



Charging and Remissions Policy

Last reviewed: February 2023

This document applies to all schools and operations of the Vale Academy Trust: www.vale-academy.org

Document Control			
Review period	12 Months	Next review	February 2024
Owner	Chief Financial Officer	Approver	Board of Directors
Category	Public	Type	Global

1. Aims

The Vale Academy Trust ('the Trust') believes that all our pupils should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra-curricular) independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will endeavour to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which might otherwise prevent some pupils taking full advantage of the opportunities.

2. Legislation & guidance

This policy is based on advice from the [Department for Education \(DfE\) on charging for school activities](#) and the [Education Act 1996, section 449-462](#), which set out the statutory regulations and law on charging for school activities in England. We are required by our funding agreement with the DfE to comply with these.

3. Definitions

Charge: a fee payable for specifically defined activities

Remission: the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Board of Directors of the Trust has overall responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy, and responsibility for monitoring its implementation.

Headteachers are responsible for ensuring staff are familiar with the charging and remission policy, and that it is being applied consistently.

Staff are responsible for implementing this policy consistently, and notifying the appropriate headteacher of any specific circumstances which they are unsure about or where they are not certain if the policy applies.

Parents and Carers are expected to notify staff or the headteacher of any concerns or queries regarding the charging and remissions policy.

5. Where charges cannot be made

- a) An admission application to any of our schools;
- 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 pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;
- d) Instrumental or vocal tuition for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless the

tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent or carer;

- e) Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school*;
- f) Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours (see 6a);
- g) Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours (see 6a)
 - I. if it is part of the National Curriculum, or
 - II. part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or
 - III. part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;
- h) Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential trip;
- i) Transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

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

6. Where charges can be made

Below is a list of what the Trust can charge for:

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

Optional Extras

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

Any charges made will not exceed the actual cost (per pupil) of provision. It is the policy of the Trust that charges will (or may) be made as indicated below. Parent/Carer agreement will be obtained before a charge is made.

- a) Activities outside school hours
Residential and non-residential activities (other than those listed in Section 5, above) which take place outside school hours. It is important to note this applies only if most of the time spent on the activity takes place outside school hours, and travel time counts in this calculation if it occurs during school hours. [See DfE guidance for full details of how school hours are calculated in regard to school visits and trips.](#)
- b) Residential visit during school hours

The board and lodging costs (but only those costs) of residential trips deemed to take place during school time. Pupils whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (See section 9 below) will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging.

c) Music tuition

Music tuition for individuals or appropriately sized groups of pupils 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 pupils.

7. Voluntary contributions

Separately from the matter of charging, schools may always seek voluntary contributions in order to offer a wide variety of experiences to pupils. All requests for voluntary contributions will emphasise their voluntary nature and the fact that pupils of parents who do not make such contributions will be treated no differently from those who have. No pupil will be excluded from an activity because his or her parents are unable or unwilling to pay.

If a school is unable to raise enough funds for an activity or trip then it may be cancelled.

8. Activities we charge for

Below is a list of some of the activities our schools will charge for:

- Meals
- Before/after school clubs
- Hire of room/facilities
- Some nursery provisions

For regular activities, the charges for each activity will be determined by the school and set before the start of the academic year.

9. Remissions

In order to remove financial barriers from pupils, the Board of Directors of the Trust 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.

Pupils entitled to Pupil Premium may qualify for remission based on the school's pupil premium allocation and the activity/visit in question.

Qualification for help with charges:

Support is available for charges for materials, books, instruments or equipment, where a parent wishes their child to own them.

Remission is available for charges for the board and lodging component of residential trips to the pupils whose parents do not have to pay for school lunches if they receive any of the following:

- Income support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided that they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and the family's annual gross income does not exceed £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (this is paid for 4 weeks after an individual stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit (provided the family's annual net earned income is less than £7,400 per)

Criteria and more information can be found here: [Eligibility for Free School Meals](#)

10. Additional considerations

The Trust 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, each school shall publish a list of visits, and their approximate cost, at the beginning of the academic 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 pupils from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

End.