

## CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY 2023-24

### POLICY NUMBER 02

#### Document Management Information

<b>Applicable to:</b>	All Staff
<b>Dissemination:</b>	TL email into NET Frameworks
<b>Linked policies:</b>	Finance Policy and Procedures
<b>Implementation:</b>	Principals and Finance Staff
<b>Training:</b>	None
<b>Review Frequency:</b>	Annual
<b>Policy Author:</b>	Head of Finance
<b>Policy Lead:</b>	CFO
<b>Approval by:</b>	Trust Board
<b>Approval Date:</b>	September 2023
<b>Next Review Due:</b>	September 2024

Revision Date	Description	Sections Affected	Revised By	Approved By
05/02/2019	Annual Review in line to Academy Financial Handbook		Business and Finance Director	Trust Board
September 2019	Annual Review in line to Academy Financial Handbook	As per track changed version presented to Finance committee – 7 October 2019	Trust Chief Operating Officer	Trust Board
September 2020	Annual Review in line to Academy Financial Handbook	As per track changed version presented to	Trust Chief Operating Officer	Trust Board (Audit Committee)

		Audit Committee 1 September 2020		
September 2021	Annual Review in line to Academy Financial Handbook	As per track changed version presented to Audit Committee 6 September 2021	Trust Chief Operating Officer	Trust Board (Audit Committee)
Autumn Term 2022	Annual Review re ATH 22- 23	As per highlighted changes presented to Finance Committee January 30 <sup>th</sup> 2023	Trust Chief Operating Officer	Trust Board Finance Committee
September 2023	Annual Review ref ATH 23- 24	No change	Head of Finance	Trust Board

Nene Education Trust (NET) recognises the valuable contribution that a wide range of activities, including clubs, trips, and residential experiences, can make towards pupils' personal development

The Trust reserves the right to make a charge for certain activities organised by the Academies from time to time.

The charging and remissions policy adopted by the Trust Board ensures that the statutory requirements are met and is intended to reflect the general principles of the Education Act which identifies activities for which:

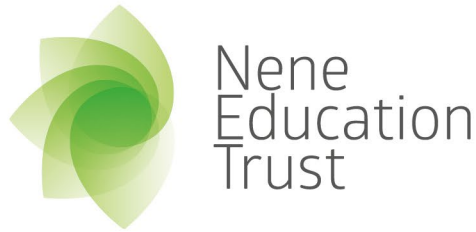
- 1) Charges will not be made
- 2) Charges will be made
- 3) Charges will be waived

The legislative and regulatory basis for charging and remissions is contained within:

- Sections 449 – 462 of the Education Act 1996.1
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- s27(1) The Education Act 1996

### **Voluntary contributions**

The Trust will seek voluntary contributions for any activity in order to benefit the school or support a school activity whether during or outside school hours, residential or non-residential and including inviting parents to pay for materials or ingredients where they wish to own the finished product. However all requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that students of parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have. Such contributions will be genuinely voluntary.



There is no limit to the level of voluntary contributions which parents or others can make to school activities, nor is there any restriction placed on the use which can be made of such contributions, provided they are used for the purpose specified in the request for them. They could, for example, be used to subsidise student from low-income families, or the cost of travel for accompanying teachers.

The Law says that:

- If the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions the parents will be notified of this from the outset.
- No child will be excluded from an activity because the parents are unable to pay.
- If insufficient contributions are raised the trip or activity may have to be cancelled.
- If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay their child will be given an equal chance to go on the visit.

#### **Education Provided Within School Hours**

Education provided by any maintained school for its registered students should be free of charge if it takes place wholly or mainly during school hours, school hours being those hours when a school is actually in session and not including the break in the middle of the day. This means that neither the student nor his or her parents or guardian may be required to pay for, or to supply, any materials, books, instruments or other equipment for use in connection with education provided during school hours.

