



# HEARTWOOD

## LEARNING TRUST

### CHARGES AND REMISSIONS POLICY

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO THE HEARTWOOD LEARNING TRUST BOARD, THE CENTRAL TEAM,  
AND ALL TRUST SCHOOLS/ACADEMIES

Document Management	
Updated Policy Approved	April 2024
Next Review Date	April 2025 <i>(Extended until 31st December 2025)</i>
Version	4.0
Approved By	Chief Operating Officer

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## Policy Updates

Date	Page	Policy Updates
February 2022	p4, item 1.1	Additional Legislation & Guidance documents
February 2022	p4, item 1.2	Additional linked policies now listed
February 2022	p4, item 2.1	Update of wording on second bullet point
February 2022	p4, item 2.2	Update of chargeable items
February 2022	p5, item 3.1	Update of wording re: transport and extended services
February 2022	p5, item 3.2	Update of wording on heading and last bullet point
February 2022	p5, item 3.5 & 3.6	Additional points added
February 2022	p6, item 4.2	Additional point added
February 2022	p7, items 7.3, 7.4, 7.5	Additional points added
February 2022	pages 7 & 8, item 9.3	Wording changed re: benefits
February 2022	p8, item 9.4	Additional point added re: school sessions
February 2022	p8, item 10.2	Additional point added re: school day
February 2022	p8, item 10.4	Related to item 9.4 above, moved from section 10 to section 9
February 2022	p9, item 12.2	List of benefits updated and change of wording
February 2022	pages 9 & 10, item 13	New section added - School Trip Refunds
February 2022	p10, item 14	New section added - Income Generation
February 2022	p10, item 15	New section added - Freedom of Information
April 2023	5	1.1 - Wording changed from "Our Funding Agreement" to "The Trust's Funding Agreement"
April 2023	5	1.1 - Updated Legal Framework (dates changed to reflect latest legislation)
April 2023	9	11.1 - Damaged or Lost Items - Additional sentence added
October 2023	Whole policy	Updated inline with the new Scheme of Delegation
January 2024	5	1.1 - Legal framework updated to reflect current applicable legislation
January 2024	7	6.2 & 6.3 - Point updated to reflect communication requirements between schools/academies and parents/carers regarding voluntary contributions
January 2024	8	9.4 - Point added in relation to Appendix 1 to enable exemptions for board and lodging for parents/carers receiving benefits
January 2024	9	10.4 point added regarding extended day services optional charge
January 2024	12	Appendix 1 - Added form for schools/academies to provide to parents/carers to request details of exemptions for payments for board and lodging

This policy has been approved by:			
Signed		Date	
	<i>Chief Operating Officer</i>		

## Statement of Intent

**Heartwood Learning Trust (HLT)** are committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of financial circumstances, and have 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 Department for Education (DfE).

Heartwood Learning Trust will:

- Not charge for education provided during school hours
- Inform parents/carers on low incomes and in receipt of relevant benefits of the support available to them when asking for contributions

## 1. Legal Framework

1.1 This policy will have consideration for, and be compliant with, the following **legislation** and **statutory guidance**:

- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 1989
- 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
- ESFA (2023) 'Academy Trust Handbook 2023'

1.2 This policy operates in conjunction with the following **Trust** policies:

- Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme
- Scheme of Delegation
- Finance Policy

## 2. Charging for Education

2.1 We will not charge parents/carers 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 religious education
- Instrumental or vocal tuition, unless provided at the request of the pupil's parents/carers
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school/academy
- Examination resits, if the pupil is being prepared for the resits at the school/academy

2.2 We may charge parents/carers for the following:

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment, where they desire their child to own them
- Optional extras
- Certain early years provision
- Music and vocational tuition (in certain circumstances)
- Use of community facilities and other commercial activities
- Provision of information within the scope of Freedom of Information

## 3. Optional Extras

3.1 We may charge parents/carers 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/academy
  - Religious education
- Examination entry fees where the pupil has not been prepared for the examinations at the school/academy
- Transport, other than that required to take the pupil to school or 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

3.2 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
- The cost of buildings and accommodation
- The employment of non-teaching staff
- The cost of teaching staff (including teaching assistants) 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 optional

3.3 The school/academy will not charge in excess of the actual cost of providing the optional extra divided by the number of participating pupils. We will not charge a subsidy for any pupils wishing to participate but whose parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge. If a proportion of the activity takes place during school hours, we will not charge for the cost of alternative provision for those not participating.

3.4 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.

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

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

## 4. Examination Fees

4.1 We may charge for examination fees if:

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

- 4.2 Where a pupil is entered for a second or subsequent attempt at an examination by the school/academy, the school will pay the fee. Once pupils have left the school/academy, resits must be taken at the school.

## **5. Examination Re-Marks**

- 5.1 If a pupil or their parents/carers 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 parents/carers. If the awarding body changes the overall grade of the result, the school/academy will not be charged by the awarding body and the parent/pupil will have their fees refunded.

## **6. Voluntary Contributions**

- 6.1 We may, from time-to-time, ask for voluntary contributions towards the benefit of the school/academy or school activities. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, we will make this clear to parents/carers at the outset. We will also make it clear that there is no obligation for parents/carers to make a contribution, and notify parents/carers whether assistance is available.
- 6.2 No pupil will be excluded from an activity simply because their parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent/carer is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal opportunity to take part in the activity. The school/academy will make it clear to parents/carers how places will be allocated from the outset. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity, and the school/academy cannot fund it via another source, the activity will be cancelled and this will be made clear to parents/carers.
- 6.3 The school/academy will strive to ensure that parents/carers do not feel pressured into making voluntary contributions. Measures which may make parents/carers feel pressured, such as colour coded letters and direct debit or standing order mandates, will not be sent when the school requests contributions.

