



CHARGES AND REMISSIONS POLICY

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1 Introduction

The City of Wolverhampton Academy Trust (COWAT) recognises the value of providing a wide range of experiences to enrich and extend students' learning and to contribute to their personal development. COWAT aims to promote and provide such experiences for the students of the academies, both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and as additional optional activities.

However, many of these activities have an associated cost and cannot be provided unless voluntary contributions are received or parents are charged for the cost. COWAT believes that all our students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from academy activities and visits (curricular and extracurricular) independent of their parent's financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities are offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some students taking full advantage of the opportunities.

The 1996 Education Act requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities, which will be kept under regular review.

The policy identifies activities for which:

- voluntary contributions may be requested
- charges will be made
- charges will not be made.
- charges may be waived

Where parent is referred to this will include adults with a responsibility for the student.

2 Voluntary contributions

Separately from the matter of charging, academies may always seek voluntary contributions in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to students. All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that students of parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have.

The Law states:

If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the Governing Body or Headteacher will make this clear to parents from the outset.

No child will be excluded from an activity because his or her parents are unable or unwilling to pay.

If insufficient contributions are received, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled.

If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay their child will still be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

3. No charges will be made for

- a) An admission application
- b) Education provided during the academy day (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment and transport provided in the academy day by the academy to carry students between the academy and an activity)
- c) Education provided outside the academy day if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the academy, or part of the academy's basic curriculum for religious education

- d) Tuition for students learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the academy, or part of religious education
- e) Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the academy
- f) Examination re-sit(s) if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the academy. However, if a student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus a charge will be made
- g) Education provided on any trip that takes place during the academy day
- h) Education provided on any trip that takes place outside the academy day
 - a. if it is part of the National Curriculum, or
 - b. part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the academy, or
 - c. part of the academy's basic curriculum for religious education
- i) Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying students on a residential trip
- j) Transport provided in connection with an educational trip.

4. Activities for which charges may be made

a) Activities outside school hours

Non-residential activities (other than those listed in Section 3 above) which take place outside the academy day, but only if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside the academy day (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during the academy day).

b) Residential activities

Board and lodging costs (but only those costs) of residential trips deemed to take place during the academy day. However students whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (see remissions policy below) may not be charged for board and lodging costs.

Residential trips deemed to take place outside the academy day (other than for those activities listed in Section 3 above).

c) Music tuition

Music tuition for individuals or groups of up to 4 pupils.

d) Home to school student transport

Costs incurred by the school in providing home to school transport for students who live outside of the academy's designated catchment area.

e) Damage to academy property

Cost of replacing any item, such as a broken window or defaced, damaged or lost book where this is a result of a student's behavior

f) Loss of academy property

Cost of replacing lost items of academy property

When any trip is arranged, parents will be notified of the policy for allocating places.

Is a residential trip in or out of the academy day?

If the number of academy sessions on a residential trip is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the trip it is deemed to have taken place during the academy day (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the academy day, regulations require that the academy day is divided into 2 sessions. A "half day" means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

5 Scale of Charges

It is the policy of COWAT that charges will (or may) be made as indicated below. Parental agreement will be obtained before a charge is made.

Activities which can be charged for (with the exception of board and lodging for residential trips) are regarded as 'optional extras'. Charges will not exceed the actual cost (per student) of provision.

Activity or thing which will or may be charged for	Notes	Remitted or help available
Charges will/may be made for any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where a parent wishes their child to own them	Eg. A clay model – a charge to cover the cost of the clay.	
Charges will/may be made for music tuition	The cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument or singing, where the tuition is an optional extra for an individual student or groups of up to four students.	
Charges will be made for the board and lodging component of residential trips	The charge will not exceed the actual cost.	Remission for category A and B (see below)
Charges will be made for extracurricular trips and visits which fall outside of the academy day which are voluntary and not part of the national curriculum or examination courses.	The charge will not exceed the actual cost.	Consideration of remission will be made for categories A and B (see below)
Charges will be made for providing home to school transport for students who live outside of the academy's designated catchment area.	The charge will not exceed the actual cost.	

6 Remissions

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged students, COWAT has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances. This remissions policy sets out the circumstances in which such charges will be waived.

Families qualifying for remission or help with charges.

If remission or help is available in relation to a particular charge it is indicated in the right hand column of the table above. Criteria for qualification for remission are given below.

Category A

Parents in receipt of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Support • Income-based Jobseekers Allowance • Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 • Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received • Guaranteed State Pension • An income related employment and support allowance

Additional categories of parents may claim help with some costs in the following circumstances:

Category B

Parents who have:

- Specific individual circumstances that have caused temporary hardship
- Recently moved into hardship but not yet receiving the benefits listed in Category A
- Made a specific request to the Principal for any other justifiable reason

Remission is at the Principal's discretion in these circumstances based on any evidence provided.

7 Additional Considerations

COWAT recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible we shall publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the academy year so that parents can plan ahead
- We have established a system for parents to pay in instalments
- We acknowledge that offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis discriminates against pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

8 Policy Review Date

This policy will be reviewed annually.