#### **Education Provided Out of School Hours**

Where education is provided out of school hours, charging is permitted, except where the education is provided:

- a) to fulfil any requirements specified in the syllabus for a prescribed Public examination; or
- b) specifically to fulfil statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum;
- c) to fulfil duties relating to Religious Education.

In these cases the only charge that may be made is for board and lodging or for residential trips.

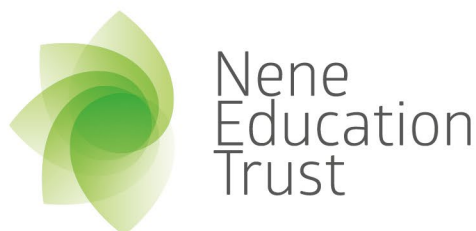
#### **Is an activity in or out of school time?**

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 a trip it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some of the activities take place in the evening). Whatever the length of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into 2 sessions. A 'half day' in this context means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

A statutory minimum is the complete remission of board and lodging charges to student whose parents receive Income Support, Child Tax Credit, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance and support under part of Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 but not Working Tax Credit even if it is paid with other benefits e.g. Child Tax Credit. If the activity is deemed to take place during school hours, or is out of school hours but is covered by the criteria set out above, the Trust Board may not charge for anything unless it has drawn up a statement for general policy on charging.

#### **Board and Lodging on Residential Visits**

Board and lodging on residential visits may be charged for whether or not the visit takes place within school time and whether or not the activity is provided to fulfil the requirements of;



- the syllabus of a prescribed public examination; or
- of the National Curriculum; or
- to fulfil statutory duties relating to religious education.

Charges for board and lodging must not exceed the actual cost.

### **Music Tuition**

The main exception to the principle of free education, which the law allows is that a charge may be made in respect of individual tuition in playing any musical instrument, even if such tuition takes place during school hours. Parental agreement must be obtained before a student is given that tuition.

### **Activities run by a Third Party**

The Act permits an organisation other than the Trust Board to levy a charge directly on parents for activities organised in school hours by a non-school organisation. The school will not be involved in collection of charges on behalf of the third party organisation. Where students are granted leave of absence to attend these activities it would be for parents and any staff Members similarly released to satisfy themselves about the adequacy of the arrangements made by the third party to secure the safety and welfare of the children.

### **Charging Policy**

a) If a charge is made for each student it should not exceed the actual cost. If further funds are needed for additional costs e.g. to help hardship cases this must be by voluntary contributions for general fund raising.

b) The permitted charge may include an allowance for the costs of teachers from the school who supervise the activity.

### **'Optional extra' Activities**

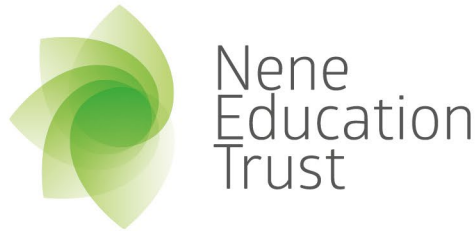
'Optional extra' activities are those which take place wholly or mainly outside school hours, but which are not provided as part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination and are not required in order to fulfil statutory duties relating to the national curriculum or to religious education.

Participation will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet such charges as are made. Any charge made in respect of individual student may include an appropriate element for the following: a student's travel costs; a student's board and lodging; materials, books, instruments and other equipment; non-teaching staff costs; entrance fees to museums, theatres etc.; insurance costs.

It should be noted that any charge for an 'optional extra' activity, as distinct from a request for a voluntary contribution, should not exceed the actual cost of providing that activity, divided equally by the number of student willing to participate. It may not, therefore, include an element of subsidy for any other student wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

### **VAT and School Journeys**

To enable schools to reclaim VAT on school journeys the visit should be part of the curriculum and the school should have purchased all elements, apart from accommodation directly and from tour operators who operate the Tour Operators Margin Scheme (TOMS)



### **Public Examination Entries**

The Trust Board Body is required to enter a student for each examination in a syllabus for a prescribed public examination for which the student has been prepared. A student is regarded as having been prepared for the syllabus at the school if the school has provided any part of the necessary preparation. The requirement to enter a student may only be lifted where, in the opinion of the Board of Trustees, there are educational reasons for not entering the student, or where the student's parents request in writing that the student should not be entered.