## **7. Music Tuition**

- 7.1 Instrumental and vocal music tuition is the only 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/carers.
- 7.2 The charges will not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff providing the tuition.
- 7.3 Charging will not be made if the teaching is an essential part of the national curriculum.
- 7.4 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.
- 7.5 No charge will be made in respect of pupils who are Looked After Children.

## **8. Transport**

8.1 We will not charge for:

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school/academy premises, where the Local Authority (LA) has a statutory obligation to provide the transport
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the school/academy / Local Governing Committee 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/academy
- Transport provided for an educational visit

## **9. Residential Visits**

9.1 We 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/academy, or part of religious education
- Supply teachers to cover for teachers accompanying pupils on visits

9.2 We may charge for board and lodging - but the charge will not exceed the actual cost.

9.3 Parents/carers 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 Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided that they are also not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- An income related employment and support allowance
- 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 £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive)

9.4 The school/academy will provide a form for parents/carers to submit and provide proof of receipt of one of the above benefit payments in order to be eligible for the exemption.

9.5 If the number of school/academy 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/academy will not charge for the activity.

## **10. Education Partly During School Hours**

10.1 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.

- 10.2 Whatever the start and finish times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into sessions. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.
- 10.3 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 we may charge for the activity; however, we 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/academy, or part of religious education.
- 10.4 The remission of charges for board and lodging payments is the responsibility of the school/ academy. These costs will be borne by our contingency funds.
- 10.5 Any charges for extended day services will be optional.

## **11. Damaged or Lost Items**

- 11.1 The school/academy may charge parents/carers for the cost of replacing items broken, damaged or lost due to negligence or poor behaviour of pupils or their parents/carers. Parents/carers will only be charged the replacement cost to purchase the same or equivalent item. The school/academy will consider waiving costs in exceptional circumstances.

## **12. Remissions**

- 12.1 Where a school/academy has been able to fundraise and allocate a fund to enable families in financial difficulty to send their children on visits/activities. This funding is limited and there is no guarantee that all requests can be met. If available, assistance will be allocated on a needs basis, and if the overall full cost of the trip/activity cannot be met through assistance funding and voluntary contributions, the trip/activity will be cancelled.
- 12.2 Parents/carers in receipt of any of the following benefits may request assistance with the costs of activities:
  - Universal Credit - if they apply on or after 1 April 2018, their household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive)
  - Income Support
  - Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
  - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
  - 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
  - The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
  - An income related employment and support allowance
- 12.3 To request assistance, parents/carers should contact the school office in the first instance.

## 13. School Trip Refunds

- 13.1 All initial deposits for school trips will be non-refundable. Parents/carers will be informed of this when they are provided with initial information about the trip.
- 13.2 In the event that the school has to cancel a trip due to unforeseen circumstances, parental contributions will be refunded. In the event that a school trip is cancelled by a party other than the school/academy due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the school's/academy's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents/carers.
- 13.3 In the event that a pupil or their parents/carers cancel the pupil's place on a trip, it is at the school's/academy's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school/academy will take into account the reason for cancellation, whether the school/academy will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip, and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.
- 13.4 Where a pupil or their parents/carers have previously cancelled a place on a trip and received a full refund, the school/academy has the right to refuse to allow the pupil to attend future trips and visits.
- 13.5 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/academy's discretion as to whether a refund is given. The school/academy will take into account whether the school/academy will be reimbursed for the pupil's place on the trip and whether the place on the trip can be offered to another pupil.
- 13.6 In the event that a school trip is postponed due to unforeseen circumstances, it is at the school's /academy's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school /academy 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/carers.
- 13.7 In the event that the decision is made to postpone a trip due to foreseen circumstances, it is at the school's/academy's discretion as to what happens with the parental contributions for the trip. The school/academy 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/carers.
- 13.8 Once trip arrangements have been booked and confirmed, if contributions exceed the total cost of the trip, a refund will be given where the excess is greater than £10 per pupil.
- 13.9 The school/academy will deal with cancellations and refunds on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that all pupils and their families are treated equally.
- 13.10 If a parent/carer wishes to make a complaint about refunds, they can do so via the Complaints Policy and Procedures.

## 14. Income Generation

- 14.1 In line with the ESFA'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.

## **15. Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme**

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

## **16. Monitoring and Review**

- 16.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Chief Finance Officer and approved by the Chief Operating Officer.
- 16.2 The next scheduled review date can be found on the title page of this document.

## Appendix 1 - Board and Lodging Exemption Form

Board and Lodging Exemption Form			
Parents/carers will be exempt from board and lodging costs for their child(ren) if they are able to provide evidence that they are in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:			
Applicable Exemption Condition	Please tick		
Income Support	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Income Based Jobseekers Allowance	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Child Tax Credit, provided that you are also not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190	<input type="checkbox"/>		
The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit	<input type="checkbox"/>		
An income related employment and support allowance	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Universal Credit - household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits received)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Name of parent/carer:			
Signature:		Date:	
Please submit this form alongside proof of how you meet the above criteria to the school/academy reception team. If you do not have access to a photocopier the school office will be able to assist with this.			