



# CHARGES AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Approved by the Audit & Finance Committee

**11.05.23**

**RENEWAL DATE: MARCH 2024**

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## **CHANGES**

### **May 2017**

Policy adopted by the Board of Trustees. Policy taken from Plymouth City Council's recommendations for charges and remissions for schools, in accordance with DfE guidance.

### **March 2020**

Updated to reflect the addition of Nightingale Daycare.

### **April 2023**

Removal of Nightingale Daycare and updated eligible benefits

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that there is clarity over those items which the settings within Discovery Multi Academy Trust (“the MAT”) will provide free of charge and for those items where there may be a charge.

The policy has been informed by the DfE guidance on charging for school activities.

## DEFINITION

The school day is defined as:

Beechwood Primary Academy: 08:55 – 15:15

Oakwood Primary Academy: 08:55 – 15:15

Weston Mill Community Primary Academy: 08.55 – 15:00

The midday break does not form part of the school day.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will ensure that staff are familiar with and correctly apply the policy. The Board of Trustees will review the policy every three years.

## POLICY STATEMENT

During the school day all activities that are a necessary part of the National Curriculum plus religious education will be provided free of charge. This includes any materials, equipment and transport to take children between the settings and the activity. It excludes charges made for teaching an individual child or groups of up to four children to play a musical instrument (unless the teaching is an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the children(s), we will make a charge).

The settings or Board of Trustees may ask for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activity. Voluntary contributions will be sought for activities during the school day which entail additional costs, *for example trips and events*. Schools must inform parents on low incomes, and in receipt of eligible benefits, of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits. In these circumstances no child will be prevented from participating because his/her parents cannot or will not make a contribution. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions and insufficient funds are available, it may be necessary to curtail or cancel activities. There is no obligation to parents to make any contribution.

From time to time we may invite a non-school based organisation such as a storyteller or drama or sporting organisation to arrange an activity during the school day. Such organisations may wish to charge parents/carers, who may, if they wish, ask the Head of School to agree to their child being absent for that period.

## EDUCATION PARTLY DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

If a non-residential activity happens partly inside the school day and partly outside of it, there will be no charge if most of the time to be spent on the activity falls within the school day.

Conversely, if the bigger proportion of time spent falls outside of the normal school day, charges can be made. When such activities are arranged parents/carers will be told how the charges were calculated.

## **OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL DAY**

We may charge for optional, extra activities provided outside of the school day, for example, a football club or theatre visit. Such activities are not part of the National Curriculum or religious education nor are they part of an examination syllabus. Where we wish to charge we will tell parents/carers in advance. Where specific funding has been received to support particular activities we will subsidise the charge to the extent permitted by the funding.

## **OPTIONAL EXTRAS**

Charges will be made for some activities known as “optional extras”. Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge may be made for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. Optional extras are:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
  - a. Part of the National Curriculum;
  - b. Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the child is being prepared for at the school; or
  - c. Part of religious education.
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered child has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- Transport that is not required to take the child to school or to other premises where the local authority/governing body have arranged for the child to be provided with educations; and
- Board and lodging for a child on a residential visit.

In calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- Any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- Non-teaching staff;
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra; and
- The cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual children will not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of children participating. It will not

include a subsidy for any other children wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

A charge will not be added for the cost of alternative provision for those children who do not wish to participate.

Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental/guardian/carer choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental/carer agreement is therefore a necessary prerequisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

## **MINIBUS**

Travel in the MAT's minibuses is free within the local area.

For longer journeys, at the discretion of the CEO or Head of School charges may be made for the use of the minibus. Only children of the MAT, MAT staff or parents and carers may be charged for travel in the minibus. Charges made will cover the actual costs incurred, excluding depreciation; the service should not make a profit for the MAT<sup>1</sup>.

## **CALCULATING CHARGES**

When charges are made for any activity, including residential activities, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of children participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who can't or won't. Support for cases of hardship will come through voluntary contributions and fundraising.

Parents/carers who would qualify for support are those who are in receipt of eligible benefits.

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the MAT and/or charges to parents/carers.

## **MUSIC TUITION**

Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music lessons are an exception to this rule.

Charges will be made for teaching either an individual pupil or groups of any appropriate size to play a musical instrument or to sing. Charges will only be made if the teaching is not an essential part of the National Curriculum.

In cases of hardship the Board of Trustees will consider in their absolute discretion the remission of fees (either in full or in part) for those pupils who they consider will benefit from such tuition.

## **ELIGIBLE BENEFITS**

- Income Support

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<sup>1</sup> To charge for travel in the MAT minibuses, the responsible academy must hold a permit issued by the LA under section 19 of the Transport Act 1985.

- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- 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)
- 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)

Further Guidance and Reference to Legislation:

Governors Guide to the Law, Chapter 23 – Charging for School activities