



the
beckmead
trust

Charging and Remissions Policy

- nurture
- sustain
- grow

Policy Level	Trust
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Beckmead Trust Academies may not:

- request any financial contributions as any part of the admissions process.
- charge for education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment).
- charge for any education or activities provided outside school hours 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 school.
- charge for entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at an Academy, or for an examination re-sit if the student is being prepared for the re-sit at an Academy.

Beckmead Trust Academies:

- must ensure that they inform parents/carers on low incomes and eligible for Free School Meals of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits.
- may invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions towards any part of a school's work.
- may charge for activities that are provided wholly or mainly outside school hours, as long as these activities are optional extras.
- may charge for board and lodging on residential courses.
- may charge for materials, books, instruments or equipment where the student's parent wishes him/her to own them.
- may charge for the use of community facilities.

2. AIMS

Beckmead Trust Academies aims to:

- provide a broad programme of trips and activities accessible to as many students as possible.
- establish and maintain a fair and coherent system of charges within the constraints of the school budget.

3. EDUCATION PROVIDED DURING SCHOOL HOURS

Education provided during school hours is free. This includes materials and equipment. 'School hours' are those when the school is actually in session, and do not include the break in the middle of the day.

4. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Where the Academy cannot levy charges, and it is not possible to make these additional activities within the resources ordinarily available to the Academy, the Academy may request or invite parents to make a contribution towards the cost of the activity. Students will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request or invitation. However, where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, then it will be cancelled.

5. ACTIVITIES TAKING PLACE OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS

- **Optional Activities** - Full cost for the activities which are deemed to be 'optional extras' can be made. Participation in optional extra activities will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet charges as are made. The Education Act 1996 describes activities which can be charged for as 'optional extras' and the Academy will decide the level of charge in such instances. Details of how the charge will be worked out will be provided for parents. The permitted charge may include an allowance for the costs of teachers from the Academy who supervise the activity.
- **Essential Activities** - If the activity is deemed to be an essential part of the curriculum the Academy may invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions. Should parents be unwilling or unable to contribute, letters of explanation addressed to the Headteacher will be considered and, where appropriate, remissions can be applied.

If a charge is made for each student, this will not exceed the actual cost. If further funds need to be raised, for example, to help in hardship cases, this must be by voluntary contributions or general fundraising or Pupil Premium funding.

6. EDUCATION PARTLY DURING SCHOOL HOURS

If most of the time spent on a non-residential activity occurs during school hours, that activity counts as taking place entirely in school hours and no charge will be levied, but parents may be asked to make a voluntary contribution. The School cannot insist that parents pay the entire cost, nor can it prohibit any student from participating if their parents are unwilling or unable to contribute, but should there be insufficient voluntary contributions from parents, the activity may have to be cancelled.

Time spent on travel only counts as being during school hours if the travel takes place during school hours.

For example:

- A long-distance trip involving much travel before and after normal school hours, but with time spent at the destination mainly within school hours, would count as happening in school time and voluntary contributions may be required.
- A trip leaving school an hour or so earlier than usual in the afternoon, but continuing until quite late in the evening, is classified as taking place outside school time and full charges may be made.

7. BOARD AND LODGING ON RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITIES

Charges may be made for board and lodging whether or not the visit takes place within school time and whether or not the activity is provided to fulfil the requirements of:

- the syllabus of a prescribed public examination
- the National Curriculum

Academies can charge for board & lodgings and the charge must not exceed the actual cost (but these costs can include appropriate admin & other directly related overheads).

Academies must remit any charges for board and lodging in the case of students eligible for Free School meals and where the activity is deemed to take place in school hours, or if it is out of hours but covered by the above criteria.

The Headteacher must tell all parents of the right to claim free activities if they are receiving these benefits.

8. TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR PLANNED ACTIVITIES

When parents are informed of a planned activity the information letter will include a reply slip. The student will not be considered for the activity until and unless a signed positive application is received by the Academy.

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

- The initial allocation will be on a first-come-first-served basis providing the payment required is attached to the application or e-payment has been made.
- The remaining unsuccessful students who had payment attached to their application will be placed on a reserve list and numbered in order of receipt.

Payments are made online.

- The Academy's acceptance of a positive reply constitutes a contract with the parents and any unpaid contribution will remain a debt to the Academy and collection will be enforced.
- Deposits are not refundable unless a replacement student is available.
- Returned contributions, for whatever reason, will be entirely at the discretion of the Academy and the amount will depend on whether the Academy's cost in providing the activity is covered.
- The planned activity may be cancelled if the estimated number of applications is not received.

9. PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

No charges will be made for entering students for public examinations that are set out in regulations. The Academy will enter a student for each examination in a public examination syllabus for which the Academy has prepared the student, unless it thinks there are educational reasons for not entering the student, or if the student's parents/carers ask in writing that the student should not be entered.

An examination entry fee may be charged to parents if:

- the examination is on the set list, but the student was not prepared for it at the Academy.
- the examination is not on the set list but the Academy arranges for the student to take it.
- a student fails without good reason to complete the requirements of any public examination where the Academy or LA originally paid, or agreed to pay, the entry fee.
- a student subsequently retakes an examination and is not prepared for this retake at the Academy.

Charges will not be made for any cost associated with preparing a student for an examination.

10. SCHOOL TRANSPORT & MINIBUSES

Only the Academy's students, staff or parents may travel in the Academy's minibus.

The Academy may charge for transport in its minibuses only if it holds a permit issued under Section 19 of the Transport Act 1985. The permit exempts the Academy from Public Service Vehicle (PSV) operator and driver licensing requirements. A permit is not required if no charge is made.

The Academy may not raise funds to make a profit by charging for travel in its minibuses.

11. SCHOOL MATERIALS & TEXTBOOKS

The Academy provides materials and textbooks but reserves the right to charge, at cost, for lost or damaged books or IT equipment. Additional materials are provided for optional purchase at cost in some subjects e.g. calculators in Mathematics and materials in practical subjects are chargeable if students or parents wish to own the finished product. Students will not be treated differently according to whether or not materials are being provided by their parents. Additional books that students wish to keep e.g. for revision, may be bought in bulk and sold to students who wish to buy them at cost price.

12. DAMAGE/LOSS TO PROPERTY

A charge will be levied in respect of willful damage, neglect or loss of Academy property (including premises, furniture, equipment (including IT equipment), books or materials), the

charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide.

A charge will be levied in respect of willful damage, neglect or loss of Academy property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials), belonging to a third party, where the cost has been recharged to the Academy. The charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide.

13. ADMISSIONS

No charge will be made for admission applications to Beckmead Trust Academies. Requests for financial contributions as part of the admissions process will not be made.

14. REMISSIONS POLICY

Participation in optional extra activities will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet charges as are made. The Education Act 1996 describes activities which can be charged for as 'optional extras' and the Trust Board will decide the level of charge in such instances.

If an activity is deemed to be an essential part of the curriculum and parents are unwilling or unable to contribute, letters of explanation addressed to the Headteacher in confidence will be considered and, where appropriate, remissions can be applied. However, it is the responsibility of parents to claim such remission of charges on an activity-by-activity basis.

Remission of charges will be considered for students who are eligible for Free School Meals.

If further funds need to be raised, for example, to help in hardship cases, this must be by voluntary contributions or general fundraising.

15. ACTIVITY DEFICIT/SURPLUSES/REMISSION ACCOUNT

The costing of activities will be undertaken with care, but as money needs to be collected in advance the costs will be estimates. A standard spreadsheet is provided to assist activity organisers with this task and is checked by the finance team.

Estimates will result in some activities making a deficit (unexpected late charges) but in the main activities will break even or make a small surplus. In those circumstances the surplus will be set against any Academy contributions for students and any deficits incurred on activities. Should a trip result in a large surplus, refunds will be made to parents who made voluntary contributions. Any year-end balance will be retained within Academy funds for the benefit of all students at the Academy and accounted for in the audited accounts annually.

16. INSURANCE

Insurance cover for trips and off-site activities within the UK is arranged by the Academy with the Risk Protection Agreement scheme provided by the Department for Education. No charge for insurance cover is made to parents when calculating charges for activities which are covered by this policy. Insurance for trips overseas will be arranged by the Academy and the cost of such insurance is factored into the charge for the trip. Full policy details are available on request from the Academy.

17. VAT

The regulations governing VAT are complex. To keep matters simple, as a general rule VAT is not recoverable on Academy trips which are paid for by parents but is recoverable when it is paid for out of the Academy budget.

18. LETTINGS

The Trustees recognise that the Academy is fully occupied during school hours, however, the Headteacher can authorise additional evening, weekend and school holiday lettings. The Trust Board will agree annually a schedule of charges for the use of all facilities by external bodies which must, as a minimum, cover all actual costs. The Academy cannot use ESFA funding to subsidise the cost of use by organisations other than other Beckmead Trust Academies.

The Trust Board reserves the right to decline any lettings that are not deemed to be in line with the Beckmead Trust's ethos.