University Schools Trust
A transformational education

Charging & Remission Policy

September 2025

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0. Document Control

The table below contains the changes made between the different final editions of this document set for approval. This is to help provide information to those reviewing and approving the document of the changes being made.

Document Edition	Section	Details of change
September 2025	Various	Update thresholds and minor changes Change ESFA to DfE
September 2024	6	Additional point added regarding transport during school hours
	13	Added clarification regarding cost reclamation when third party property has been damaged by a pupil
	17	New section
	18	New section
	20	New section
June 2023	Various	Update to reflect New CFO / COO roles
August 2022	All	Update to new brand
April 2021	Various	Aesthetic changes removal of individual school logo's, plus changes to the policy in line with the SchoolBus guidance
April 2020	Various	Aesthetic changes made re cover sheets and document control, plus update definitions
April 2019	Various	Updated so that there is one policy across the Trust, previously different versions for each school.

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1. Definitions

The "Trust" refers to the company known as the University Schools Trust, East London and all Trustees, Governors and Staff who work within it.

A "School" refers to an individual academy within the Trust, as denoted by their Unique Reference Number. As such a 'school' may span one or several phases of education to the individual academies within the Trust. Depending on the context the term "School" may refer to a singular academy or to all of the academies within the Trust but as separate entities.

"Staff" refers to any individual who is employed by the Trust or who operates on the Trust's behalf, e.g. Trustees and Governors.

The "Headteacher" is defined as the individual who has ultimate responsibility for a school in line with UST strategy, approach, ethos and values. Individual schools may have alternative titles for this position such as Executive Headteacher or Principal.

A "Parent" includes the natural or adoptive parent of a pupil as well as any non-parent / carer who has parental responsibility including being involved in the day-to-day care of a pupil.

A "Charge" refers to a fee payable for specifically defined activities.

A "Remission" refers to the cancellation of a charge which would normally be payable.

The "Accounting Officer" is a role appointed by the Board of Trustees and should be the senior executive leader, i.e. the Trust Leader. The accounting officer role includes specific responsibilities for financial matters.

The "Chief Financial Officer" is a role appointed by the Board of Trustees , who is the Trust's Director of Finance (DFO). Responsibility for the Trust's detailed financial procedures are delegated to the Chief Financial Officer.

2. Scope of the Policy

The purpose of the Charging and Remission Policy is 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.

3. Policy Aims and Ethos

University Schools Trust is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of financial circumstances, and has established the following policy and procedures to ensure that no child is discriminated against by our offering of school trips, activities and educational extras.

In addition, we are committed to adhering to legal requirements regarding charging for school activities, and meeting all statutory guidance provided by the DfE.

We promise:

- Not to charge for education provided during school hours.
- To inform parents on low incomes and in receipt of relevant benefits of the support available to them when asking for contributions towards the costs of school visits.

Please note that while this policy may be more or less generous than the LA's, we have ensured it meets the requirements of the law.

4. Links to Legislation and Guidance Documents

4.1. Relevant Internal Policies

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Freedom of Information Publication Scheme
- The school's Scheme of Delegation
- Finance Policy

4.2. Relevant External Documents

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- DfE (2018) 'Charging for school activities'
- DfE (2020) 'Governance handbook'
- The trust's Funding Agreement
- DfE 'Academy trust handbook 2025'

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. Trust Board

The governing board also has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

5.2. Resources committee

Responsibility for approving the charging and remissions policy has been delegated to the Resources Committee.

5.3. Headteachers

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

5.4. Staff

Staff are responsible for:

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

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

5.5. Parents

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

6. Charging for Education

The school will not charge for:

- 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, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for by the school, or part of RE.
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, for pupils learning individually or in groups, unless 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 resits, if the pupil is being prepared for the resits at the school.
- There is no charge for transport during school hours to school-organised activities.

The school may charge for:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment, where the child's parent wishes their child to own them.
- Optional extras.
- Music tuition (in certain circumstances).
- Certain early years provision.
- The use of community facilities and other commercial activities.
- Provision of information within the scope of freedom of information.
- Any charge that the school remits (either wholly or partly) will be at the headteachers discretion and will take account of the child's circumstances.

7. Optional Extras

The school may charge for the following optional extras:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
- Part of the national curriculum
- Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school
- Part of RE

- Examination entry fees where the pupil has not been prepared for the examinations at the school
- Transport, other than that required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the trust board 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, e.g. breakfast or out-of-school provision

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

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in relation to the optional extra
- Buildings and accommodation
- Non-teaching staff (including TAs)
- Teaching staff under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra
- The cost, or an appropriate proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide vocal tuition or tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra

The school will not charge in excess of the actual cost of providing the optional extra divided by the number of participating pupils. A subsidy will not be charged for any pupils wishing to participate 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 school will not charge for the cost of alternative provision for those not participating.

The school will not charge for supply teachers to cover for teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

Participation in any optional activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges; therefore, parental agreement is a prerequisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

If a charge is to be made for a particular activity, such as optional extras, parents will be informed of how the charge will be calculated.

8. Examination fees and resits

The school may charge for examination fees if:

- The examination is on the set list (which includes SATs, GCSEs and A-levels), but the pupil was not prepared for it at the school.
- The examination is not on the set list, but the school arranged for the pupil to take it.
- A pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the requirements of any public examination where the governing board or LA originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

Where a pupil is entered for a second or subsequent attempt at an examination, the school will pay the fee. Once pupils have left the school, resits must be taken at the school.
If a pupil or their parent consider it to be in the best interests of the pupil to request that an examination is re-marked, any fees involved must be covered by the pupil or their parent. If the remarking of an examination paper is supported by the school, the school may pay the costs of the remark at the headteachers discretion. If the awarding body changes the overall grade of the result,

the school will not be charged by the awarding body and the parent or pupil will have any of their fees paid refunded.

