



## Charging and Remissions Policy

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### 1. Introduction

The Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (DBAT) is a multi-academy trust with a faith designation and a Christian religious ethos that is both distinctive and inclusive. Distinctive in the sense that all decisions about the nature and purpose of the Academy are taken through the lens of Christian values, inclusive in the sense that all students and staff are equally valued for their uniqueness in the eyes of God and their belonging to the school community.

### 2. Ethos statement

#### **Vision**

The Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (DBAT) shares the Church of England’s Vision for Education 2016, “Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good”, which includes four basic elements wisdom, hope, community and dignity. We aim to deliver values-led education with the very best outcomes for children and young people.

#### **Purpose**

To provide high quality education enabling young people to flourish and grow: spiritually, in love and in understanding.

### 3. Compliance

- a. DBAT (the Academies Trust) is required by law to publish a policy on charging for academy activities. The Education Act 1996 establishes the basic principle that education provided by any maintained school/academy for its registered pupils should be free of charge. This basic underlying principle requires that there should be no school/academy admission charge and no charge for any related activity which takes place during school/academy time. Exceptions to this general statement are as follows:

- b. Individual tuition in playing a musical instrument may be charged for provided that it is not part of the National Curriculum or part of the syllabus for a prescribed Public Examination.
- c. Where parents have indicated that they wish to own the finished product from a particular lesson e.g. individual craft items, pottery, needlework, cookery, a charge may be made to cover materials.
- d. For all residential visits deemed to be within academy hours, or part of the National Curriculum or part of the Syllabus for the prescribed Public Examination, a charge for board and lodging will be made, except for families in receipt of relevant welfare benefits.
- e. Optional visits or activities occurring outside of academy hours may be charged for in full.

## 4. Policy

- a. Within the Education Act it is possible for schools to ask for voluntary contributions from parents. The Board of Directors of the Trust has therefore approved the following:
  - Voluntary contributions can be invited from parents towards the cost of the school activities which are related to the life and work of the school. Such contributions will be genuinely voluntary and no child whose parents feel unable to contribute will be treated differently from the rest.
  - Parents not wishing to make a voluntary contribution in whole or part, but wishing their child to be included, must make the fact known directly to the Headteacher who will treat any such approach in strictest confidence.
  - School visits and activities will be planned in advance and, if sought, voluntary contributions will usually be invited through individual letters to parents. The letter, asking for support, will outline the proposed visit, cost, educational value and its relationship to the academy curriculum.
  - If insufficient voluntary contributions are received and the trip is considered by the Headteacher not to be financially viable, then it will be cancelled and any monies received will be refunded.
  - Any charge made in respect of individual pupils will not be greater than the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating.
  - Any charge will not include an element of subsidy for any other pupils who wish to take part in the activity but whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

- b. Charges may be made by the school for:
- Replacement of broken windows or fittings defaced or damaged textbooks or any other damage or loss occurring as a result of pupils' deliberate action. The school is empowered to recover this loss and resultant costs as a civil debt.
  - Unpaid charges legally recoverable will also be recouped, together with resultant costs, as a civil debt.
- c. Any amendments to this policy will be made if and when necessary.
- d. Children whose parents are in receipt of certain 'support' payment may be eligible for further remissions.

For example: Parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodgings for residential visits. However, a voluntary contribution, at a reduced rate, will be requested:

- Universal credit in prescribed circumstances
- Income support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received and that family's income (as assessed by HMRC) does not exceed HMRC threshold
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- An income related employment and support allowance that was introduced on 27 October 2008

- b. Schools are responsible for implementing the charging and remissions policy consistently.

## 5. Communication with Parents

Schools should make every effort to:

- Ensure parents / carers are given plenty of notice of expensive trips
- Aim to share with parents the trips planned for the year in each year group so parents can budget ahead
- Establish systems so parents can pay by instalments.

## 6. Our Ethos and Values

As identified at the opening of this policy, our structure and approach here is underpinned by our Christian ethos and values, focused on an ethos that is both distinctive and inclusive.

In our adoption and subsequent adaptation of this policy we have asked ourselves two clear questions: “Is this policy and practice underpinned by our vision and values?” and “What is the impact of our vision and values on those subject to the policy?”. This is a key focus of our ongoing development of policy and practice.

## History of most recent policy changes and review period

Date	Page	Change(s) made	Origin of Change (e.g. TU request, change in legislation)
July 2015	New document		
September 2022	Whole document	New policy template and review	New template agreed by Trustees
November 2023	Whole document	Reviewed by Trustees – no changes	

Policy Owner	<b>Finance</b>
Date Adopted	<b>Sep 21</b>
Latest Review Date	<b>Nov 23</b>
Next Review Date	<b>Nov 24</b>
Level	<b>Level 1</b>
<b>DBAT Policy levels:</b>	
LEVEL 1	DBAT policy for adoption (no changes can be made by the Academy Council; the Academy Council must adopt the policy)
LEVEL 2	DBAT policy for adoption and local approval, with areas for the Academy to update regarding local practice (the main body of the policy cannot be changed)
LEVEL 3	DBAT model policy that the Academy can adopt if it wishes
LEVEL 4	Local policy to be approved by the Academy Council