If a student fails, without good reason, to complete the examination requirements for any public examination for which the Board of Trustees has paid or is liable to pay an entry fee, that fee can be recovered from parents.

### **Transport**

Trust **cannot** charge for:

- transporting registered students to or from the school premises, where the Trust Board or local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- transporting registered students to other premises where the Trust Board or local education authority has arranged for students to be educated;
- transport that enables a student to meet an examination requirement when he has been prepared for that examination at the school; and
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

### **Damaged or lost property**

- Lost items of clothing, such as school uniform, cannot be refunded by the academy however they will make every effort to help lost items to be found.

If a child intentionally damages or defaces academy property a meeting will be held with parents/carers to discuss a fair resolution. This could result in a charge to replace or restore the damaged property.

Similarly, the academy will not fund replacement or repairs of property which has been damaged through an incident between children, between adults or between children and adults.

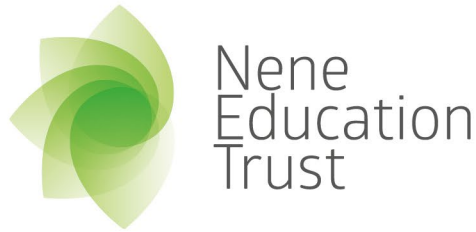
The academy will not charge for accidental breakages of school property however, deliberate or wilful acts which result in breakage or damage to school property will be charged for at a rate appropriate to replacement costs. In such cases parents/carers will be expected to pay for the replacement rather than the cost of the original.

### **Refunds for Trips**

Where the organisation does refund a deposit/cost of a trip or activity then this will be passed onto parents/carers. If this is not in the organisation's policy, then NET cannot take liability for a refund.

Please note that a child's absence will not mean an automatic refund for a Trip.

We are a cashless Trust, therefore all payment should be made via the relevant payment platform; all refunds will be made in the same way.



## **School Uniform**

The Nene Education Trust has agreed the following policy for school uniforms.

- All pupils should wear a uniform that is of reasonable cost and offers the best value for money for parents and carers
- The policy strives to avoid discrimination in line with our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010

### **Expectations for school uniform**

We believe that school uniform makes a positive contribution to the culture within our academies and to the learning which takes place there.

In order to ensure that our academy leaders have the maximum flexibility to organise uniform requirements in line with the principles in this policy, each school decides on the specific requirements about the uniform to be worn in our academies.

Each of our academies has a separate uniform statement which is available on request.

### **Our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination against an individual based on the protected characteristics, which include sex, race, religion or belief, and gender reassignment.

We will ensure that our approach to uniform confirms with these duties and obligations. We will also remain mindful at all times of the need for reasonable adjustments to be made in response to a protected characteristic or to a pupil's special educational needs or disabilities.

### **Limiting the cost of school uniform**

We have a duty to make sure that the uniform we require is affordable, in line with statutory guidance from the Department for Education on the cost of school uniform.

We understand that items with distinctive characteristics (such as branded items, or items that have to have a school logo or a unique fabric/colour/design) cannot be purchased from a wide range of retailers.

We will make sure our uniform

- is available at a reasonable cost
- provides the best value for money for parents/carers.

We will do this by

- carefully considering whether any items with distinctive characteristics are necessary and limiting any items with distinctive characteristics where possible
- avoiding specific requirements for generic items, such as coats, bags and shoes
- keeping the number of optional branded items to a minimum,
- making sure that arrangements are in place for parents to acquire second-hand uniform items
- avoiding frequent changes to uniform specifications and minimising the financial impact on parents of any changes
- consulting with parents and pupils on any proposed significant changes to the uniform policy and carefully considering any complaints about the policy.