



Charges and Remission Policy

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1. Introduction

EMLM is committed to providing learners with a broad range of educational, enrichment and personal development opportunities. These experiences form an important part of our approach to supporting learners to develop academically, socially and personally.

EMLM is an independent fee-paying school. We aim to ensure that our arrangements for fees and additional charges are clear, fair and transparent.

We also recognise that additional costs can create barriers for some families. Wherever reasonably possible, EMLM will seek to ensure that financial circumstances do not prevent a learner from participating in activities and experiences that would benefit their education and development.

This policy explains:

- What is normally included within School fees;
- When additional charges may be made;
- How parents/carers will be informed about additional costs;
- How charges for loss or damage may be dealt with; and
- How parents/carers may request financial assistance or remission of a charge.

This policy should be read alongside EMLM's current Fees Schedule, Terms and Conditions or placement agreement, Educational Visits Policy, Complaints Policy and any other relevant policies.

2. Aims

EMLM aims to:

- Provide a broad range of educational and enrichment experiences for learners;
- Ensure that fees and additional charges are communicated clearly and transparently;
- Ensure that additional charges are reasonable and, wherever practicable, agreed in advance;
- Apply charging arrangements fairly and consistently;
- Minimise financial barriers to learners participating in educational and enrichment opportunities;
- Deal sensitively and confidentially with families experiencing financial hardship; and
- Ensure that parents/carers are not charged for provision that has already been included within the learner's fees or agreed funding arrangements.

3. Legal and Regulatory Context

EMLM is an independent school in England.

The statutory charging arrangements contained within sections 449 to 462 of the Education Act 1996 apply to maintained schools and, through their funding arrangements, academies. They do not apply to EMLM in the same way as they do to maintained schools and academies.

However, EMLM is committed to following appropriate principles of fairness, transparency and accessibility when setting and applying charges.

EMLM will comply with applicable contractual, consumer, equality, taxation and independent-school regulatory requirements.

Where VAT or another tax is legally payable on School fees, goods, activities or services, this will be dealt with in accordance with current legislation and HMRC requirements.

4. School Fees

School fees are set out in EMLM's current Fees Schedule and/or the individual contractual or placement arrangements agreed for each learner.

Fees may vary according to the nature and level of provision required by an individual learner. This may include, where appropriate:

- Teaching and curriculum provision;
- Staffing and supervision;
- Individual support;
- Risk management arrangements;
- Pastoral support;
- Resources and equipment;
- Liaison with parents/carers;
- Liaison with external professionals and agencies; and
- Other provision agreed as part of the learner's placement.

The relevant fee agreement or placement documentation will identify what is included within the learner's agreed provision.

Where a learner's placement is funded by a local authority or another commissioning organisation, EMLM will have regard to the terms of the relevant placement, funding and contractual arrangements.

Parents/carers will not be charged separately for provision that a commissioning body has agreed to fund.

5. Additional Charges

EMLM may make additional charges for goods, services or activities that fall outside the provision included within the learner's agreed fees or placement.

Wherever reasonably practicable, parents/carers will be informed of the nature and anticipated cost of an additional charge before they are asked to make a commitment.

Additional charges may include the following.

5.1 Materials and Finished Products

Ordinary materials, books, stationery and equipment required for a learner's agreed educational provision will normally be included within the learner's fees or placement arrangements.

An additional charge may be made for materials or ingredients where:

- They are additional to those ordinarily provided by the School; and
- The parent/carer has agreed in advance that the learner wishes to own or take home the finished product.

Examples may include food, art, craft, design or technology projects.

5.2 Examinations and Qualifications

Where examination or qualification costs are included within a learner's agreed provision, no additional charge will normally be made.

EMLM may make an additional charge for:

- An optional examination or qualification that falls outside the learner's agreed provision;
- An examination for which the learner has not been prepared by EMLM;
- Additional qualifications requested by a learner or parent/carer;
- Examination resits where these are not included within the learner's agreed provision; or
- Late-entry, amendment or other examination fees arising from a request or action by the learner or parent/carer.

Where an additional examination charge is proposed, this will normally be explained and agreed before the learner is entered.

5.3 Loss of or Damage to Property

EMLM recognises that accidents can happen and will consider the circumstances of each incident individually.

Parents/carers may be asked to meet the reasonable cost of repairing or replacing School property where loss or damage has resulted from a learner's deliberate, reckless or seriously careless behaviour.

This may include:

- Books and learning resources;
- IT equipment;
- Specialist equipment;
- Furniture;
- Fixtures and fittings; or
- Other School property.

Any amount requested will reflect the reasonable cost of repair or replacement, taking account where appropriate of the age and condition of the item.

