



**COLLABORATIVE
LEARNING TRUST**

Working Together to Secure Success

CHARGING & REMISSIONS POLICY

Approved by Audit Risk and Finance Committee: October 2024

Date for next review: October 2025

POLICY STATEMENT

The Collaborative Learning Trust is committed to providing the best education for all its students and recognises the important role that activities such as trips, residential visits and extra-curricular activities play in enhancing student's educational experiences. This policy has been formulated in accordance with the Education Act 1996, which contains the legislation on charging for activities in schools maintained by local authorities in England, and the Education Act 2002.

The Trust Board is responsible for determining the content of this policy and the CEO is responsible for implementation. Any determination with respect to individual parents will usually be considered by the school Headteacher.

Under the Education Act 1996, education provided during the school day must be free. The definition of education includes materials, books, equipment, instruments and transport to or from any part of the school premises in which education is provided for those pupils, or to or from any place outside the school premises in which education is provided for those pupils under arrangements made by or on behalf of the Trust Board.

The aim of the policy is to set out when charges will be levied for activities, what remissions will be implemented and the circumstances under which voluntary contributions will be requested from parents. For the purposes of this document, 'Parent' is taken to include any parent, carer or person with parental responsibility for the child.

DETAILS OF CHARGES

The Trust Board recognises that legislation prohibits charging for certain activities but reserves the right under the legislation to make appropriate charges in the following areas:

1. **Residential Visits:** Charges will be levied for board and lodging during residential visits. The cost will not exceed the actual cost of the provision and will not include the cost of covering the staff involved in the visit. In all cases, the date of the trip will be provided in advance to allow parents to budget, and participation will be facilitated by publishing a payments schedule to encourage payment by instalment.
2. **Music Tuition:** Music tuition is an exception to the general rule that all education provided during school hours must be free. School governing committees are responsible for setting the charges for musical instrument tuition on an annual basis and will communicate these to parents. These charges will not exceed the cost of the provision.
3. **Books and Equipment:** Books and equipment will be provided by the school and must be treated with care. Parents will be asked to pay for the replacement of lost, defaced or damaged items. A charge will be made for any materials, books, instruments or equipment where parents wish their children to own them.

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4. **Ingredients and Materials:** Charges may be applied to cover the cost of ingredients or materials for practical subjects where the parent has indicated that they wish the finished article to be owned by them or by the pupil.
5. **Public Examinations:** Re-sit entry fees will be charged if the entry is requested by parents, where no further preparation has been provided by school or if the examination is not on the set list but school arranges for the student to take it. Charges may also be levied where the pupil fails without good reason to meet any examination requirement for that syllabus.
6. **Optional Extra Visits:** Visits which do not take place wholly or mainly during school hours, are not provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or to fulfil statutory requirements of the National Curriculum or to Religious Education will be classified as optional extras and the full cost will be charged for. Charges will not include any subsidies for students wishing to participate whose parents have not paid.
7. **Extra-curricular activities and school clubs:** The Trust Board reserves the right to charge for extra curricular activities at its discretion. Parents will be given sufficient notice of any charges which will be applied.
8. **School Meals:** The charges for food served in the school cafeteria, and the standard meals allowance for those entitled to free school meals will be determined and published annually with any increase being applicable from the beginning of the new academic year.
9. **Extended Services:** Fees and charges relating to the provision of community facilities will be reviewed annually.
10. **iPad Repairs and Replacements (schools with 1:1 iPad schemes only):** Parents will be asked to contribute towards the cost of repair or replacement if their child damages or loses their iPad.

REMISSIONS

Board and Lodging – Residential Visits: Parents of students in receipt of free school meals will be exempt for paying the cost of board and lodging for any trips essential to the provision of the National Curriculum.

Optional Extra Visits: Parents of students currently experiencing financial difficulties may request assistance towards the costs of these visits, in line with the procedures outlined below.

Music tuition: Students currently in receipt of free school meals are entitled to a discount on the cost of music tuition, please contact individual schools for further details. Students currently studying GCSE or A Level Music are entitled to subsidised tuition on one instrument only. This amount will be reviewed annually.

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Individual Cases of Financial Difficulty: Requests for financial assistance should be made in writing to the Headteacher upon receipt of the letter outlining the details of the activity, or as soon as parents are aware that an activity is to take place.

- The Headteacher may be able to agree flexible, extended payment terms
- Parents may be able to ask for assistance from the Hardship fund which operates independently from other funds. Essential activities will take preference over non-essential ones
- Parents currently in receipt of free school meals will be considered as first priority for assistance
- In most cases, parents will be asked to bear at least 50% of the cost
- All cases will be treated individually and in confidence

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

In order to enhance the quality and breadth of experience offered to students, the Governing Body of member schools may from time to time, request voluntary contributions from parents towards the benefit of the school or school activities. In such cases:

- No child will be excluded from an activity simply because their parent is unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent is unable or unwilling to pay, the child will still be given equal opportunity to take part in the activity.
- Initial letters will explain the nature of the proposed activity and its likely value in educational terms
- The letter will indicate the contribution per student which would be required if the activity were to take place
- If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, this will be made clear at the outset
- If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund the activity, then it may be cancelled

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