

Charging Policy

Staff Member with Responsibility:	Rebecca Harris – Business Manager
Reviewed by:	Board of Trustees
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Next Review Due:	Autumn 2019

ElmWey Learning Trust aims to value each student as an individual and enable them to achieve their full potential through a wide variety of opportunities and experiences. This document sets out the trust's policy for charging for the provision of this wide variety of opportunities and experiences. Whilst the intention is to apply the policy equally in order to promote fairness, every effort will be made to ensure that no child is prevented from participating because of financial circumstances.

By law, students may not be charged for taking part in activities that take place during the school day. Parents may be asked for voluntary contributions in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to students.

When notifying parents of activities the following will be made clear at the outset:

- if an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions this will be made clear at the outset.
- that there is no obligation to make any contribution and
- students will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents/carers have contributed towards the planned activity.

Procedure

1. Admissions – no charge shall be made in respect of admission.

2. Provision of Education – no charge shall be made in relation to the education of registered students where education is provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment.). Where education is provided outside of the normal school hours, no charge shall be made provided it is required as part of the National Curriculum or part of a syllabus for a prescribed examination. The trust may charge persons who are not registered pupils at Heathside School for education provided or for facilities used by them belonging to the trust.

3. Musical Instrument Tuition – A charge will be made for the cost, or a proportion of the cost, for self-employed teaching staff engaged specifically to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument where the tuition is an optional extra and not part of the National Curriculum. Tuition will be provided free of charge where it is considered to be an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a prescribed public examination syllabus taught as part of the main school curriculum.

4. Curriculum Area Charges – charges will be made for materials and ingredients for practical subjects where parents indicate they wish to receive the finished articles. Only where payment has been received will children be allowed to take work home. Charges will also be made for books, instruments or equipment where a student's parents or carers indicate specifically they wish to own them.

5. Visits & Activities during the School Day – Charges levied for day trips and in-school activities will represent the actual cost of providing the trip/activity. No profit will be made. Where the trip/activity occurs during the school day, parents will be asked for a voluntary contribution to cover the cost of their child's participation. Every effort will be made to ensure that the voluntary contributions are made but, if insufficient funding is received, the trust reserves the right to cancel the trip/activity. Once a trip or activity has been paid for, there will be no reimbursement for absentees on the day. Where a student may be prevented from participating because of financial hardship, consideration will be given to reducing the voluntary contribution expected. Any shortfall is to be met from the academy funds. All students will be treated equally regardless of the amount of voluntary contribution made by their parents.

6. Residential visits – Where at least half of the time away from home is not in normal school time or where the work undertaken is not an integral part of the examination course, the trip can be classified as an optional extra. Any charge in respect of an optional extra requires parental agreement and willingness to meet the charges. A charge will be made for board, lodging on a residential trip and transport on an optional extra. Parents should be made aware that the activity might be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received. Charges made in the above circumstances will not exceed the actual costs.

An initial deposit is usually requested for such residential trips with the remaining cost paid in instalments. This initial deposit is non-refundable should a child subsequently not participate in a trip. A request for the refund of any further payment must be made in writing by the parent and, if the cancellation is due to illness, a medical certificate may be required. Where a student may be prevented from participating because of financial hardship, consideration will be given to reducing the voluntary contribution expected. Any shortfall is to be met from academy funds. All students will be treated equally regardless of the amount of voluntary contribution made by their parents.

7. Public examinations – No charge shall be made in respect of the entry of a registered pupil at Heathside School. Charges are applied for the entry of a student for an examination for which he/she has not been prepared by the school. Entry fees for public examinations including re-sit fees may be charged for if a student fails without good reason to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus. Where a student has paid for an examination re-mark and the new grade exceeds the original, a refund is made for the fee.

8. Optional Extra Activities and Visits – Visits or activities that take place beyond the school day or as part of an extra-curricular activity can be charged and parents are expected to meet the full cost of the trip.

9. Breakages – The financial cost relating to breakages/damage/fines are recoverable from parents/carers and can be pursued as a civil debt. A charge will also apply for loss or damage to trust property which is placed under the responsibility of the student and may be taken off the premises.

Remission of Parent/Student charges

Parents or carers who find themselves in financial difficulties and who can prove they are in receipt of income support, income based job seekers allowance, receive support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, or are in receipt of child tax credit provided that working tax credit is not also received and that the family's income is below that specified by the Inland Revenue may apply to the Academy for financial support.

Remission where charges can legally be made is at the Principal's discretion in these circumstances based on any evidence provided.

The trust 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:

- When appropriate there is an established system for parents to pay in instalments
- When an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it may be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip in exceptional circumstances.
- We acknowledge that offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis could be seen to discriminate against students from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection