



## Financial Procedures: Charging and Remissions Policy

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## Introduction

### FCAT Academies:

- May not charge for activities which take place in academy time, subject to limited exceptions;
- May not charge for education provided during academy hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or equipment);
- May not charge for any education or activities provided outside academy hours if it is part of the national curriculum or part of a religious education;
- Must ensure that they inform parents / carers on low incomes and in receipt of benefits listed on page 5 of this document of the support available to them when being asked for contributions towards the cost of school visits;
- May invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions towards any part of the academy's work;
- May charge for activities that are provided wholly or mainly outside academy hours, as long as these activities are optional extras;
- May charge for board and lodging on residential courses.

### Aims

The academy aims to:

- Provide a broad programme of trips and activities accessible to as many students as possible;
- Establish and maintain a fair and coherent system of charges within the constraints of the academy budget.

#### 1. Education provided during Academy hours

Education provided during academy hours is free. This includes materials and equipment. 'Academy hours' are those when the academy is actually in session and do not include the break in the middle of the day.

#### 2. Voluntary Contributions

Where the academy cannot levy charges, and it is not possible to make these additional activities within the resources ordinarily available to the academy, the academy may request or invite parents to make a contribution towards the cost of the activity. Students will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution in response to the request or invitation. However, where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make the activity possible, then it will be cancelled.

#### 3. Activities not run by the academy

When an organisation acting independently of the academy arranges to take place during academy hours and parents want their child to join the activity, such organisations may charge parents. Parents must then ask the academy to agree to their child being absent, just as they would if they wanted to take their child out of the academy for a family holiday. However, when the academy permits an organisation other than the academy to levy a charge directly on parents for activities organised in academy hours by a non-academy organisation if their parents are unwilling or unable to contribute, such activities have to be cancelled.

#### 4. Activities taking place outside of academy hours

**Optional activities:** Full cost for the activities which are deemed to be 'optional extras' can be made. Participation in optional extra activities will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet charges as are made. The Education Act 1996 describes activities which can be charged for as 'optional extras' and the governing body will decide the level of charge in such instances. Details of how the charge will be worked out will be provided for parents. The

permitted charge may include an allowance for the costs of teachers from the academy who supervise the activity.

**Essential activities:** If the activity is deemed to be an essential part of the curriculum the academy may invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions. Should parents be unwilling or unable to contribute, letters of explanation to the Headteacher / Head of School will be considered and, where appropriate, remissions can be applied.

If a charge is made for each student, this will not exceed the actual cost. If further funds need to be raised, for example to help in hardship cases, this must be by voluntary contributions, general fundraising or non-committed reserves / remissions account.

## **5. Education partly during academy hours**

If most of the time spent on a non-residential activity occurs during academy hours, that activity counts as taking place entirely in academy hours and no charge will be levied but parents may be asked to make a voluntary contribution. The Academy cannot insist that parents pay the entire cost, nor can it prohibit any student from participating if their parents are unwilling or unable to contribute, but should there be insufficient voluntary contributions from parents, the activity may have to be cancelled.

Time spent on travel only counts as being during academy hours if the travel takes place during academy hours.

For example:

1. A long distance trip involving much travel before and after normal academy hours, but with time spent at the destination mainly within academy hours, would count as happening in academy time and voluntary contributions may be required.
2. A trip leaving academy an hour or so earlier than usual in the afternoon but continuing until quite late in the evening is classified as taking place outside academy time and full charges may be made.

## **6. Board and Lodging on Residential Activities**

Charges may be made for board and lodging whether or not the visit takes place within academy time and whether or not the activity is provided to fulfil the requirements of:

- The syllabus of a prescribed public examination
- The national curriculum
- The statutory duties relating to religious education

Charges for board and lodging must not exceed the actual cost to the student. They must not, for example include any element representing a share of the costs of staff accompanying the visit (this may however, be covered by voluntary contributions).

Governors must remit any charges for board and lodging in the case of students whose parents are in receipt Income Support, Child Tax Credit, Income Based Job Seeker's Allowance, Universal Credit or asylum seekers whose Home Office Applications are outstanding and where the activity is deemed to take place in academy hours or if it is out of hours but covered by the above criteria.

