



CEDARS ACADEMY TRUST

Cedars Academy: Low Fell

Cedars Academy: High Heworth

Charging and Remissions

Policy

Policy owner	Gareth Kyle, Academy Business Leader
Approved by	Resources, Audit & Risk Committee
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Applies to	The Trust as a whole, across both sites

The Policy

1. Purpose and scope

- 1.1** This policy sets out what the Trust charges for, what it does not charge for, and when a charge is waived. It applies across the Trust, at Cedars Academy: Low Fell and Cedars Academy: High Heworth, and to every pupil on roll at either site.
- 1.2** The Trust charges for board and lodging on residential visits, and for school meals taken by pupils who are not eligible for free school meals. It does not charge for after school clubs or for trips, although it reserves the right to do so, and its normal approach where a cost falls on the academy is set out at paragraph 5.6.
- 1.3** Every pupil at the Trust has an Education, Health and Care Plan. The Trust must not charge for anything named in a pupil's Plan, or for anything provided to meet a pupil's special educational needs.
- 1.4** No pupil will be prevented from taking part in an activity because their parents are unwilling or unable to pay.

2. Legal framework

- 2.1** Sections 449 to 462 of the Education Act 1996 set the law on charging in schools. Clause 36 of the Trust's funding agreement applies those provisions to the Trust.
- 2.2** The Trust follows the Department for Education's guidance Charging for School Activities, May 2018. That guidance has not been updated since free school meals were expanded in September 2026, so section 8 of this policy follows the current meals position rather than the benefit list in the guidance.

3. Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1** The Resources, Audit & Risk Committee approves this policy and monitors how it is applied.
- 3.2** The three co-headteachers and the Academy Business Leader decide together on any request for remission or for help from the support fund.
- 3.3** The Director of Inclusion is the named contact for parents on charging, remissions and support.
- 3.4** The Academy Business Leader sets the charge for a residential visit, arranges invoicing and collection, and keeps the record of charges made, remissions applied and support given.
- 3.5** Staff arranging a visit or activity must tell parents in writing what the charge or requested contribution is before the visit is booked, and must follow this policy when places are allocated.

4. What the Trust does not charge for

- 4.1** Education. The Trust does not charge for admission; for education provided during school hours, including any materials, books, instruments or equipment used; or for education provided outside school hours where it is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination the pupil is being prepared for at the Trust, or part of religious education.

- 4.2** Examinations and tuition. The Trust does not charge for entry to a prescribed public examination the pupil has been prepared for at the Trust, or for a resit the pupil is being prepared for at the Trust. It does not charge for instrumental or vocal tuition in any circumstances, whether or not a parent has asked for it.
- 4.3** Transport. The Trust does not charge for transport to or from either site where the local authority has a duty to provide it; to other premises where the Trust or the local authority has arranged for the pupil to be educated; to meet an examination requirement where the pupil has been prepared for that examination at the Trust; or in connection with an educational visit.
- 4.4** Visits and provision. The Trust does not charge for education provided on a residential visit, or for supply cover for teachers who are absent because they are accompanying pupils on one. It does not charge for anything named in a pupil's Education, Health and Care Plan, or for anything provided to meet a pupil's special educational needs.

5. What the Trust charges for

- 5.1** Board and lodging on a residential visit. The charge must not be more than the actual cost of the board and lodging, divided equally between the pupils taking part.
- 5.2** The charge must not include a subsidy for other pupils, the cost of alternative provision for pupils who are not going, or the cost of supply cover.
- 5.3** Parents are told the amount in writing before the visit is booked. A pupil takes part on the basis that their parent has agreed to the charge, subject to the remission and support arrangements in section 8.
- 5.4** School meals. Meals are charged at the same price at both sites and are free to any pupil eligible for free school meals. Meal charges are made under the school meals provisions of the Education Act 1996, sections 512 to 512ZB, and are not affected by the rest of this policy.
- 5.5** Replacing Trust property that a pupil has damaged or lost. The Trust will not charge where the damage or loss arises from a pupil's special educational needs or disability, including behaviour that is a feature of those needs. Given the Trust's cohort, that will usually be the case. Where a charge is made it is limited to the cost of the same or an equivalent item, and it is waived where paying it would cause hardship.
- 5.6** After school clubs and trips. The law allows the Trust to charge for after school clubs, and for activities that take place outside school hours, as optional extras. The Trust does not currently do so, but reserves the right to where the cost to the academy is significant or where a club or trip is delivered by a third party. In those cases the Trust will normally meet part of the cost itself and ask families for a voluntary contribution towards the rest rather than making a charge. Section 7 applies to any voluntary contribution. Where an activity counts as taking place during school hours under section 6, the Trust must not charge for it and may only ask for a voluntary contribution.

