

Purpose and background

St Martin's Academy wishes to make its broad programme of activities accessible to as many pupils as possible and is committed to ensure equal opportunities for all children, regardless of financial circumstances. This policy is intended to maintain a fair and coherent system of charges and remissions within the constraints of the school budget to ensure that no child is discriminated against. It also defines other circumstances when the school may wish to ask for voluntary contributions. The policy is written to comply with the relevant terms of the Education Act 1996, the Education (School Sessions and Charges and Remissions Policies) (Information) (England) Regulations 1999 and the Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) Regulations 1989. It also states the school's policy for charging for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Charging

No pupil should have his/her access to the curriculum limited by charges. However, the school reserves the right to levy a charge in any circumstances permissible under statute as detailed below. When charges are to be made the school reserves the absolute right to determine whether the activity has to be cancelled if an insufficient number of families are prepared to pay for the activity to take place.

Voluntary Contributions

Where a charge cannot be made (as is the often the case for activities which are an essential part of the curriculum, or religious education) parents may nevertheless be asked to make a voluntary contribution. The matter of a voluntary contribution, whether a parent is unable or unwilling to contribute, will not be a factor in deciding whether a pupil is allowed to participate in an activity to be financed by voluntary contributions. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity, and the school cannot fund it via another source, the activity will be cancelled.

Remissions

The school will apply the statutory minimum remissions to any charges that they make. However no pupil shall be placed at an educational disadvantage because of a parent's unwillingness or inability to contribute. **In the case of particular need, remission outside these parameters will be at the absolute discretion of the Head of School.**

Liability for personal property

The school does not accept liability for any items of personal property lost or damaged in school, **although in exceptional circumstances a contribution to the replacement of a lost or damaged item may be made at the absolute discretion of the Head of School.**

Management of policy

Staff: This policy is implemented and managed by the Head of School.

Academy Trust: The Finance Committee reviews this policy on a regular basis and recommends amendments to the Governing Body for final decision.

Approval: Approved by the Academy Trust/Reviewed January 2015

Practice and procedures

Organisers of activities should be clear as to whether an activity falls within the parameters for charging or voluntary contributions.

A - Activities which are AN ESSENTIAL PART of the national curriculum, religious education or for an approved examination

Charging

It is not *normally* possible to charge for these activities.

Where a charge **is allowed** (see below), it may not exceed the cost that can be apportioned to the pupil's participation. If the cost of the chargeable element of an activity is expected to exceed the sum of the charges received, then the organiser should ensure funds to balance are available by reference to the Head of School. The school may make a charge where the law permits it.

For example:

- The cost of board and lodging for all residential activities.
- Musical instrument tuition for pupils in groups, if the teaching is not an essential part of either the national curriculum or a public examination syllabus.

- Activities that take place during lunch breaks.
- The services of a non-school organisation employed during school hours.
- Materials used in the production of an article where the pupil's parent has indicated in advance that he/she wishes the article to be owned by the pupil. (NB: where a parent declines to offer to pay for materials used in the production of an article where otherwise it would be expected that the pupil's parent would have indicated in advance that he/she wishes the article to be owned by the pupil, then the pupil shall undertake the exercise but not be allowed possession of the article on completion.)

Voluntary contributions

These may be asked for, but this must be done in line with the stated objectives of this policy. Organisers of activities may ask for voluntary contributions to cover the costs of:

- travel
- materials, books and equipment
- teaching costs including supply cover
- associated administrative and support staff costs
- tickets and entrance fees.

The organiser is expected to have constructed a balanced budget in advance. When arranging an activity, the voluntary contribution requested may be set to cover the direct cost per pupil, fixed overhead costs and, where appropriate, an allowance for a contingency.

When writing to parents, the benefit and educational aims of the activity must be described along with any risks associated. A request for voluntary contributions must make it clear that:

- there is no obligation to make a contribution
- no pupil will be treated differently or not allowed to participate according to whether a contribution has been made
- It may be necessary to cancel an activity if voluntary contributions received are insufficient to meet the costs of the activity.

Relevant Legislation

Education Act 1996

Education (School Sessions and Charges and Remissions Policies) (Information) (England) Regulations 1999

Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) Regulations 1989

The Education (Residential Trips) (Prescribed Tax Credits) (England) Regulations 2003

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 SI 2006/1751 as amended by SI 2010/1725 and SI 2011/1625

The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007

Policy Reviewed: April 18

Date of next review: April 2020