



# CHARGING & REMISSIONS

December 2023-2024

Passmores Co-operative Learning Community

## Introduction

The Trustees of the Passmores Co-operative Learning Community (PCLC) recognise the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including clubs, out of school trips, residential and experiences of other environments, can make towards students' all-round educational experience, and their personal and social development.

PCLC is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all students, regardless of financial circumstances, and has established the following policy and procedures to ensure that no child is discriminated against by our offering of school trips, activities and educational extras.

In addition, we are committed to adhering to legal requirements regarding charging for school activities, and meeting all statutory guidance provided by the DfE.

PCLC will:

- not charge for education provided during school hours.
- inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of relevant benefits of the support available to them when asking for contributions.

Throughout this policy, the term 'parents' means all those having parental responsibility for a child.

### 1. Charging for education

We will not charge parents for:

- Admission applications.
- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment).
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for by the school, or part of religious education.
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, unless provided at the request of the student's parents.
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school.
- Examination re-sits, if the student is being prepared for the re-sits at the school.

We may charge parents for the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment, where they would like their child to own them.
- The cost of materials or ingredients for subjects where parents have indicated in advance that they wish to own the final product.
- Optional extras (see below).
- Instrumental and vocal tuition, if this has been requested by the parent
- Use of community facilities and other commercial activities
- **Early years providers only:** Certain early years provision
- Provision of information within the scope of freedom of information.

### 2. Optional extras

We may charge parents for the following optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
  - Part of the national curriculum.

- Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school.
  - Religious education.
- Examination entry fees where the student has not been prepared for the examinations at the school.
  - Transport, other than transport that is required to take the student to school or other premises where the Trustees have arranged for the student to be provided with education.
  - Board and lodging for a student on a residential visit.
  - Extended day services offered to students (for example breakfast club, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions).

When calculating the cost of optional extras, the school will only take into account the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in relation to the optional extra.
- The cost of buildings and accommodation.
- The employment of non-teaching staff.
- The cost of teaching staff (including teaching assistants) under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra.
- The cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide vocal tuition or tuition in playing a musical instrument where the tuition is an optional extra.

The school will not charge in excess of the actual cost of providing the optional extra divided by the number of participating students. We will not charge a subsidy for any students wishing to participate but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge. If a proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, we will not charge for the cost of alternative provision for those not participating.

Participation in any optional activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Therefore, parental agreement is a prerequisite for the provision of an optional extra.

If a charge is to be made for a particular activity, such as optional extras, parents will be informed of how the charge will be calculated.

### **3. Examination fees**

We may charge for examination fees in the following circumstances:

- If a student has not regularly attended the lessons for a particular examination subject, the examination fee may be requested, refundable if the student attends for examination.
- If, without a medical certificate explaining the reason, a student fails to complete examination requirements for any public examination for which the Academy has paid an entry fee, the Trustees may seek to recover the fee from the parent.
- *There may be a charge for examination entry where there is a request from the parent for additional subject entries to be made or for a module or whole exam to be re-sat.*
- Where a pupil is entered for a second or subsequent attempt at an examination, the school will pay the fee. Once pupils have left the school, resits must be taken at the school.

- If a pupil or their parents consider it to be in the best interests of the pupil to request that an examination is re-marked, any fees involved must be covered by the pupil or their parents. If the awarding body changes the overall grade of the result, the school will not be charged by the awarding body and the parents or pupil will have their fees refunded.

#### **4. Voluntary contributions**

We may, from time-to-time, ask for voluntary contributions towards the benefit of the school or school activities. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, we will make this clear to parents at the outset. We will also make it clear that there is no obligation for parents to make a contribution, and notify parents whether assistance is available.

No child will be excluded from an activity simply because their parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal opportunity to take part in the activity. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity, and the school cannot fund it via another source, the activity will be cancelled.

We will strive to ensure that parents do not feel pressurised into making voluntary contributions.

#### **5. Music tuition**

Music tuition is the only exception to the rule that all education provided during school hours must be free. The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 allow for charges to be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of any size if the tuition is at the request of the student's parents.

The charges will not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff providing the tuition.

Charges cannot be made:

- If the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum
- If the teaching is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme.
- For a pupil who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22(l) of the Children Act 1989)

#### **6. Transport**

We will not charge for:

- Transporting registered students to or from the school premises, where the LA has a statutory obligation to provide the transport.
- Transporting registered students to other premises where the Trustees have arranged for students to be educated.
- Transporting students to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for the examination at the school.
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

#### **7. Residential visits**

We will not charge for:

- Education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours.
- Education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.

