



# Vanguard Learning Trust

## Charging Policy

---

### 1. Principles

---

The 1988 Education Act requires all schools to have a clearly defined policy on charges and on the remission of charges for school activities and sets out the legal framework in which such policies have to be set.

The Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for the implementation of this policy. Trustees delegate responsibility for day-to-day compliance with this policy to individual Headteachers / Local Governing Bodies.

---

### 2. 'Free of Charge' activities

---

No charge will be levied for any of the following:

- An admission application to the school
- Statutory education provided during normal school hours (including the supply of materials, exercise books, text books, instruments or other equipment)
- Education or activities provided outside normal school hours that are part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that students are being prepared for at the school, or part of the basic curriculum for Religious Education.
- Music Tuition that is deemed part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that students are being prepared for at the school
- Entry for a public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school (see Section 6 below for detailed guidance on when exam fees are payable)

Where an activity is partly in and partly out of school time, it is deemed to be in school time if at least 50% of the time is during normal school sessions.

---

### 3. Chargeable Activities

---

Secondary schools within the Trust may levy charges for the following:

- Any materials, books, instruments or equipment where the student or parent wishes to retain ownership. This includes items such as those prepared in D&T (resistant materials or food tech), which a student takes home.
- Everyday equipment required by students in order to complete their work eg. replacement pens, pencils, art equipment etc.
- Photocopying and printing costs, where those costs exceed a reasonable limit set by the school.
- Education provided outside normal school hours which is not part of the National Curriculum, or part of a prescribed syllabus for which the student is being prepared or part of Religious Education
- Exam entry fees (including resits) where students have not been prepared by the school

- Voluntary activities which do not form part of the National Curriculum and which mainly or wholly take place outside school hours.
- The administrative costs of running the work experience programme for Year 10/12 students
- The cost of hiring a secure locker for student use during the school year. (Vyners School only)

Primary schools within the Trust may levy charges for the following

- Photocopying and printing costs, where those costs exceed a reasonable limit set by the school.
- Education provided outside normal school hours which is not part of the National Curriculum, or part of a prescribed syllabus for which the student is being prepared or part of Religious Education
- Board and lodging on a residential visit
- Voluntary activities which do not form part of the National Curriculum and which mainly or wholly take place outside school hours.

In all situations, parents/carers have a choice as to whether the student participates in any of the activities above.

Individual schools also reserve the right to charge for deliberate damage to books, furniture, fixtures and fittings, and equipment caused by carelessness or bad behaviour. Schools may also charge for replacement items, originally issued free of charge, which have subsequently been misplaced or damaged (eg locker keys, school planners).

---

## **4. Voluntary Donations**

---

From time to time, individual schools may seek voluntary donations for activities (including those which take place during the school day) which, in the view of the Local Governing Body, it would be prohibitive to finance from within school funds. This includes enrichment activities, out of hours intervention sessions and school trips (include board and lodging). Student participation in any such activity that takes place will not be dependent upon making a donation, but the Local Governing Body reserves the right to withdraw any activity where donations have been sought if, in their opinion, the amount donated is insufficient to make the activity financially viable.

---

## **5. Cases of Financial Hardship**

---

In order to remove financial barriers and encourage the full participation of financially disadvantaged students, the Local Governing Body may reduce charges in the following circumstances:

- A student is currently eligible for free school meals

A student may be eligible for free school meals if parents / carers are in receipt of any of the following:

- Income support
- Income-based job seekers allowance
- Support under Section VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax credit, providing that working tax credit is not also received and the total family income (as assessed by HMRC) does not exceed the sum prescribed by

- HMRC rules
- Guaranteed State Pension.

The attention of all parents / carers is drawn to the fact that the school receives extra funding (known as the 'Pupil Premium') for all students registered for free school meals. This funding is specifically intended to support these students and may be used to facilitate their inclusion in essential curriculum-led trips and activities. Parents who think they may be eligible, are encouraged to contact the relevant school office for details of how to apply.

Sixth Form students who are financially disadvantaged may be eligible for apply for a bursary payment, to support their education. Full details are on individual school websites.

Schools may also receive Pupil Premium funding for students who are care leavers, have been eligible for free school meals during the last 6 years ('Ever 6' students) or are from a Forces Family. In such situations, individual schools may (at their discretion) waive charges for activities in those instances where participation in the activity will directly enhance the educational progress of the student.

Individual schools within the Trust may, at their discretion, operate an additional 'Headeacher Fund' in order to support the education of students whose families may be experiencing short term financial hardship. The operation of any fund must be compliant with Equalities Legislation and individual schools are required to keep a log of when students have been financially supported in this way.

