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Policy for Charging and Remissions

Name and Title of Author:	Debbie Carvalho – Business Manager
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References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- DfE, 'Charging for School Activities: Departmental advice for governing bodies, school leaders, school staff and local authorities', October 2014.- The Key for School Leaders, 'Charging and remissions policy – checklist'

Introduction

As specified in Swanland Education Trust's Funding Agreements with the Department for Education, the Trust is required to comply with the law on charging for school activities (Sections 449–462 of the Education Act 1996). The law states very clearly that education during normal school hours is to be free of any compulsory charge to parents and carers, that charges can be made for specified activities and that parents and carers in receipt of certain benefits will receive support from the school where possible. The Trust is committed to upholding these legal requirements.

The Trust wishes to provide, for all children, the best possible educational opportunities available within the funds allocated by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. However, educationally valuable activities have been, and will continue to be, dependent on financial contributions in whole or in part from parents and carers. The Trust's concern is to keep financial contributions to a reasonable minimum and to ensure, as far as possible, that all children are able to take part, irrespective of their circumstances. The law recognises that charges may be made to parents and carers in certain defined circumstances, provided that the Trust has identified the activities for which charges will be made and has explained the basis on which charges may be reduced or waived for certain children.

The agreed policy is detailed below.

1. Admissions

There is no charge for admissions.

2. School Meals

There is no charge for children who are entitled to Free School Meals or Universal Infant Free School Meals. Parents/carers of children who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged as per the current price set by each individual school.

3. Activities That Take Place During School Hours (this does not include the break in the middle of the school day)

There is no charge for activities during school hours, with the exception of music or vocal tuition (see Section 7)

There is no charge for transport during school hours to school-organised activities.

The school **may charge** for:

- books, materials, instruments and equipment that the parent wishes the child to keep (the cost will be made clear to the parents before charge);
- optional extras (see Section 4);
- music or vocal tuition (see Section 7).

4. Activities That Take Place Outside of School Hours (non-residential)

There is no charge for activities that take place outside of school hours when they are:

- part of the set curriculum, including sports matches against other schools;
- part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education.

However, other than the two exceptions above, education provided outside of school hours is considered an **Optional Extra** and charges for optional extras may be made.

Optional Extras

The school will charge for optional extras as follows:

- education provided outside of school time that is **not**
 - a) part of the national curriculum nor
 - b) part of religious education;
- transport (other than transport taking the child to a school or other premises where the local authority or school governing body has arranged for the child to be provided with education);
- board and lodging for a child on a residential visit;
- extended day services offered to children (eg breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions).

Participation in Optional Extras

Participation in optional extras will be on the basis of parental choice and prior confirmation from parents is required, either in writing or by clicking the 'Consent' button on the school's online payment facility, followed by making an electronic payment for the optional extra.

Charging for Optional Extras

The charge per child cannot exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra, divided equally by the number of participating children and may include elements for:

- any materials, books or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- the cost of buildings and accommodation;
- non-teaching staff;
- the cost for teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide the optional extra or for teaching staff employed to provide music or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra.

The charge will not include:

- an element of subsidy for any other children who may wish to take part in the optional extra but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay;
- a charge for supply teachers (where the optional extra takes place partly during school hours) to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying children on a visit.

5. Activities That Take Place Partly During School Hours Either On- or Off-Site

Where the majority of a non-residential activity takes place during school hours, the charging of the activity will be the same as outlined in Section 3. Travelling time is included in time spent on the activity.

In cases where the majority of a non-residential activity takes place outside of school hours, the charging of the activity will be the same as outlined in Section 4.

6. Residential Activities

Schools will not charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours (ie the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit);
- education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum or part of religious education;
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from the school accompanying children on a residential visit;
- travel costs where the residential activity is classed as being within school hours;
- residential activities that take place during school hours.

Schools will charge for:

- **Board and Lodging** – When any visit has been organised by the school where there may be a cost for board and lodging, parents/carers will be informed of this before the visit takes place. The school will charge anything up to the full cost of board and lodging on residential visits, whether it is classified as taking place during school hours or not. The charge will, however, not exceed the actual cost. Parents who can prove they are in receipt of certain benefits may be exempt from paying this cost (see Section 9).
- **Travel** – Travel charges may apply when the residential activity takes place outside of school hours. The amount charged will be calculated to cover the unit cost per child. These charges may not apply to those children entitled to remissions, but no other children will be charged extra to cover those costs.
- **Activities** – The school may charge for residential activities that fall outside of school hours (see Section 4).

7. Music Tuition

The Trust follows government legislation that states that all education provided during school hours must be free; however, music lessons are an exception to this rule.

Charges will be made if the teaching is not part of either the national curriculum or the Schools' Music Service Wider Opportunities programme.

The school may charge for teaching requested by parents and delivered by specialist tutors, given either to an individual child or to groups of an appropriate size, to play a musical instrument or to sing. The cost of these lessons will be calculated by considering the total cost for music tuition in school each term and dividing that by the number of pupils taking part.

There is no charge for vocal or instrumental tuition for Looked After Children.

8. Damage to Property and Breakages

Where school property has been willfully or neglectfully damaged by a child or parent, the school may charge those responsible for some or all of the cost of repair or replacement.

Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a child and the school has been charged, the school may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible.

Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the Head and be dependent on the situation.

9. Remissions

The Head of each school will give consideration to the remission of charges on optional extras (either wholly or partly) to parents or carers who receive the following benefits:

- Universal Credit in prescribed circumstances;
- Income Support (IS);
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA);
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190 (financial year 2013/14);
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
- an income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008.

Children of parents/carers in receipt of these benefits are also entitled to Free School Meals.

Please note, that where a parent or carer can prove they are in receipt of one of the above benefits, they will be wholly exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging on a school residential visit.

It is the Board of Trustees' policy that no child should be discriminated against by virtue of his or her parents/carers' inability to pay. Parents/carers in receipt of any of the above benefits should contact the school Head in the knowledge that the matter will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

10. Voluntary Contributions

The Head may ask for voluntary contributions to the school to fund activities that will enrich our children's education.

In any case where an activity cannot be afforded without voluntary funding, this will be made clear to the parents/carers. If the activity is cancelled owing to lack of funds, all monies paid will be returned to parents/carers.

There is no obligation for a parent or carer to make any contribution and the school will in no way pressure parents to make a contribution.

11.Inability or Unwillingness to Pay

The Trust is committed to ensuring fair access and treatment of all children and this means ensuring no child is excluded from an activity because the parents or carers of that child are unable or unwilling to pay. If there is insufficient funding for an activity, then it will be cancelled.

The identity of the child or parents/carers of the child who did not want/was unable to make the payment will not be disclosed under any circumstances.