



Charging and Remissions September 2020

Office use

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Associated documents:			
Trips Policy Debt Recovery Policy		Diverse Academies Trust Parental Request form	
Links to:			
Education Act 1996			

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1 Introduction

Legislation under the terms of the Education Act 1996 restricts the types of activity schools are allowed to charge parents for. The Diverse Academies Trust policy applies to charges made to parents/students, for facilities used by private individuals and third party organisations that rent Trust premises, for which separate arrangements apply and can be provided on request.

As a Trust we strive:

- To make activities accessible to all students, regardless of family income.
- To encourage and promote external activities which give added value to the curriculum.
- To respond to the wide variations in family income while not placing additional unexpected burdens on an Academy's budget.

For the purposes of this document, 'Parent' is taken to include any parent, carer or person with parental responsibility for a student. The Diverse Academies Trust may be referred to as DAT or the Trust.

By law, students may not be charged for activities that form part of the normal academy day, but DAT may invite parents and others from time-to-time to make a voluntary contribution to the Trust, to allow us to offer activities or experiences which otherwise might not be possible. This may include a voluntary contribution to activities taking place in academy time or activities which form part of the curriculum or an examination syllabus. However, the child of any parent who is unable to contribute will not be prevented from participating in an activity which takes place during academy time if the activity goes 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 a contribution.
- Students will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have contributed to the planned activity.
- If there are insufficient contributions received to cover the cost of including all students who wish to participate, the activity will not go ahead.
- Where an activity takes place outside of academy hours and does not form part of the Curriculum or examination syllabus, which is classed as an optional extra the Trust retains the right to request that parents meet the full cost of these activities.

2 Admissions

No charge shall be made in respect of admission to the academy 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 outside of that which is organised by the Trent Valley Teaching School Alliance or any of its satellites.

No charge shall be made in relation to the education of registered students where education is provided during academy hours. Where education is provided outside of academy hours, no charge shall be made provided it is required as part of the syllabus/curriculum. The Trust reserves the right to charge individuals who are not registered students of one of its academies for education provided or facilities used by them belonging to the Trust.

3 General charging

- **Musical instrument tuition** – the Diverse Academies Trust is committed to providing opportunities for students to experience the learning of a musical instrument. From September 2018 it became necessary to review the current charging policy and we expect that parents/carers pay for this tuition. However, support for students taking GCSE or A-level music will be considered. In addition, students registered for free school meals are also exempt from music tuition fees for one instrument/vocal. Please note that free school meals registration is necessary, and parents must meet the eligibility criteria for free school meals.

For those lessons that are chargeable each academy will determine whether to arrange individual or group lessons. Payment can be made for the whole year or termly via the academy's cashless payment provider, available online. Lessons will not commence until payment is received.

- **Transport** – where transport to and from the normal academy day, is arranged by DAT, the Trust reserves the right to charge parents full transportation costs. For transport during the normal academy day refer to point 1.
- **Practical subjects** - Voluntary contributions may be requested to cover the cost of materials and ingredients provided by an academy for practical subjects where parents indicate that they wish to receive the finished articles.

- **Visits during the academy day** – a voluntary charge will be made to cover the cost of educational visits and other activities. However, charges cannot be enforced where this forms part of the curriculum. Where the level of non-payment renders a trip financially unviable, consideration will be given to cancellation.
- **Residential visits** – where at least half of the time away from home is not normal academy time, where the trip involves an overnight stay or where the work undertaken is not an integral part of the examination course, the trip is classed as optional and parents can be expected to meet the full cost of residential courses in academy time. If the visit is deemed to have taken place during the academy day, or is part of the required curriculum, or is preparation for a public examination, then only the cost of board and lodgings can be passed onto parents and this cannot exceed the actual cost. Any charge in respect of an optional extra requires parental agreement and willingness to meet the charges. Parents should be aware that the activity may be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received. If a student is unable to go on a trip after the initial deposit has been paid (unless this is because of ill-health, for which a doctors' note will be required), parents will still be required to meet the full cost of the trip, unless another student can be found to take up the place.
- **Public examinations** – no charge will be made in respect of the entry of a registered student at an academy for an examination for which the academy agrees the student should be entered. Charges will be applied for the entry of a student for an examination for which they have not been prepared by an academy, or for entry to an examination against the advice of that academy. Entries for re-sits of examinations where the academy has not provided additional tuition are also subject to charge. Parents seeking to have an examination paper remarked will be required to pay the re-mark fee; however, if the new grade exceeds the original then this fee will be refunded. Where a student fails to attend for an examination for which they have been entered (unless this is because of ill-health, for which a doctors' note will be required), parents may be expected to meet the cost of the examination entry.
- **Optional extra visits** – visits that take place outside the academy day or as part of an extracurricular activity can be charged for, and parents are expected to meet the full cost of the trip.
- **Loss or damage** – parents will be expected to meet the cost of repairing or replacing any Trust property, or the property of Trust partners, damaged or destroyed by a student, or any fines to be paid by the Trust as a result of the actions of a student. A charge will also apply

for loss or damage of Trust property (including books or equipment) placed under the care of the student.

4 Remission

All requests for remission should be authorised using the Diverse Academies Trust Parental Request form. In the case of pupil premium/FSM pupils this can be requested by a member of staff leading the visit. In all cases the approval forms should be authorised by the Senior Leader for Educational Visits.

The following percentage contribution for visits should be used when offering Academy financial support for visits to pupil premium and disadvantaged students

Visit Category	Percentage of Support towards full cost of visit	Maximum number of visits per year that financial support can be applied for or offered
Category A	Up to 100%	2
Category B	Up to 75%	2
Category C	Up to 50%	1

5 Fundraising and sponsorship

General fundraising and sponsorship from a variety of sources may be used to allow additional activities to take place. Any fundraising activity will make the purpose of the fundraising clear to those who may wish to contribute.

6 Letting of the Trust's buildings

Charges will be levied for the use of the Trust's facilities by private individuals or external organisations at a rate to be determined annually. Facilities will only be let where they are not needed for the purpose of education during that time and under no circumstances will lettings be subsidised from resources provided for the students.

7 Refunding of Charges

Trips and activities charges and contributions are set to cover the anticipated costs. If the income from an activity exceeds the actual costs, the Academy will refund any surplus of £15 or more per student who contributed to the activity. Any amount below this will be transferred to the General Trips Fund and used to support access to optional activities for pupils.

The default refund method will be made via the Academy's online cashless facility, for example Scopay (via Worldpay).

However, in cases:

- Where parental payments were not made via the Academy's cashless facility a suitable alternative refund method will be arranged with the named contact or contacts held on the Academy's management information system (MIS) and refunds made either by BACS transfer or by cheque. Cash refunds will only be considered when all other refund methods have been confirmed as not viable.
- Where the bank account or credit/debit card used to make payment via the Academy's cashless system is closed or no longer active, alternative bank account details will be sought from the named contact or contacts held on the Academy's management information system (MIS).

8 Provision for review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust Board and will be adjusted in accordance with any subsequent guidance issued by DfE, ESFA or the local authority.