Charging and Remissions Policy

GFM Education

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Maintained by:	GFM Executive	Next review due:	September 2023

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1. Aims

The GFM aims to:

- Have robust, clear processes in place for charging and remissions
- Clearly set out the types of activity that can be charged for and when charges will be made

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on charging for school activities and the Education Act 1996, sections 449-462 of which set out the law on charging for school activities in England. Academies are required to comply with this Act through their funding agreements.
This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

- Charge: a fee payable for specifically defined activities
- Remission: the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable
- The term 'parent(s)' means all those having parental responsibility for a child.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Trustee Board

The Trustee Board has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy, but can delegate this to a committee, an individual trustee or governor or the Headteacher of the respective school.
The Trustee Board also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

4.2 GFM Executive

The GFM Executive are responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the charging and remissions policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

4.3 Staff

Our staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently
- Notifying the relevant senior school leader of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies

The senior leadership team will provide staff with appropriate training in relation to this policy and its implementation.

4.4 Parents

Parents are expected to notify staff or the specific school senior leader e.g. Exec. Head, Head or Associate Head of any concerns or queries regarding the charging and remissions policy.

5. Where charges can be made

Below we set out what each school can charge for.

5.1 Education

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him or her to own them
- Optional activities (see below)
- Music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances
- Certain early years provision
- Community facilities

5.2 Optional Activities

We are able to charge for optional activities. In these cases, the school can charge for providing materials, books, instruments or equipment. The following are optional activities:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not part of:
  - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
  - Where an activity or visit is not curriculum linked and less than 50% of it takes place in school time, it can be charged to parents in full
  - Activities outside school hours: the full cost for each pupil of journeys, trips and overnight stays in the United Kingdom and abroad which take place at weekends and during holidays, which are deemed to be optional extras.
- Examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school
- Transport (other than transport that is required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the school has arranged for the pupil to be provided with education)
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
- Extended day services offered to pupils (such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions). For individual terms and conditions, please refer to the relevant school office and website

- Materials: the cost of materials or ingredients for areas of the curriculum such as Design Technology, if parents have indicated in advance that they wish to own the final product e.g. food and lanterns.
- Provision of Education and use of Facilities: to those persons who are not registered pupils at the school.
- Miscellaneous charges: the school may levy charges for miscellaneous services up to the cost of providing such services e.g. for providing a copy of an OFSTED report.
- Acts of vandalism and negligence: the school reserves the right to recover part, or the whole cost, of damage to buildings or equipment which is the result of vandalism or negligence by a pupil

When calculating the cost of optional activities, an amount may be included in relation to:

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra
- The cost of buildings and accommodation
- Non-teaching staff
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional activity
- The cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, or vocal tuition, where the tuition is an optional extra

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not be greater than the actual cost of providing the optional activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating.

Insurance

Any insurance costs will be included in charges made for off-site visits or activities.

Any charge will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils who wish to take part in the activity but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

In cases where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate.

Parental agreement is necessary for the provision of an optional activity which is to be charged for.

5.3 Music tuition

The school can charge for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of pupils, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent.
Charges may not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff giving the tuition.

Charges cannot be made:

- If the teaching is an essential part of the curriculum
- For a pupil who is looked after by a local authority

5.4 Residential visits

We can charge for board and lodging on residential visits, but the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

5.5 Photocopying

Subject Access Requests

The Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR) grants the right of access to pupils and those with parental responsibility for a pupil to ask for copies of their personal information, verbally or in writing by submitting a subject access request (SAR). The organisation can charge a fee for the copies, however, the fee must not exceed the cost of supply. The cost depends on the number of pages provided. For example, 1 to 19 pages will cost £1.20; 29 pages will cost £2, and so on, up to a maximum of 500+ pages which will cost £50. If the request is for other information excluding the educational record then the maximum charge is £10.

If the education record is to be supplied as part of a right of access under data protection, the organisation can charge for information held in the education record but not for any other personal data held by the school-supplied in its response to a SAR.

Freedom of Information Requests

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) gives rights of public access to information held by public authorities. Regulation 6(3) states that this includes, but is not limited to, the costs of:

- Reproducing any document containing the information, eg printing or photocopying;
- Postage and other forms of transmitting the information; and
- Complying with section 11 of FOIA where the applicant has expressed a preference for the means of communication and where this is reasonably practicable.

5.6 Private Fees

Any report or data that is requested on a pupil for the purpose of a third-party private assessment requested by parents / carers (e.g. mid-year pupil progress

report for solicitors, private psychologist reports or solicitor reports) will be charged at an agreed rate by the Finance Director of the Trust. This rate will include a cost for staff time to sort and collate the relevant information (not less than £10 per hour) as well as photocopying charges (not less than 10p per sheet) and postage.

6. Voluntary contributions

As an exception to the requirements set out in section 7 of this policy, each school is able to ask for voluntary contributions from parents to fund activities during school hours which would not otherwise be possible. These might be on an annual or one-off basis.

Some activities for which the school may ask parents for voluntary contributions include:

- Workshops run by external third party companies
- Off-site visits

There is no obligation for parents to make any contribution, and no child will be excluded from an activity if their parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If the school is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or visit then it will be cancelled.

7. Where charges cannot be made

Below we set out what each school cannot charge for:

7.1 Education

- 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
    - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
    - Religious education
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent
- Entry for a prescribed public examination if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) by the school but not at the parents request

7.2 Transport

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing board or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he or she has been prepared for that examination at the school
- Transport provided in connection with an educational visit

7.3 Residential visits

- 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
    - A syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
    - Religious education
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit

8. Activities each school charges for

Where relevant each school will charge for the following activities:

- Breakfast & after school clubs where offered
- Sports clubs and events

For regular activities, the charges for each activity will be determined by the relevant school leaders and reviewed each year.

9. Remissions

In some circumstances schools may not charge for items or activities set out in sections 6 and 8 of this policy. This will be at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher at each school and will depend on the activity in question.

9.1 Remissions for residential visits

Parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging for residential visits:

- Universal credit in prescribed circumstances
- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA)

- 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 (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008

10. Monitoring arrangements

The school leader of each school monitors charges and remissions supported by the central finance team, and ensure these comply with this policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the GFM Board.