- Supply teachers to cover for teachers accompanying students on visits.
- We may charge for board and lodging – but the charge will not exceed the actual cost.
- Parents who can prove that they are in receipt of certain benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging (see section 10).

## **8. Education partly during school hours**

If 50 percent or more of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours (including time spent travelling if the travel occurs during school hours), it is deemed to take place during school hours and no charge will be made.

Whatever the start and finish times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into two sessions. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

If less than 50 percent of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours and we may charge for the activity; however, we will not charge if the activity is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.

The remission of charges for board and lodging payments is the responsibility of the school. These costs will be borne by the school.

Any charges for extended day services will be optional.

## **9. Damaged or lost items**

The Trust schools may charge for the cost of replacing items that are damaged or lost due to the negligence or poor behaviour of pupils or their parents. Parents will only be charged the replacement cost to purchase the same or equivalent item. The school will consider waiving costs in exceptional circumstances, e.g. financial hardship.

## **10. Remissions**

Where the parent of a student/student is in receipt of qualifying state benefit(s), the Trustees will remit in full the cost of board and lodging for any residential activity that is organised for the student and which takes place within school time. This will also be the case where the residential activity forms part of the syllabus for a public examination.

Parents in receipt of any of the following benefits may request assistance with the costs of activities:

- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

The Trustees may remit charges in full or in part to other parents after considering other specific hardship cases. The Trustees invite parents to apply, in the strictest confidence, for the remission of charges in part or in full. In the case of secondary school trips, parents can contact either the person organising the trip (indicated on the trip letter) or any member of the Senior Leadership Team. For primary schools, contact should be made with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.

The Principal/Headteacher will authorise remission.

## **11. Charging and Remissions Procedures**

1. Staff organising a trip, visit, club or activity will notify parents in advance of any likely costs. This will be done by letter, with a reply slip for parents to accept the proposed costs. The letter will contain details of remission arrangements as set out in the Charging and Remissions Policy.
2. The organising member of staff, in agreement with the CFO, will set out the arrangements for collection of costs to parents.
3. The organising member of staff will agree the process for the collection of monies with the Finance Manager (Passmores Academy) or the Office Manager (Purford Green Primary/Potter Street Academy/The Downs).
4. Collection of unpaid or late monies will be the responsibility of the trip leader in the first instance. If payment is not recovered the issue will be passed on and dealt with by the PCLC Finance department.
5. The PCLC Finance department will keep accounts of all trips, visits, clubs or activities.

## **12. Insurance**

Any insurance costs will be included in charges made for trips or activities.

## **13. School trip refunds**

All initial deposits for school trips will be non-refundable. Parents will be informed of this when they are provided with initial information about the trip.

In the event that the school has to cancel a trip due to foreseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded.

If the school cancels a trip due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the co-principals' / headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The principals' / headteacher's may consult the Trust Board on the matter, taking into account the cost to the school, including alternative provision cost.

If a school trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the co-principals' / headteacher's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The co-principals / headteacher will discuss options with the Trust Board, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.

If a pupil or their parents cancel the pupil's place on a trip, it is at the co-principals' / headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The co-principals' / headteacher will consult the Trust Board on the matter, taking into account the reason for cancellation, whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip, and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

Where a pupil or their parents have previously cancelled a place on a trip and received a full refund, the school has the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future trips and visits.

In the event that a pupil cannot attend a trip at the last minute, e.g. due to illness, it is at the co-principals' / headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The co-principals / headteacher take into account whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

Once trip arrangements have been booked and confirmed, if contributions exceed the total cost of the trip, a refund will be given where the excess is greater than £1 per pupil. If the excess is less than £1 per pupil, this will be paid into the school's account.

Excess expenditure will be subsidised by the school fund.

The school will deal with cancellations and refunds on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all pupils and their families are treated equally.

If a parent wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they can do so via the PCLC Complaints Policy.

#### **14. Income generation**

In line with the ESFA's 'Academy Trust Handbook', the trust will set fees for chargeable services at full cost, and reserves the right to apply an additional rate of return when in a commercial environment.

#### **15. Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme**

The school's Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme sets out where fees may be charged for the provision of information.

#### **16. Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

On behalf of the Trustees, the PCLC Finance and Audit Committee will review this policy every year and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be ratified by the Trust Board and will be promoted and implemented throughout the PCLC academies.

**This policy was reviewed by the PCLC Finance, Audit & Risk Committee and ratified by the Trustees on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023. It will be reviewed at least annually.**