

TreeHouse School Charging and Remissions Policy

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1. Introduction

This policy applies to TreeHouse School which is registered with the Department for Education as a Non-Maintained Special School (NMSS).¹

The school is owned and run by the national charity Ambitious about Autism (AaA). AaA is a national charity for autistic children and young people. AaA's vision is for a future where every autistic child and young person can be themselves and realise their ambitions and our mission is that we stand with autistic children and young people, champion their rights and create opportunities. TreeHouse School is funded through Local Authority fees and voluntary income.

2. Charging and Remissions

During the school's day, all activities that are a necessary part of the curriculum will be provided free of charge as this is included within the fee paid for the education placement. This includes any materials, equipment and transport to take children and young people between the school and the activity. There will be no charge for any activity that is an essential part of the syllabus for an approved examination or accredited course of study.

Voluntary contributions may be sought for activities during the school's day which entail additional costs, for example visits to a museum. In these circumstances no child or young person will be prevented from participating because his/her parents/carers cannot or will not contribute. (If insufficient funds are available, it may be necessary to curtail or cancel activities).

From time to time we may invite a non-educational organisation to arrange an activity during the school's day. Such organisations may charge the school who may then ask parents/carers to make a voluntary contribution. Again, no child or young person will be prevented from participating because his/her parents/carers cannot or will not contribute. (If insufficient funds are available, it may be necessary to curtail or cancel activities).

2.1 Optional activities outside of the school day

We will charge for optional, extra activities provided outside of the school's day, for example a visit to the theatre. Such activities are not part of the curriculum nor are they part of an examination syllabus.

2.2 Education partly during the school day

If a non-residential activity happens partly inside the school's day and partly outside of it, there will be no charge if most of the time to be spent on the activity falls within the school's day. Conversely, if the bigger proportion of time spent falls outside of the normal day, charges may be made. When such activities are arranged, parents/carers will be told how the charges were calculated.

2.3 Residential Visits

Charges will be made towards board and lodging, except for children or young people whose parents/carers are in receipt of eligible benefits, however, no child or young person will be prevented from participating because his/her parents/carers cannot or will not contribute. On many occasions, donations from funders have enabled the school to heavily subsidise educational visits and significantly reduce the charge to parents/carers.

2.4 Minibus

Travel in the educational establishment's mini-bus is free.

¹ NMSS schools are included on the Secretary of State's list of eligible school in accordance with section 41.

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2.5 School meals

School meals can be provided at lunchtime, paid for by parents/carers, and are optional. If a pupil is eligible for Free School Meals the cost will be charged to the Local Authority. School meals are invoiced in advance on a termly basis. Parents/carers Parents are able to pay online for school meals using a secure web application called ParentPay.

2.6 Calculating charges

When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school's day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who cannot or will not. Support for cases of hardship will come through voluntary contributions and fundraising.

Parents/carers who would qualify for support are those who are in receipt of eligible benefits.

Eligible benefits are:

- 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; or
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get).

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the educational establishment and/or charges to parents/carers.

3. Further information

Website: www.treehouseschool.org.uk

Phone: 020 8815 5424

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