



The Robert Carre Trust

Charging and Remissions Policy

General

The general principle that no charge can be made for education in school hours (excluding the midday break) in schools is set out in the Education Act 1996.

In accordance with the above, the Robert Carre Trust will make no compulsory charge for any books, materials, instruments, equipment or transport for use in connection with education if the education is:

- within school hours;
- for the National Curriculum programme out of school hours;
- for statutory religious education; and
- for a prescribed public examination prepared for by the school.

Examinations

No charge can be made for entry to a public examination on the Secretary of State's prescribed list except where the student, without good reason, fails to attend or meet the requirements of the examination. In the case of students in schools which are members of the Robert Carre Trust this includes failing to submit coursework or attend sessions for good reason.

Students will be charged for re-sitting examinations at GCSE and A Level and also for any re-marking requests. Should an improvement in grade be achieved, the re-marking fee will be returned to the student.

School Meals

The Trust does not charge for school meals where the student is eligible for free school meals.

Students who are not entitled to free school meals will be charged.

Board and Lodging

A charge will be made for board and lodging on residential educational visits/activities, but parents will be advised of this beforehand and those who qualify for prescribed benefits and allowances are entitled to a remission of the charges. The charge will not exceed the actual cost. Consideration of remission will be made for categories outlined in the remissions section of the policy.

Further information about the Trust's policy on charging for educational visits can be found in our Educational Visits Policy.

Transport

Transport to and from home to any activity not provided by, but permitted by, schools which are members of the Robert Carre Trust or the Local Authority, can be charged for (the main example is work experience). The Trust will not charge for:-

- Transporting registered students to or from the school premises, where the Local Authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;

- Transporting registered students to other premises where the Trustees of The Robert Carre Trust, the school's Local Governance Tier or the Local Authority has arranged for students to be educated;
- Transport that enables a student to meet an examination requirement when he/she has been prepared for that examination at a school in the Trust;
- In the case of a Trust/School-owned Minibus or other vehicle, only students on the roll of the Trust/School, their parents/guardians or staff may be charged for this form of transport. Funds will not be raised by the Trust/School to create a profit although charges may be made to recover some or all of the running costs and depreciation of the vehicle.

Voluntary Contributions

The academy may ask parents/carers for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the academy or any of its activities.

Where it is intended that an activity is to be funded by voluntary contributions, the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher will ensure that parents/carers are made aware at the outset that:

- the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions
- there is no obligation to make any contribution
- if insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund the activity, and the academy is unable to fund it from some other source, then the activity will be cancelled

No pupil will be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parent/carer is unwilling or unable to pay. Pupils whose parents/carers are unwilling or unable to pay will still be given an equal chance to participate in the activity.

Refunds

Request for refunds for activities will be considered on an individual basis and may be rejected if the academy is unable to recoup the costs incurred.

In all cases of withdrawal, either voluntarily or otherwise, applications should be made in writing to the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher. If approved, refunds will be processed via the original method of payment.

The academy reserves the right not to refund costs where a pupil is withdrawn from an activity by the academy on the basis of a pupil's breach of the academy's behaviour policy.

Permitted Charges/Optional Extras

The Robert Carre Trust uses the payment system, ParentPay, which does incur costs for the Trust and there will be a small charge of approximately 2% added to the cost of each trip to cover this.

The following are also permitted charges:

- Education provided outside of school time that is not part of the National Curriculum;
- Charges for board and lodging on trips – exceptions detailed in Board and Lodging section above;
- Costs of lost and destroyed Trust/school property and breakages;
- Any costs associated with individual tuition in the playing of musical instruments whether in or out of school hours (UNLESS it is provided as part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination or is required by the National Curriculum);
- Finished Products - where parents have expressed a wish in advance to have a finished product made at school, a charge will be made at cost price. The parents will be informed of the likely charge for the product in advance;
- The cost of optional extras provided outside school hours (or mainly outside school hours), but the charge will not exceed the cost of the provision, and parents must agree to their child receiving the optional extra;

- The cost of entering a student for a public examination not prescribed in regulations, and the cost for preparing the student for such an examination out of school hours; and
- Re-sits of prescribed public examinations where no further preparation has been provided by the Trust.

In calculating the cost of the above, an amount may be included in relation to:-

- Materials, books, instruments or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- Support staff;
- Teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra, this includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide that optional extra; and
- The cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where tuition is an optional extra.

In all cases where a permitted charge is likely to be made the parents will be told the amount in advance.

Education/Activities partly during School Hours

Where an activity takes place partly during school hours and partly outside normal school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. However, a charge will only be made for the activity outside school hours if it is not part of the National Curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the students is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education.

In order to determine whether an activity that is undertaken partly during school hours and partly out of school hours the 50% rule is applied:

Non-Residential Activities: if 50% or more is spent on an activity in school time (including travelling time, but excluding midday breaks) the whole activity is deemed to be inside school time, and will not be charged for; and

Residential Activities: the number of half-days is counted (a half-day being any 12 hour period ending noon or midnight). If the number of days and half-days spent on the activity is greater than the number of school sessions (morning and afternoon sessions) that a student would spend on a normal school day, the activity is deemed to take place outside school hours, and vice-versa. Travelling time is included in the time spent on the activity.

When a departure or return time splits a half-day then all the half-day counts if more than 50% of the half-day is used for the activity.

Third parties

On occasion, the Trust uses third parties to provide some educational activities (especially educational visits). We will ensure that the monies are paid directly to the third-party organisation.

In such cases if the activity is in school time the school formally grants leave of absence to the students taking part, as the activity would no longer technically be part of the school's official programme.

Damages and Breakages

Where the Trust's property has been wilfully recklessly damaged by a student or parent/carer, the Trust may charge those responsible for some of all of the cost of repair or replacement.

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

Remissions

In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged students, the Trustees have agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made will be offered at no charge or a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances. This remissions policy sets out the circumstances in which such charges will be waived.

Families qualifying for remission or help with charges will be those the school receives a pupil premium (PP) allocation for or those students in receipt of 16-19 Bursary funding.

In addition, students may be given financial assistance with uniform and equipment through the school hardship fund which is designed to support students where there is a demonstrable financial need.

The level of support which the school can offer is dependent on the total funding available and the number of applications received. The final decision will be made by the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher.

16-19 Bursary

The Trust has a 16-19 Bursary fund which is designed to help and support any student over the age of 16 who faces financial barriers to participation in education, such as costs of transport, food or equipment. Further information can be found in the RCT Bursary Policy.

Additional Considerations

The Trust recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Where possible we shall publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the school year so that parents can plan ahead
- We have established a system for parents to pay in instalments
- When an opportunity for a trip arises at short notice it will be possible to arrange to pay by instalments beyond the date of the trip

Monitoring and Review

The Executive Headteacher / Director of Finance and Resources will review the working of the policy with the appropriate Trustees annually.

Approved by the Trustees on 18 March 2024

Next Review Date: March 2025 (annually)