation for a parent or carer to make any contribution and the school will in no way pressure parents to contribute.

Inability or unwillingness to pay

38. The school is committed to ensuring fair access and treatment of all pupils, 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.

39. 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.

Complaints

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