

# **Rise Multi Academy Trust: Charging Policy 2025**

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**Date of Policy: January 2025**

**Approved by the Trust Board: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

**Date of Review: January 2028**

**Signed:** 

## DEBT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

### Introduction

This procedure has been written to enable Rise Multi Academy Trust and its schools to adopt a consistent approach to debt management. It provides clarity and consistency in managing debt and will also help our parents understand our expectations and their responsibilities.

### The debt management procedure aims are as follows:

- Schools are required to take all reasonable steps to collect debts as part of their duty for the management of public funds.
- This debt management procedure forms part of our strategy to make sure this is achieved.
- Voluntary contributions for activities are out of the scope of this procedure.
- For the purposes of this procedure the term 'parent' refers to any parent, guardian or carer.

### Background

- Where debts are allowed to build up, it may become harder for the debtor to pay.
- If a debt is not paid, then funds which are earmarked to be spent on providing the children's education are instead used to subsidise the debt. This is an inappropriate use of public funds.

*Therefore, a key objective of this procedure is to:*

- reduce the risk of burdening parents with large debts
- ensure the school budget is used to provide educational services for the benefit of pupils

### Services for which parents are required to pay

The services provided to pupils which parents are required to pay for include:

- School Meals (unless a pupil is eligible for either Free School Meals or Universal Infant Free School Meals)
- Music tuition if extra to the curriculum
- Extra-curricular clubs if chargeable (e.g. after school sports, cooking clubs, art clubs, activity clubs, etc)
- Residential School visits where board and lodging costs are chargeable to parents
- Pre School and nursery charges not covered by government funding

### Timing of payments

- Parents should pay for services provided by the school by making payments to their child's account through the online payment system (currently Arbor).
- Separate payment items are listed for each child and for every service (e.g. School Meals, After School Activity Clubs, Trips and Residential visits etc).
- Where possible, payments for residential visits will be split into instalments.
- Parents can choose how frequently they make payments to their Arbor account as long as they ensure they meet the required instalment/pay period timings.



## Statement of Intent

Rise Multi Academy 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 Department for Education.

We will endeavour:

- 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 contribution



## **1. Legal Framework**

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

- Education Act 1996
- DfE 'Charging for school activities' guidance
- The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) (England) Regulations 2010
- Our 'Funding Agreement'

## **2. Charging for Education**

**2.1.** We 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, or 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, 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 re-sits if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sits at the school.

**2.2.** We may charge for the following:

- Materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child wishes to own them
- Optional extras
- Music and vocational tuition (in limited circumstances)
- Certain aspects of early years provision not covered by statutory entitlements
- Use of community facilities

## **3. Optional extras**

**3.1.** We 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 religious education.
- Examination entry fees where the pupil has not been prepared for the examinations at the school
- Transport, other than that arranged by the local authority/governing board for the pupil to be provided with education
- Board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit
- Extended day services offered to pupils (for example breakfast club, after-school clubs, tea and supervised homework sessions)
- Some aspects of early years provision not covered by the statutory entitlement
- Meals for pupils not entitled to free school meal

**3.2.** When calculating the cost of optional extras, the school will only take into account the following:

- Materials, books, instruments, resources 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

**3.3.** The school will not charge in excess of the actual cost of providing the optional extra. We will not charge a subsidy for any pupils wishing to participate but whose parents 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 pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra.

#### **4. Voluntary contributions**

**4.1.** We may ask for voluntary contributions towards the benefit of the school or school activities. If an activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, we will make this clear to parents at the outset. We will also make it clear that there is no obligation for parents to make a contribution and notify parents whether assistance is available.

**4.2.** No child will be excluded from an activity simply because their parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child will still be given an equal opportunity to take part in the activity. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund an activity, and the school cannot fund it via other sources, the activity will be cancelled.

**4.3.** We will strive to ensure that parents do not feel pressurised into making voluntary contributions

#### **5. Music tuition**

**5.1.** 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.

**5.2.** The charges should not exceed the cost of the provision, including the cost of the staff providing the tuition.



## **6. Transport**

### **6.1. We will not charge for:**

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local authority has a statutory obligation to provide the transport
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing board or local authority 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 in connection with an educational visit

## **7. Residential visits**

### **7.1. 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, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education.
- Supply staff to cover for those staff who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit

### **7.2. We may charge for board and lodging, but the charge will not exceed the actual cost.**

### **7.3. Parents may 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 £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 £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive)

## **8. Education partly during school hours**

**8.1.** Where an activity takes place partly during and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. However, a charge can 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 pupil is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education.

**8.2.** If 50% 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.



**8.3.** If less than 50% 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, or part of religious education.

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

## **9. Damaged or lost items**

**9.1.** The school may charge for the cost of replacing items broken, damaged or lost due to their child's behaviour.

## **10. Remission**

**10.1.** We have set aside limited funds to enable families in financial difficulty to send their children on visits/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/activity cannot be met through voluntary contributions and other funding sources, the trip/activity will be cancelled.

**10.2.** 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 £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they receive)

**10.3.** To request assistance, parents should contact the school office.

## **11. School Trip refunds**

**11.1.** All initial deposits for school trips will be non-refundable.

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

**11.3.** In the event that a school trip is cancelled, it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The Headteacher will consider the reason for the cancellation, cancellation costs incurred by the school, options for carrying forward the money until the trip takes place or transferring the money to another trip etc.





**11.4.** In the event that a pupil or their parents cancel their place on a trip, it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether a refund is given to parents. The Headteacher will consider 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

**11.5.** 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.

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

