Meridian Trust

Extract from the Meridian Trust Finance Handbook 26-27

Parental Charges

Examinations

No charges may be made for entering pupils for public examinations that are set out in the DfE charging for school activities regulations. The trust must enter a pupil for each examination in a public examination syllabus for which the academy has prepared the pupil. This does not apply if the academy thinks there are educational reasons for not entering the pupil, or if the pupil's parents request in writing that the pupil should not be entered.

An examination entry fee may be charged to parents if:

Candidates have either failed to attend the exam without an acceptable reason or failed to meet the academy's entry criteria but still wish to be entered, they may be asked to pay entry or resit fees.

- The costs of re-scrutinising an examination entry will be passed on to parents.
- The examination is on the set list, but the pupil was not prepared for it at the academy.
- The exam is not on the set list, but the academy arranges for the pupil to take it.
- A pupil fails, without good reason, to complete the requirements of any public examination where the academy originally paid or agreed to pay the entry fee.

Charges may not be made for any cost associated with preparing a pupil for an examination. However, charging is allowed for tuition and other costs if a pupil is prepared outside academy hours for an examination that is not set out in the regulations.

Residential Trips

- Special rules apply for residential trips. A trip is residential if it takes place in more out of academy hours than academy hours (9:00-15:00) in a day.
- If the residential trip counts as taking place during academy hours, such as year 7 camp, a charge will be made for board and lodging on the trip, except for those pupils whose parents or carers are receiving any of the following benefits at the time of the trip:
    - 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 you're 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 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
    - Universal Credit - (provided an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three most recent assessment periods)

All parents and carers will be advised of the right to claim free board and lodging if they are receiving the benefits set out above.

Trips

- All trips will be charged under a voluntary contribution arrangement unless they are fully funded by the academy (part of prescribed examinations syllabus or national curriculum requirement), although a voluntary contribution can

be requested. If the level of voluntary contribution is insufficient to support the trip, then it will be cancelled, and parents will be advised of this, and refunds made where appropriate.

- All trips must have an approved full and detailed financial plan prepared by a Finance Officer.
- All costs associated with the trip are to be included when completing the detailed financial plan.
- All trips must have a completed financial statement following completion of the trip to identify any surplus or loss.
- If there is any surplus exceeding £10 per pupil this will be refunded to parents. If less than £10 this will be retained by the academy.
- Voluntary contributions will be sought for trips which take place mainly within academy hours. No child may be excluded because of inability to pay but the academy is entitled to cancel the trip if the level of contributions does not meet its budgetary requirements.
- All trips are chargeable, subject to any remissions.
- Cancellation of trips must be sanctioned by the CFO to ensure action is in keeping with the terms and conditions of our insurance.
- Trip refund policy can be found in Appendix 2

Breakages, Damage and Lost Items

- Parents will be expected to pay for all, and any breakages or damages caused by their child's irresponsible or careless behaviour and deliberate vandalism. They will also be expected to pay for replacement text/library books or other academy property entrusted to their child if lost, damaged, or defaced.

Musical Instrument Tuition

- Charges will be made for musical instrument tuition provided to individual pupils or in groups of up to four pupils. This tuition is an optional extra. (No charge would apply for musical instrument tuition which is an essential part of the national curriculum or part of the academy's basic curriculum for religious education.)
- Most musical tuition is provided directly from external tutors under contract with the parents and academy staff will only deliver this on occasion.
- Students in receipt of free school meals will be provided tuition at no cost; the academy will fund this in full.

Academy shop – trading (where applicable)

Elements to be included within costs apportioned to academy shop:

- Costs of items and services
- All delivery costs
- The risk of not selling all items purchased with a view to sale.
- Cash/stock handling costs – including online payments charges, banking, accountancy charges, and audit charges.
- Premises related costs – modifications
- Software costs
- Set up costs relating to academy shop
- Equipment needed to deliver the service (e.g.: lockers)

Appendix 2
Academy Trips Refund Policy

General

No refunds issued 4 weeks prior to departure- but see below for details and any exceptions.

Any refund not covered by the circumstances below will be at the sole discretion of the academy.

Cancellation of a trip by the academy

Refund in full

This includes central government guidance on trips and may mean a postponement where deposits can be deferred

Change of trip date by the academy

Deposits/instalments refunded on request

This includes central government guidance on trips and may mean a postponement where deposits can be deferred

Pupil withdrawn from Trip by Parent/Carer

If a pupil is withdrawn from a trip by the parent/carer for any reason other than those covered by trip insurance, including personal issue, friendship issue or non-attendance.

- If replacement pupil found, then a full refund of sums paid less any additional costs charged to the academy as a result of the change. (i.e., name change on flight)
- If replacement not found - no refund

- If pupil withdrawn before full payment is made parents may be liable for any remaining balance due

Covered by trip insurance circumstances include -death in the family, illness, or injury.
Full refund – less any unrecoverable cost to the academy

Pupil excluded from trip because of behaviour issues / other issues.
No refund – however each circumstance should be dealt with on an individual basis with Principal.