The Headteacher / Head of School can tell all parents and carers of the right to claim free activities if they are receiving these benefits.

## **7. Terms and Conditions for Planned Activities**

When parents are informed of a planned activity the information letter will include a reply slip, alternatively there may be a tick-box on the online payment system, which includes a section with permission / authorisation and terms / conditions. The student will not be considered for the activity until and unless a signed or online positive application is received by the academy.

The information letter will also include a deadline by when the reply should be received by the academy. In the event that the activity is oversubscribed (and the academy is unable to increase the number of participants) the following criteria will be used, to select successful applicants:

- The initial allocation will be on a first-come-first-served basis providing the payment required is attached to the application or online payment has been made;
- The remaining unsuccessful students who had payment attached to their application will be placed on a reserve list and numbered in order of receipt.

Electronic payments, made on-line are encouraged. Where cheque payments are accepted, they should be made payable to the academy. Where cash is accepted receipts are given by the Finance Office but students should not bring large amounts of cash into the academy. The FCAT schools preference is for all activities to be paid on-line.

- The academy's acceptance of a positive reply constitutes a contract with the parents and any unpaid contribution will remain a debt to the academy and collection will be enforced.
- Deposits are not refundable unless a replacement student is available.
- Returned contributions, for whatever reason, will be entirely at the discretion of the academy and the amount will depend on whether the academy's cost in providing the activity is covered.
- The planned activity may be cancelled if the estimated number of applications is not received.

## **8. Musical Instrument Tuition**

Charges may be made for vocal or instrumental tuition to either an individual or groups of any size, provided that the tuition is at the request of the student's parent / carer.

Some musical instruments may be available on loan from the academy for which a hire charge is applicable. Information on the scheme is provided by the Academy and a loan agreement must be signed by parents or carers before an instrument is issued. Additional charges will be levied for the full current cost to replace the instrument / equipment should it be damaged, lost or stolen whilst on loan.

Some FCAT Academies may benefit from a local music school providing music lessons within school hours for selected year groups. In this situation there will be no charge for the lessons and the instruments will be available for use within the lessons for all pupils free of charge. If parents / carers wish for their child to take the instrument home to practice, there will be a charge for insurance in case of loss or damage to the instrument. Should parents be unwilling / unable to cover the costs of the insurance, the Headteacher / Head of School will consider if a remission can be applied.

## **9. Public Examinations**

No charges will be made for entering students for public examinations that are set out in regulations. The academy will enter a student for each examination in a public examination syllabus for which the academy has prepared the student, unless it thinks there are educational reasons for not entering the student, or if the student's parents / carers ask in writing that the student should not be entered.

## **10. Academy Materials and Text Books**

The academy provides materials and text books but reserves the right to charge, at cost, for lost or damaged books. Additional stationery materials are provided for optional purchase at cost from the school shop e.g. pens, pencils, rulers, rubbers etc. Students will not be treated differently according to whether or not materials are being provided by their parents. Additional books that students wish to keep e.g. for revision may be bought in bulk and sold to students who wish to buy them at cost price.

## **11. Damage / Loss to Property**

A charge may be levied in respect of willful damage, neglect or loss of academy property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials), the charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher / Head of School may decide.

A charge may be levied in respect of willful damage, neglect or loss of academy property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials), belonging to a third party, where the cost has been recharged to the Academy. The charge to be the cost of replacement, repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher / Head of School may decide.

## **12. Admissions**

No charge will be made for admission applications to Academies within FCAT. Request for financial contributions as part of the admission process will not be made.

## **13. Extended Services**

The Academy may charge for additional child-care before and after school. The Academy may charge a late payment fee if funds are not received by the due dates and if payments are persistently late the child's place may be revoked. The Academy may charge an ad-hoc fee if a child has received additional care without being booked into the session in advance.