6. When an activity counts as taking place during school hours

- 6.1** Education provided during school hours must be free, so whether an activity counts as taking place during school hours decides whether it can be charged for. The school day is divided into two sessions, and school hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.
- 6.2** For an activity that is not residential, if half or more of the time spent on it falls during school hours, including travel that happens during school hours, it counts as taking place during school hours and must not be charged for. If less than half falls during school hours it counts as taking place outside school hours and may be charged for, unless it is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination or part of religious education.
- 6.3** For a residential visit, if the number of school sessions the visit takes up is half or more of the number of half days spent on it, the visit counts as taking place during school hours. A half day is any period of twelve hours ending at noon or midnight. Board and lodging may be charged for either way.

7. Voluntary contributions

- 7.1** The Trust may ask parents for a voluntary contribution towards an activity or visit that would not otherwise be possible. There is no obligation to contribute, no pupil will be left out of an activity because their parents do not contribute, and every pupil has the same chance of a place whether or not their parents contribute.
- 7.2** Where the Trust asks for a voluntary contribution, it tells parents what the activity costs and how much the Trust is meeting itself, so the request is clear. Where an activity cannot run without voluntary contributions, the Trust says so at the outset. If not enough is raised and the activity cannot be funded another way, it is cancelled and parents are told.
- 7.3** The Trust will not ask for contributions in a way that puts pressure on parents. It does not use colour coded letters, direct debit mandates or standing order mandates to request contributions, and it does not allocate places on a first paid, first served basis. How places will be allocated is set out to parents before the activity is offered.

8. Remissions and support with costs

- 8.1** The Trust remits the charge for board and lodging on a residential visit in full where the pupil is eligible for free school meals, or where the pupil's parent receives a benefit listed in section 457(4) of the Education Act 1996. Parents do not have to apply. The Trust applies the remission from the free school meals record it already holds.
- 8.2** From 1 September 2026 every child in a household receiving Universal Credit is eligible for free school meals, alongside children whose families are supported under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, so in practice most pupils at the Trust are covered by paragraph 8.1. Where a pupil becomes eligible after their parent has paid, the Trust refunds what was paid, provided the entitlement takes effect before the visit.
- 8.3** The Trust holds a support fund for families in financial difficulty who are not covered by paragraph 8.1, or who need help with a cost this policy does not remit. The fund is

discretionary. It has no fixed budget and no guaranteed amount, and help is given as far as funds allow.

- 8.4** A request for help is made in confidence to the Director of Inclusion. It is decided by the three co-headteachers and the Academy Business Leader together, and the decision is given to the parent promptly. Requests and decisions are confidential and are handled in line with the Trust's Equality Statement and Objectives.
- 8.5** Parents may pay a charge by instalments by agreement with the Academy Business Leader. Where an activity comes up at short notice, instalments may be agreed that run beyond the date of the activity.

9. Refunds

- 9.1** Deposits for residential visits are not refundable, and the Trust tells parents this when it first gives them information about the visit.
- 9.2** Where the Trust cancels a visit, everything parents have paid is refunded. Where the Trust decides that a pupil should not take part, what has been paid is refunded, less any deposit.
- 9.3** Where a parent cancels, or a pupil cannot attend at short notice, a refund is at the Trust's discretion, taking account of whether the Trust can recover the cost and whether the place can be offered to another pupil. Where a visit is postponed, the Trust decides whether to hold the money until the visit takes place, move it to another activity or refund it, and tells parents which.
- 9.4** A parent who is unhappy with a decision on a charge, a remission or a refund may use the Trust's Complaints Procedure.

10. Monitoring and review

- 10.1** The Academy Business Leader monitors charges made, remissions applied and support given, and reports on them to the Resources, Audit & Risk Committee once a year.
- 10.2** This policy is reviewed annually by the Resources, Audit & Risk Committee, or sooner if the law changes, and is published on the Trust website.

Annex A: Linked policies, forms and systems

Linked policies

- Debt Management Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Equality Statement and Objectives
- Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

Forms and systems

- Free school meals eligibility record, maintained by the Data and Office Manager
- Trip and visit letters to parents, issued by the member of staff arranging the visit
- Record of charges, remissions and support fund decisions, maintained by the Academy Business Leader