



# **Downham Market Academy**

## **Charging and Remissions Policy**

## **Introduction**

This document sets out Downham Market Academy's (The Academy) charging and remission policy for school activities and school visits. This is based on latest legislation (Education Act 1996) and guidance from the Department for Education (DFE). Whilst there are many things that schools can and cannot charge for in law, we do occasionally request voluntary contributions to help sustain valuable learning experiences for our students.

## **Voluntary Contributions**

Nothing in legislation prevents our Trustees requesting voluntary contributions from parents/carers for the benefit of the school or any school activities. At The Academy we believe that optional school activities provide invaluable learning experiences for students. Whilst there is clear guidance and legislation regarding the costs we can and cannot pass onto parents/carers, we aim to be completely transparent in our activity costings.

In order to calculate the voluntary contributions required for our optional activities, our costings will be based on actual costs that will be incurred and these may include some or all of the following:

- transport;
- board and lodgings;
- activity costs;
- insurance;
- passport costs;
- first aid/health and safety costs;
- refreshments;
- clothing/equipment;
- entrance fees;
- supply teacher costs, but only where the school has incurred supply costs as a result of the activity;
- roundings (the cost of all trips under £50 will be rounded up to the nearest £1. The cost of all trips above £50 will be rounded up to the nearest £5. The cost of all trips over £200 will be rounded up to the nearest £10. This will reduce bureaucracy and any income that is generated but not used will be put into the hardship fund);
- hardship element for students who are eligible for Free School Meals. These parents/carers will be entitled to a reduction of 30% for all trips and activities. The school only has a very small hardship fund for those parents/carers who are unable to financially contribute at all;

- contingency.

Our goal is that no student should be prevented from participating in educational activities, including trips, because they cannot afford it. However, the school cannot afford to heavily subsidise trips. When making requests for voluntary contributions, we do not wish for parents/carers to feel pressurised into paying as we stress that contributions are voluntary and not compulsory. However, where insufficient voluntary contributions are made by parents/carers to cover the cost of a chargeable activity, the activity is likely to be cancelled without their support.

When we inform parents/carers about a forthcoming educational activity for which we will charge and seek voluntary contributions, we make it clear that we offer a discounted price for students who are eligible for free school meals, but if payment for the full amount is likely to cause hardship then the school will consider each case individually.

Whilst every effort is made to accurately cost trips and activities, costs can be affected by variables beyond our control. Should the actual cost per student be lower than anticipated, any overpayment of less than £5 will be automatically donated to the hardship fund, unless parents/carers request otherwise. This fund enables us to offer financial support for students to participate in trips and activities which otherwise they may not be able to access. Should the overpayment be more than £5, parents/carers will be given the choice to reclaim the refund or donate to the hardship fund.