

# **VALE ACADEMY TRUST**

## **Charging & Remissions Policy**

*Person responsible for policy:*

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*VAT Committee: Finance and Operations*

## Charging and Remissions Policy for Vale Academy Trust

Vale Academy Trust believes that all our Children & Young People (C&YP) should have an equal opportunity to benefit from academy activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some C&YP taking full advantage of the opportunities.

The 1996 Education Act requires all schools to have a policy on charging and remissions for school activities, which will be kept under regular review. The review date for this policy is recorded at the end of the document.

1. **The policy identifies activities for which:**
  - **voluntary contributions may be requested**
  - **charges will be made**
  - **charges will not be made**
  - **charges may be waived**
2. **Voluntary contributions**

Separately from the matter of charging, schools may always seek voluntary contributions in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to C&YP. All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that C&YP of parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have.

**The Law states:**

If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the Governing Body or Headteacher will make this clear to parents from the outset.

No child or young person (CoYP) will be excluded from an activity because his or her parents are unable or unwilling to pay.

If insufficient contributions are received, the trip or activity may have to be cancelled.

If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay their CoYP will still be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

### 3. No charges will be made for

- a) An admission application to any maintained school
- b) Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- c) Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the CoYP person is being prepared for at the school, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;
- d) Tuition for C&YP learning to play musical instruments (or singing) if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the CoYP is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- e) Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the CoYP has been prepared for it at the school\*;
- f) Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours (see 4a);
- g) Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours (see 4a)
  - a. if it is part of the National Curriculum, or
  - b. part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the CoYP is being prepared for at the school, or
  - c. part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;
- h) Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying C&YP on a residential trip;
- i) Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

\* If a CoYP fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus a charge may / will be made.

### 4. Charges may be made for

#### **a) Activities outside school hours**

Residential and non-residential activities (other than those listed in Section 3 above) which take place outside school hours, but only if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside school hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours). (See Section 9)

#### **b) Residential visits during school hours**

The board and lodging costs (but only those costs) of residential trips deemed to take place during school time, However C&YP whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (see remissions policy below) will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging.

#### **c) Music tuition**

Music tuition for individuals or appropriate sized groups of C&YP to play a musical instrument or to sing and which is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus for all C&YP.

**When any trip is arranged, parents will be notified of the policy for allocating places. This should recognise that parents may not be able to pay quickly and may have to budget for the trip over a reasonable period of time.**

## 5. Optional Extras

**Is a residential trip in or out of school time?**

**If the number of school sessions on a residential trip is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the trip it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A “half day” means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.**

Charges may be made for optional activities that are known as ‘Optional Extras’.

Any charges made will not exceed the actual cost (per CoYP) of provision

**It is the policy of Vale Academy Trust that charges will (or may) be made as indicated below. Parental agreement will be obtained before a charge is made.**

		<b>Remitted or help available</b> (enter your school decision here).
Charges will/may be made for any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, <i><b>where a parent wishes their CoYP to own them;</b></i>	E.g. A clay model – a charge to cover the cost of the clay.	Support is available
Charges will/may be made for music tuition	The cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument or singing, where the tuition is an optional extra for an individual or appropriate groups of C&YP	No support is available
Charges will be made for the board and lodging component of residential trips	The charge will not exceed the actual cost	Remission for category A (see below)

## 6. Remissions

In order to remove financial barriers from C&YP, the governing body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances. This remissions policy sets out the circumstances in which such charges will be waived.

## 7. Families qualifying for remission or help with charges

If remission or help is available in relation to a particular charge it is indicated in the right hand column of the table above. C&YP entitled to Pupil Premium will qualify for remission.

### Category A

Parents (in 2012\*) do not have to pay for school lunches if they receive any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided that they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190 (at 2011/12\*)
- Working Tax Credit 'run on' – the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.

\*Updated criteria and figures at:

<http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/public/LandC/Resources/CFM/Eligibilityforfree-schoolmeals.pdf>

## 8. Is an academy visit in or out of school time?

When any visit is arranged, parents will be notified of the policy for allocating places. If the number of school sessions on a school visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A "half day" means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

## 9. Additional considerations

The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible we shall publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the academy year so that parents can plan ahead
- We have established a system for parents to pay in instalments
- When an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip

We acknowledge that offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis discriminates against C&YP from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.