9. Voluntary Contributions

Instrumental and vocal music tuition is an exception to the rule that all education provided during school hours must be free. The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007 allow for charges to be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually or to groups of any size – provided that the tuition is at the request of the pupil's parents. The charges will not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff providing the tuition.

- Charging will not be made if the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum.
- Charging will also not be made if the teaching is provided under the first access to the Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Programme.
- No charge will be made in respect of pupils who are Looked After Children.

10. Transport

The school will not charge for:

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the LA has a statutory obligation to provide the transport.
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing board or LA has arranged for pupils to be educated.
- Transporting pupils to meet an examination requirement when they have been prepared for the examination at the school.
- Transport provided for an educational visit.

11. Education partly during School Hours

If 50 percent or more of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours (including time spent travelling if the travel occurs during school hours), it is deemed to take place during school hours and no charge will be made.

Whatever the start and finish times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into two sessions. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

If less than 50 percent of the time spent on an activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours and the school may charge for the activity; however, the school will not charge if the activity is part of the national curriculum, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of RE.

The remission of charges for board and lodging payments is the responsibility of the school. These costs will be borne by the school.
Any charges for extended day services will be optional.

12. Residential Visits

The school will not charge for:

- 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, part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of RE.
- Supply teachers to cover for teachers accompanying pupils on visits.

The school may charge for board and lodging, but the charge will not exceed the actual cost. 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 Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided that they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £18,725
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit – if they apply on or after 1 April 2018, their household income must be less than £7,455 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive)

If the number of school sessions covered by the visit is equal to or greater than 50 percent of the number of half days (any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day) spent on the visit, the school will not charge for the activity.

13. Damaged or Lost Items

The school may charge for the cost of replacing items that are damaged or lost due to the negligence or poor behaviour of pupils or their parents.

Where property belonging to a third party has been damaged by a pupil, and the academy has been charged, the academy may charge some or all of the cost to those responsible.

Whether or not these charges will be made will be decided by the Headteacher and dependent on the situation.

14. Remissions

The school has set aside a fund to enable parents in financial difficulty to send their children on visits and activities. The funding is limited and there is no guarantee that all requests can be met. Assistance will be allocated on a needs basis, and if the full cost of the trip or activity cannot be met through assistance funding and voluntary contributions, the trip or 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 State Pension Credit

- Child Tax Credit, provided that they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and they have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run on – paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit – if they apply on or after 1 April 2018, their household income must be less than £7,455 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive)
- To request assistance, parents should contact the named role via contact details.

15. School Trip Refunds

All initial deposits for school trips will be non-refundable, unless cancelled by the school due to unforeseen circumstances. Parents will be informed of this when they are provided with initial information about the trip.

In the event that the school has to cancel a trip due to foreseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded. In the event that a school trip is cancelled by a party other than the school due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents.

In the event that a pupil or their parents cancel the pupil's place on a trip, it is at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school will take into account the reason for cancellation, whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip, and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

Where a pupil or their parents have previously cancelled a place on a trip and received a full refund, the school has the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future trips and visits.
In the event that a pupil cannot attend a trip at the last minute, e.g. due to illness, it is at the school's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school will take into account whether the school will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.

In the event that a school trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the school's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.

In the event that the decision is made to postpone a trip due to foreseen circumstances, it is at the school's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school will consider its options, which could include carrying forward the money until the trip takes place, transferring the money to another trip, or refunding parents.

Once trip arrangements have been booked and confirmed, if contributions exceed the total cost of the trip, a refund will be given at the headteachers discretion.

The school will deal with cancellations and refunds on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all pupils and their families are treated equally.

If a parent wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they can do so via the Complaints Procedures Policy.

16. Income Generation

In line with the DfE's 'Academy Trust Handbook', the trust will set fees for chargeable services at full cost, and reserves the right to apply an additional rate of return when in a commercial environment.

17. Inability or Unwillingness to Pay

The Trust is committed to ensuring fair access and treatment of all pupils, and this means ensuring that no child is excluded from an activity because the parents or carers of that child are unwilling or unable to pay. If there is insufficient funding for an activity, then it will be cancelled.

The identity of the child or parents of the child who did not want to make the payment, or could not make the payment, will not be disclosed under any circumstances.

18. Voluntary Contributions

The Trust may ask for voluntary contributions to the school for general funds and/or to fund activities that will enrich our pupils' education. It will always be made very clear that this is completely voluntary and there is no detriment for those not paying and no expectation that parents will pay where the contribution is voluntary.

If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary funding, the school will make it clear to parents at the outset. If the activity is cancelled, all monies paid will be returned to parents.

19. Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

The school's Freedom of Information Policy and Freedom of Information Publication Scheme sets out where fees may be charged for the provision of information.

20. Complaints

Complaints about the implementation of this policy will be considered as part of the Trust Academy Complaints Procedure.

21. Approval Signature

Signature of (enter position e.g. Chair) _____

Print name _____

Date _____

22. Appendix 1 – Key Members of Staff Referenced

Role	Current Member of Staff
Accounting Officer	Gillian Kemp
Chief Financial Officer	Mike Antoniou