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CHARGES AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Committee Responsible	Policy Approval Committee
Lead Member	CFO
Approved by	Board of Trustees
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THE CHELMSFORD LEARNING PARTNERSHIP – CHARGES AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Introduction

1. State education should be free. There are some exceptions as follows:
 - Music lessons (in some cases);
 - Examination fees including re-sit fees;
 - Board and lodging;
 - Finished products;
 - Transport (in some very limited cases);
 - Activities arranged by third parties;
 - Damage to school property;
 - Optional extras outside school hours;
 - Voluntary contributions;
 - Lockers.
2. The main guidance in these matters is The Education Act 1996, The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007, The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010, the DfE (2014) 'Charging for School Activities', the DfE (2017) 'Governance Handbook and the trust's Funding Agreement.

Music Lessons and examinations

3. These must be free if in a class or group of five or more, or the lessons form part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or is required by the National Curriculum. Otherwise a charge may be made for individual instrumental or vocal tuition.

Examination fees

4. A charge may be made for:
 - re-marking (a refund will be made in the event of a higher mark being awarded and the school has recovered the fees);
 - an examination for which the student has not been prepared by the school;
 - a re-sit;
 - the fee of a student who fails without good reason (in the judgement of the Board) to meet any examination requirements of that syllabus including non-attendance;
 - the return of examination papers from the Examination Board;
 - late request for certification;
 - late withdrawal of an entry for an examination;
 - late change of tier for an examination;
5. To meet the administration costs involved in any of the above, a small fee may be payable. Details are available from the school.

Board and lodging

6. Where a school activity involves a student in a night away from home, a charge may be made which must not exceed the actual cost of the board and lodging for that student.

Parents will be exempt from board and lodging costs if they can prove that they are in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:

- 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 guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit

Finished products

7. Where a parent has indicated in advance a wish to own a finished product made at school, the parent may be required to supply the ingredients or materials or be charged the cost thereof.

Transport (in some very limited cases)

8. Parents may be required to meet the cost of transport from home to an activity sanctioned but not provided by the school (eg travel to work experience).

Activities arranged by third parties in school hours

9. A "Third Party" is somebody other than the school. A Third Party who arranges an activity during school hours may make a charge for their services to the parents of the students who are released to participate.

Damage to school property

10. The school may charge parents for the cost of replacing items broken, damaged or lost due to their child's behaviour.

Optional extras outside school hours

11. For education provided as:

- an option;
- an addition;
- wholly or mainly outside school hours;

then some charges may be made.

- An option – participation must be on the basis of parents' choice and willingness to meet the charges made.
- An addition – education, provided to fulfil any requirements in the syllabus for a prescribed public examination or the statutory duties relating to the National Curriculum or Religious Education, cannot be an extra and the only charge which can be made is for board and lodging. See above.

- Wholly or mainly outside school hours - defined by complex rules which differ between activities within one day and residential activities. Approximately, these amount to more than half the time being spent outside the school day for a one day activity or more than half the possible half-days being outside school days for a residential activity.

The charges which may be made include:

- student's travel costs;
- student's board and lodging costs;
- materials, books, instruments and other materials;
- non-teaching staff costs, entrance fees (museums etc);
- insurance costs; and
- the costs of engaging teaching staff specifically for this activity, including their travel, board and lodging – but not the cost of teaching staff already employed by the school unless employed to provide individual musical tuition or engaged on a separate contract to provide the optional extra.

Voluntary contributions

12. Voluntary contributions may be sought from parents in support of any school activity, in or out of school time, residential or not but contributions must be genuinely voluntary.
13. It is a statutory requirement that the terms of any request make it clear that there is no obligation to contribute and that students will not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have contributed. It is perfectly proper to make it clear that the activity cannot take place without 100% or nearly 100% support.
14. There is no limit to the amount of the contribution or to the use which can be made of it. So, for example, it could include an element to pay for accompanying adults, provided that parents are aware of that use when they contribute.

Refunds of contributions

15. Should an activity not proceed or is cancelled in advance, refunds of amounts paid in advance will be repaid in full. Where an activity has taken place and the final total costs were substantially less than expected, refunds will be issued to parents for amounts in excess of £10.00. Where the refund would be less than £10.00, parents may request a refund, otherwise the small amounts would be aggregated and donated to the school's voluntary fund.

Remissions

16. Families in financial difficulty to be able to send their children on visits/activities may apply to the school for financial support. The total funding allocated to this purpose is limited and there is no guarantee that all requests will be met. Assistance will be allocated on a needs basis, and if the full cost of the trip/activity cannot be met through this assistance funding and voluntary contributions, then the trip/activity will be cancelled.

Parents in receipt of any of the following benefits may request assistance with the costs of activities:

- 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 guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit

To request assistance parents should contact the school's visits/activities co-ordinator.

Lockers

17. Some schools have lockers and the following charges and refund aspects apply to all students hiring a locker.

- Payment for renting lockers may be made on a termly, annual or a 'one off' basis with price reductions being offered for annual and 'one off' payment options. All payments are to be made in advance.
- Failure to pay when required would result in the school requiring the key to be returned immediately and/or the lock having to be changed at cost to the parent concerned.
- Refunds would be given for those paying for more than one term on a pro-rata basis on return of the key to the school except where the amount is less than £3 which is uneconomic to process.
- Where all student keys have been lost or mislaid and a replacement key is needed, this would be arranged by the school with the cost passed on to parents. Students and parents may arrange for additional keys to be cut at their own expense.
- All costs of repairing or replacing lockers withdrawn due to misuse, vandalism or any other reason will be met by parents.