---

## 6. Service Families

---

Schools within the Trust also receive Pupil Premium funding for the children of service families'. These funds are not allocated on the basis of financial need, but are intended to help these students to integrate into school life. Support is also offered to bolster the progress of such students, reflecting that regular changes in education provide may have an impact on educational attainment.

Individual schools will allocate these funds on the basis of the needs of individual children. Funds may be used on both curriculum and non curriculum activities.

---

## 7. Examination Fees

---

The following are provided free of charge:

- GCSE initial registration and entry exam fees.
- AS initial registration and entry exam fees.
- A2 initial registration and entry exam fees.
- Authorised late entry or amendment fees.

Candidates will not be charged for changes of tier, withdrawals made by the proper procedures or alterations arising from administrative processes, provided these are made within the time allowed by the awarding bodies.

The following are chargeable:

- Fees for any examinations for which private entry has been agreed
- Payment of exam board fees for any parental enquiry about a result or copy exam script

Individual schools reserve the right to seek reimbursement where candidates fail to sit an exam (without good reason) or meet the necessary controlled assessment/ coursework requirements.

Full details on examinations procedures can be obtained from individual schools.

---

## **8. Music Tuition**

---

Charges will be levied for voluntary individual music tuition where the tuition does not form part of the syllabus for a prescribed public examination and is not a requirement of the National Curriculum.

---

## **9. Text books / supplementary texts / online revision**

---

As a matter of policy, schools within the Trust will not charge students for any core curriculum text book or exercise books.

Where students wish to purchase their own copy of a text book (eg so it may be annotated), information will be provided by individual schools as to the correct text to purchase. Lists of supplementary texts (particularly to support student learning with post-16 learning) may also be made available.

Schools may also offer optional revision guides or online revision tools where they feel these offer good value and will assist students in their preparation for exams. All such guides / tools will be offered at cost price and schools will seek to access bulk purchasing discounts where possible.

Individual schools may, at their discretion, ask Sixth Form students to pay a returnable deposit against the issue of expensive text books.

---

## **10. Online Payment system**

---

Individual schools within the Trust may choose to operate an online payment system and Local Governing Bodies may elect to specify this as the main method of making payments.

The following charges are levied by the UK banking system:

- Credit card payments, where a standard merchant fee may be charged by card providers.
- Trip / other offer payments under £10, where a 25 pence charge may be levied.

Both of these charges are outside the control of individual schools and the cashless payment provider, neither of whom benefit from the fees levied. Where the school is aware of methods by which this charge may be avoided (eg. by making multiple payments at once), this will be communicated to parents at a local level

An additional processing fee may be charged by a cashless payment system for using the software. Individual schools within the Trust may, at their discretion, pass on this cost onto parents for all non-catering costs over £10 in value.

Full information on the cashless system is contained on individual school websites.

---

## 11. Refunds

---

Individual schools within the Trust will always cost trips and activities with care, so as to limit the financial burden on parents. No school within the Trust will seek to make a profit on a parentally-funded activity. Generating a surplus, however is sometimes unavoidable (particularly when a contingency fund for an overseas trip goes unused).

Where a trip or activity makes a surplus, parents/carers will automatically be offered a refund where the amount due to be refunded exceeds £10. Parents may additionally request the refund of any individual surplus under this amount. Any surpluses under this limit (not requested by parents) will be treated as a donation to school funds, to be used at the individual Headteacher's discretion on student-facing activities.

Balances left on the catering system will similarly only be refunded for amounts exceeding £10. Refunds must be requested by 31 July in the year of departure. Amounts under this, or which are left on the system after 31 July, will be treated as a donation to school funds. The school strongly encourages all departing students to clear their catering accounts before they leave. Any balance may be transferred for free to a sibling account.

---

### Approval / Revision History

#### Pre multi-academy trust:

Policy	Last reviewed	By
<i>Charging Policy</i>	<i>June 2013</i>	<i>VSAT Finance Committee</i>

#### Post Multi Academy Trust revision history:

Revision date	By	Summary of Changes Made
<i>March 2015</i>	<i>VLT Board of Trustees</i>	<i>Changes made to reflect new MAT status</i>
<i>July 2017</i>	<i>VLT Board of Trustees</i>	<i>Changes to Charging Policy, enabling cashless system charges to be passed onto parents. References changed from EFA to EFSA. References to cheques removed.</i>
<i>July 2018</i>	<i>VLT Board of Trustees</i>	<i>Name change to Vanguard Learning Trust.</i>
<i>July 2020</i>	<i>VLT Board of Trustees</i>	<i>Date of next review</i>