STEEL RIVER
ACADEMY TRUST

# Charging and Remissions Policy

**Key document details**

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## 1.0 Policy statement

1.1 Steel River Academy Trust (SRAT) is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all students, regardless of financial circumstances, and has established the following policy and procedures to ensure that our offering of school trips, activities and educational extras discriminates against no child.

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

We promise:

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

## 2.0 Scope and purpose

2.1 The policy explains our legal and moral obligation to provide a free education to all children and to ensure all provision is fully inclusive. It is our mission to challenge social and educational disadvantage and this policy supports this. The policy explains all types of charges that a child and or parent may incur and how we support families who may encounter financial difficulties.

The legal framework and statutory guidance that that underpins this policy is;

- Education Act 1996
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010
- DfE (2014) 'Charging for School Activities'
- DfE (2017) 'Governance Handbook'
- ESFA (2016) Financial Handbook
- Our Funding Agreement (see Trust website)
- Other associated Trust policies such as our Finance policy

## 3.0 Charging for education

3.1 We will not charge parents / carers for:

- admission applications
- education provided during school hours (we may ask for voluntary contributions towards transport and entry in venues, see section 7 regarding voluntary contributions)
- 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 / carer through our peripatetic service)
- entry for a prescribed public examination (if the student has been prepared for it at the school)

3.2 We may charge parents / carers for the following:

- materials, books, instruments or equipment (where they desire their child to own them), for example mathematical equipment

- wilful damage to Academy property, equipment and furniture
- Lost or damaged text or exercise books, lost locker keys and badges, planners etc.
- Ingredients and materials for practical subjects (including Design Technology, Food Technology etc.)
- use of community facilities

## 4.0 Optional extras

4.1 We may charge parents / carers 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 for trips, other than that arranged by the council for the student to be provided with education
- board and lodging for a student on a residential visit
- extended day services offered to students

4.2 When calculating the cost of optional extras, the school will only consider 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

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

4.4 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 pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra.

## 5.0 Examination fees

5.1 We may charge for examination fees if:

- the examination is on the prescribed list but the student was not prepared for it at the school (eg a language not offered by the school)
- the examination is not on the prescribed list, but the school arranged for the student to take it
- Peripatetic examinations that the parent requests the child to undertake
- a student fails, without good reason, to complete the requirements of any public examination where the school agreed to pay the original fee (for example a former Post-16 student re-sitting as an ‘external’ candidate

## 6.0 Examination re-sits and re-marks

6.1 It will be at the school's discretion if a student is entered for a second, or subsequent, attempt at an examination. Payment of fees will be discussed and agreed on an individual student basis.

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

## 7.0 Voluntary contributions

7.1 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 / carers at the outset. We will also make it clear whether assistance is available.

7.2 If a parent / carer 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.

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

## 8.0 Music tuition

8.1 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 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 / carers.

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

## 9.0 Transport

9.1 We will not charge for:

- transporting registered students to or from the school premises, where the council has a statutory obligation to provide the transport
- transporting students to meet an examination requirement at another school when they have been prepared for the examination at the school

## 10.0 Residential visits

10.1 We will not charge for:

- 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

10.2 When the school organises a residential visit, we do make a charge for the visit. The school heavily subsidises all residential visits for all pupils and is flexible in the time that is given to parents to make those contributions.

## 11.0 Education partly during school hours

11.1 If 50%, or more, of the time spent on an activity 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, (we may ask for voluntary contributions towards transport and entry in venues, see section 7 regarding voluntary contributions) .

11.2 If less than 50% 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. (We may ask for voluntary contributions towards transport and entry in venues see section 7 regarding voluntary contributions)

## 12.0 Damaged or lost items

12.1 The school may charge parents / carers for the cost of replacing items broken, damaged or lost due to their child's behaviour. Parents / carers will not be taken to court for failure to pay such costs, except in cases of criminal damage.

## 13.0 Remissions

13.1 We have some flexibility from our income streams to enable children who are in 'hardship' to access school trips.

13.2 The Head Teacher will, with discretion, exempt or support those experiencing hardship from charges. E.G. when a parent has more than one child taking part in the residential of visit or if changes have been made to benefits. Parents who approach the school will be dealt with in confidence.

13.3 To request assistance, parents / carers should contact the Academy.

## 14.0 Refunds

14.1 Most trips will require a non-refundable deposit. This deposit will only become refundable if the trip is cancelled by the school. If a student pulls out of the trip through medical grounds, then this will be reviewed on an individual basis.