Remission of charges may be considered for students whose parent / carer is in receipt of:

- Universal credit;
- Income Support;
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance;
- 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 does not exceed the sum given in the Revenue and Custom rules;
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

## **14. Nursery / Pre-School Charges**

All children are eligible for 15 hours a week free childcare for 38 weeks a year commencing the start of school term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Some children are entitled to 30 hours a week free childcare for 38 weeks a year from the start of the school term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

The Academy may charge for additional sessions, lunch club, before and after nursery care and snacks subject to availability.

Parents of children eligible to access free entitlement must give 6 weeks written notice of their intention to leave in order to terminate the place (both during and out of term time). The Academy will charge for the full term fees if there is a failure to provide the required notice.

Remission of charges may be considered for students whose parent / carer is in receipt of:

- Universal credit;
- Income Support;
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance;
- 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 does not exceed the sum given in the Revenue and Custom rules;
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

Children of families in receipt of the above support payments may be entitled to free meals.

### **15. Other Charges**

The Headteacher / Head of School may levy charges for miscellaneous services up to the cost of providing such services e.g. additional printing of letters, copies of reports, passport signing etc.

### **16. Remissions Policy**

Participation in optional extra activities will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet charges are made. The Education Act 1996 describes activities which can be charged for as 'optional extras' and the LGB will decide the level of charge in such instances.

If an activity is deemed to be an essential part of the curriculum and parents are unwilling or unable to contribute, letters of explanation addressed to the Headteacher / Head of School in confidence will be considered and, where appropriate, remissions can be applied. However, it is the responsibility of the parents /carers to claim such remission of charges on an activity-by-activity basis.

Remission of charges will be considered for students whose parent / carer is in receipt of:

- Universal credit;
- Income Support;
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance;
- 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 does not exceed the sum given in the Revenue and Custom rules;
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

If further funds need to be raised, e.g. to help in hardship cases, this must be by voluntary contributions, donations, or general fundraising.

### **17. Activity Deficit / Surpluses / Remission Account**

The costing of activities will be undertaken with care, but as money needs to be collected in advance the costs will be estimates. A standard spread sheet is provided to assist activity organisers with this task and is checked by the Finance Department.

Estimates may result in some activities making a deficit but in the main, activities will break even or make a very small surplus. In those circumstances the surplus will be set against any academy contributions for students, any administration charges for electronic payments and any deficits incurred on activities. Should a trip result in a larger surplus, refunds will be made to parents who made voluntary contributions. Any year-end balance will be retained in the School Fund for the benefit of all students at the academy and accounted for in the audited accounts annually.

## **18. Insurance**

Insurance cover for trips and off-site activities is arranged by the academy with FCAT Schools' insurers and renewed annually by the FCAT School's Board. No charge for insurance cover is made to parents when calculating charges for activities which are covered by the policy. Full policy details are available on request from the School Business Manager or equivalent.

## **19. VAT**

The regulations governing VAT are complex. To matters simple, as a general rule VAT is not recoverable on academy trips which are paid for by parents but it is recoverable when it is paid for out of the academy budget.

## **20. Lettings**

The Governors recognise that the academy is fully occupied during academy hours, however, the Headteacher / Head of School may authorise additional evening, weekend and academy holiday lettings if accommodation can be made available. The LGB will agree annually a schedule of charges for the use of all facilities by external bodies which must, as a minimum, cover all actual costs. The academy cannot use the ESFA funding to subsidise the cost of use by organisations other than the FCAT schools.

All lettings are subject to the academy Letting's Agreement and must be signed by the hirers to indicate agreement before the letting takes place. VAT will be charged on some lettings in accordance with HMRC VAT Regulations.

The LGB reserves the right to decline any lettings that are not deemed to be in sympathy with the academy's ethos.

## **References**

The DfE Guide to the Law for Academy Governors

Education Act 1996: Sections 402, 449-462

The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) Regulations 1989

The Education (Residential Trips) (Prescribed Tax Credits) (England) Regulations 2003 SI 2003/381

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 SI 1995 No. 2089 as amended by

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1997 SI 1997 No. 2624 as amended by

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1999 SI 2627 and by the Education (Pupil

Registration) Regulations 2001 SI 2802

DfE Charging for School Activities November 2014

## **Definitions**

Any reference to academies will apply to all establishments within the Frassati Catholic Academy Trust.