



SIKH ACADEMIES TRUST
Faith Inspired Education

SAT CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

Date reviewed: Autumn 2024
Date of next review: Autumn 2025

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS

1. Overview

The Executive Headteacher, Headteachers and Trustees of Sikh Academies Trust (the “Trust”) recognise the value of providing a wide range of experiences to enrich and extend pupils’ learning and to contribute to their personal development.

The Trust aims to promote and provide such experiences for the pupils of the school, both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and as additional optional activities including those that support the Sikhism ethos. However, many of these activities have an associated cost and cannot be provided unless voluntary contributions are received, or parents are charged for the cost.

This policy will set out the circumstances in which charges will or will not be made for school activities and when charges may be waived in order to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to benefit from school visits, curricular and extra-curricular activities.

2. Statement

The policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1996 (where ‘parent’ is referred to this will include adults with a responsibility for the pupil).

Our aims are:

- To make school activities accessible to all pupils regardless of family income
- To encourage and promote external activities which give added value to the curriculum
- To provide a process which allows activities to take place at a minimum cost to parents, pupils and the school
- To respond to the wide variations in family income while not adding additional unexpected burdens to the school budget

3. Legislation

During School hours

DfE guidance states that “education provided during school hours must be free. The definition of “education” includes materials, equipment and transport provided in school hours by school to carry pupils between the school and an activity.” It goes on to advise that “although schools cannot charge for school time activities, they still invite parents and others to make voluntary contributions (in cash or in kind)”.

When additional costs are incurred by the Trust Schools to enhance the curriculum opportunities for the pupils, parents may be requested to make voluntary contributions. However, no pupil will be left out of an activity because his or her parents don’t or are not able to make a contribution of any kind.

Outside School Hours

DfE guidance states that “Parents can only be charged for activities that happen outside school hours when these activities are not a necessary part of the national curriculum or religious education. No charge can be made for activities that are an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination. Charges may be made for other activities that happen outside school hours if parents agree to pay. The Education Reform Act 1988 describes activities which can be charged for as “optional extras”.

4. Remissions

The fundamental aim of this policy is to ensure that all pupils gain fully from everything that the school is able to offer them and is based on an understanding of the relationship between low income, entitlement and access.

This policy takes into account the very real and persistent difficulties which people on low income have in meeting the costs of educational activities for their children.

Where parents are in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Support under part IV of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999 or Child Tax Credit (provided that Working Tax Credit is not also received), the Trust will endeavour to observe its statutory requirement to remit in full the cost of board and lodgings for any residential activity that the school organised for the pupil if the activity is deemed to take place within school hours.

There is a recognition that there may be cases of family hardship which make it difficult for pupils to take part in other particular activities for which a charge is made. When arranging a chargeable activity, the Trust Board will invite parents to apply in confidence for the remission of charges in part or in full. Authorisation of remission will be made by the Headteachers in consultation with the Executive Headteacher.

5. Data Protection of pupils and families

Staff will ensure that these children are not publicly identified and stigmatised. This is particularly important as the fear of stigmatisation is often a key element in the non- take up of Free School Meals or activities.

6. Voluntary contributions

SAT is exploring voluntary contributions by parents. Details will be updated in this policy once decisions have been finalized.

Nothing in legislation prevents a school governing body or local authority from asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the headteacher will make this clear to parents at the outset. The headteacher must also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution.

It is important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because

his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, or the school cannot fund it from some other source, then it must be cancelled. Schools will ensure that they make this clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still be given an equal chance to go on the visit. Schools will make it clear to parents at the outset what their policy for allocating places on school visits will be.

When making requests for voluntary contributions, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. Voluntary contributions may be requested to help with providing activities even though they may be part of the normal school day or part of the National Curriculum. If voluntary contributions are **requested for an** activity, it should be clearly understood that there is no obligation to contribute and that if the parent is unable or unwilling to pay, the child will not be excluded from the activity but that the activity might not be able to run.

7. Charges

The Trust reserves the right to make a charge for the activities and items detailed below:

- Trips which are not part of the school curriculum or are outside the school day (i.e. weekend residential)
- After school and pre-school clubs
- Music tuition if it is not required for the National Curriculum and is provided for an individual pupil or for groups of pupils.
- Damage to school property - the cost of replacing any item, such as a broken window or defaced, damaged or lost book, where this is a result of a pupil's behaviour.
- Visits to school by professionals e.g. Authors, storytellers, musicians, dancers, artists etc.

8. Individual Music Tuition

Charges may be made to parents for individual tuition in playing any musical instrument, even if such tuition takes place during school hours. Parental agreement and a signed contract will be obtained before the tuition is provided.

9. Ingredients or Materials for Practical Subjects

Parents are encouraged to provide ingredients, materials, etc. needed for practical subjects such as Food Technology. The Trust may charge for, at cost or less, or require the supply of, ingredients and materials if parents have indicated, in advance, their wish to own the finished product.

10. Lost School Equipment

Parents will be expected to replace or pay for the cost of lost items of School property.

11. Breakages and Damage to School Buildings, Furniture or Property

Parents will be charged for damage caused as a result of a pupil's behaviour.

12. Visits during the school day

A voluntary charge will be made to cover the cost of educational visits and other activities. However, as detailed at the outset, charges cannot be enforced where this forms part of the curriculum. Where the level of non-payment renders a trip financially unviable consideration will be given to cancellation.

13. Residential Activity

The DfE in its guidance states that "For a residential activity taking place largely during school time, or essential to the education provided at the school, no charge may be made for either the education or the costs of the travel. However, charges will be made for board and lodging in these circumstances, except for pupils who are receiving Income Support or Family Credit. The Headteachers will tell all parents of the right to claim free activities if they are in receipt of these benefits." A voluntary contribution will be requested by the school for such activities.

14. Public examinations

No charge shall be made in respect of the entry of a registered pupil at any Trust school. Charges are applied for the entry of a student for an examination for which they have not been prepared by the school.

Re-sit examinations are not subject to charge where the pupil has been prepared by the school. Where a student has paid for an examination re-mark and the new grade exceeds the original, the admin fee to the student is non-refundable.