Blue Coat Church of England Academy

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

2026-2027

Date:		September 2026
Prepared by:		E Jordanou
Ratified by the Governing Body on:		1st October 2026
	Signature	
Principal		D Smith
Chair of Governors		A Clayton
Review date:		September 2027

Numbers 10:32: "If you come with us, we will share with you whatever good things the LORD gives us."

Blue Coat Church of England Academy is an inclusive Christian learning environment, our Academy values underpin all of our policies: Wisdom, Endurance, Service, Kindness and Hope.

Rationale

The Directors of Blue Coat Church of England Academy recognise the valuable contribution a wide range of additional activities have on a student's education. These activities include trips, clubs, sporting events and residential experiences.

The Directors aim to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the students of the Academy and as additional optional activities.

Context

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education on charging for Academy activities and the Education Act 1996. In general, the law states that education provided during Academy hours must be free. This definition includes materials, equipment and transport provided in Academy hours by the Academy. However, Academies are allowed to charge for certain costs and this policy outlines activities for which a charge can be made. The level of charge will be dependent on the nature or type of activity and the costs involved. The Directors are also permitted to request voluntary contributions as set out below.

Aims

- To make Academy activities accessible to students regardless of family income.
- To provide a process which allows activities to take place at a minimum cost to parents/carers, students and the Academy and which acknowledges the cost of such activities to the Academy's budget.

Charges

The Directors reserve the right to make a charge in the following circumstances for activities organised by the Academy:

Residential activities during Academy hours

For a residential activity taking place mainly during Academy time, or which meets the requirements of the syllabus for a public examination or is to do with the National Curriculum or religious education, no charge may be made either for the education or for the cost of travel when using the Academy's minibus. However, a charge (not exceeding the cost) will be made for the board, lodging and any non-teaching staff costs, if applicable.

Optional activities during Academy hours

Where the Academy provides optional activities in Academy hours, the full cost of the activity may be charged to parents/carers. This includes travel, materials, non-teaching staff (if applicable) or any other cost incurred directly

in connection with the activity. It will be made clear to parents/carers in advance that the activity is optional and students are not required to participate. Charges to parents/carers will apply only where legislation permits and where the activity is genuinely optional and falls outside the free entitlement.

Activities outside Academy hours (including overseas trips)
A charge will be made for education provided outside Academy hours provided it is with the prior agreement of parents/carers. The charge in respect of a student will not exceed the actual cost of providing the activity divided equally by the number of students participating nor will it include a share of the cost of any remissions.

Costs will, if appropriate, include an element for travel, board and lodging, instruments, materials, books and equipment, non-teaching and teaching staff costs (where a teacher/instructor is engaged specifically to provide the activity), entry fees, activity specific insurance and any other direct costs of the activity.

An administration charge of 5% will be included to off-set the Academy's costs (including those of the Educational Visits Coordinator and finance team) in planning, organising and recording costs and income for such trips. Payment for trips and activities must be made in advance of any trip.

It may be possible for the more costly trips (over £100) be paid for in instalments (over a period of not more than 12 months for the most expensive trips). Where a trip is organised by an external travel agent or operator, who may require a non-refundable deposit from the Academy, then the initial deposit by parents/carers will be for the same amount and will also be non-refundable, unless the Academy is able to obtain a refund. Balances paid by parents/carers will also be non-refundable unless the Academy is able to obtain a refund from the company. The Academy reserves the right to charge the administration fee in all such cases.

Materials, books and other equipment
The Academy may charge for materials used, where a parent/carer indicates in advance they or the student wishes to ultimately own the item. Any charge will not exceed the cost of the materials. Alternatively, parents/carers may provide the materials themselves.

Instrumental tuition
The Academy will charge for the cost of instrumental tuition that is not an essential part of the National Curriculum or examination syllabus. Parents/carers are informed of charges at the start of the academic year and, as the Academy must pre-book tuition, these are non-refundable. Instrument hire is available through the Forest Arts Centre (Walsall Council) and is currently free of charge (subject to a signed loan agreement).

Public examinations
<u>Students</u>
No charge will be made for entering students for public examinations. The Academy must enter a student for each examination in a public examination

syllabus that the Academy has prepared the student for, unless they think 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. An examination entry fee may be charged to parents/carers if:

- the examination is on the set list but the student was not prepared for it at the Academy
- the examination is not on the set list but the Academy arranges for the student to take it
- a student fails without good reason to complete the requirements of a public examination where the Directors originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee
- the student chooses to re-sit a public examination where no additional preparation is provided in the Academy, e.g. if a student wishes to improve their original exam grade.

Private candidates

The Academy will accept private candidates providing they meet our eligibility criteria laid out in our Exams Policy. Fees will be charged based on the following:

- entry fee
- any applicable late entry fee
- other applicable charges, e.g. invigilation cost if the exam is taken in a separate room
- an administration fee at 2.5% of the total cost

Uniform

Students are given one free Academy tie on admission. Replacement ties can be made available to parents and will be charged at cost. Parents purchase PE uniform from the Academy. This is also charged at cost.

Damage to property

The Directors reserve the right to request the parents/carers of students, whose inappropriate behaviour causes damage to property, to contribute to the cost of repairs or replacing defaced, damaged or lost property.

Voluntary contributions

Although the Academy will not make charges to parents/carers for educational activities taking place in Academy hours, the Academy may request voluntary contributions from parents towards such costs. There will be no obligation for parents to make voluntary contributions towards the cost of Academy activities and it is the Directors' policy that no student will be left out of an activity because their parents/carers cannot or prefer not to make a contribution. In such cases students will be treated no differently from those who have contributed. All such requests will make it clear contributions are voluntary. The Academy reserves the right to cancel activities if insufficient contributions are received.

Remissions

There is no obligation for any parent/carer to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of Academy activities. Students will be treated no differently from those who have contributed.

The Academy may provide some financial support through the Student Support Fund to help parents/carers who are having difficulty paying for charges under this policy in order to enable their child to attend trips and other activities. This support may be either in part or in full. The Directors' policy on remissions is as follows:

- the Academy will provide a limited amount of funds towards charges for students. This is subject to eligibility criteria and a maximum of £100 per student
- funding will not be provided for students eligible for the 16-19 Discretionary Bursary Fund as this can be used by the student to pay such charges (limitations as per the Bursary Fund policy)
- any parent/carer can request financial support and each request will be considered on its own merit. Granting such support is entirely at the discretion of the Academy and parents/carers may be asked to provide evidence of hardship and income. Such requests should be made, in the first instance, to the appropriate Head of Year. Authorisation for the remission of charges will be made by the Principal or Vice Principal on behalf of the Directors.

General

The Directors may from time to time amend the categories of activity for which a charge may be made. Nothing in this policy statement precludes the Directors from inviting parents/carers to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of additional activities which take place in Academy time. Parents/carers may be advised that the continuance of an activity may depend upon voluntary contributions, but once it has been decided to run such an activity no qualifying student will be excluded on the grounds of voluntary contributions. The Academy will review this policy annually to ensure compliance with current legislation, Department for Education guidance and Trust financial procedures.