Charges for damage or loss will not be used as a punishment.

Where the circumstances relate to a learner's identified additional needs, disability or agreed support needs, these will be appropriately considered before any decision is made.

5.4 Specialist and Enrichment Activities

EMLM may offer learners opportunities to participate in additional activities delivered by specialist professionals or external organisations.

These may include, for example:

- Arts and creative activities;
- Sports and physical activities;
- Vocational experiences;
- Workshops;
- Specialist tuition; and
- Other enrichment opportunities.

Where an activity falls outside the provision included within the learner's fees or placement, an additional charge may be made.

Parents/carers will normally be informed of the proposed cost in advance and their agreement obtained before the learner is committed to the activity.

6. Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities

EMLM recognises the value of educational visits and off-site activities in enriching learners' educational experiences, supporting personal development and providing opportunities to develop skills within the wider community.

Due to the individual and often high level of need of our learners, EMLM does not currently offer residential trips. Educational visits and off-site activities are planned carefully to ensure that they are appropriate to learners' individual needs and can be undertaken safely with the appropriate level of support.

Where an educational visit or off-site activity forms part of a learner's agreed educational provision and the cost is included within their fees or placement arrangements, no additional charge will normally be made.

EMLM may occasionally offer optional educational visits, recreational activities or other experiences that fall outside a learner's agreed provision. Where an additional charge is proposed, parents/carers will be informed in advance of:

- The purpose and nature of the activity;
- Whether participation is optional;
- The anticipated cost and what is included;
- Any relevant payment, cancellation or refund arrangements; and
- The availability of financial assistance or remission where applicable.

Where an educational visit or off-site activity is considered appropriate as part of provision agreed with a local authority or other commissioning organisation, EMLM will seek to establish responsibility for any additional funding before seeking payment from parents/carers.

All educational visits and off-site activities will be planned and risk assessed in accordance with EMLM's Educational Visits Policy and the individual needs, risk assessments and support arrangements of the learners participating.

7. Transport

Transport that is included within a learner's agreed placement or fee arrangements will not normally attract an additional charge.

This may include transport provided specifically to enable a learner to participate in an educational activity or meet an examination requirement where this has been included within their agreed provision.

Where optional transport is offered outside the agreed provision, EMLM may make a reasonable additional charge. Parents/carers will be informed of this in advance.

8. Music Tuition

Where music tuition forms part of a learner's agreed educational provision, no additional charge will normally be made.

Additional charges may be made for optional individual or specialist music tuition that falls outside the learner's agreed provision.

Any such charge will be communicated to parents/carers before tuition begins.

9. Voluntary Contributions

From time to time, EMLM may invite parents/carers to make a voluntary contribution towards an activity, visit, project or additional opportunity.

Where a contribution is voluntary, this will be made clear.

A learner will not be treated adversely, embarrassed or excluded solely because their parent/carer is unable or unwilling to make a voluntary contribution.

There may be circumstances where an activity cannot proceed if insufficient funding is available. Where this is the case, EMLM will explain this clearly to parents/carers.

10. Remissions and Financial Hardship

EMLM is committed to reducing financial barriers to participation wherever reasonably possible.

We recognise that families' financial circumstances can change and that there may be occasions when an additional charge would make it difficult for a learner to participate in an activity.

Parents/carers experiencing financial hardship are encouraged to contact the Head of School confidentially.

A parent/carer may request that an additional charge is:

- Reduced;
- Waived in full;
- Paid by instalments; or

- Supported through another available source of funding.

Applications will be considered individually and sensitively.

In deciding whether assistance can be provided, EMLM may take account of:

- The learner's circumstances;
- The educational or developmental benefit of the activity;
- The family's circumstances;
- The amount of assistance required;
- Alternative sources of funding;
- Whether another organisation is responsible for meeting the cost; and
- The resources reasonably available to the School.

The Head of School will consider requests for remission in consultation with the Proprietor where appropriate.

Decisions will be made fairly and confidentially.

Providing financial assistance in one case does not create an automatic entitlement to assistance in another case.

11. Learners Funded by Local Authorities or Other Commissioners

Where a learner's placement is wholly or partly funded by a local authority or another commissioning organisation, EMLM will work in accordance with the relevant contractual, funding and placement arrangements.

Where additional provision, support, activities or services are proposed, the School will seek to establish who is responsible for meeting the cost before the provision begins wherever reasonably practicable.

Parents/carers should not be charged directly for provision that a local authority or other commissioning organisation has agreed to fund.

Where there is uncertainty about responsibility for a cost, this should be clarified before a financial commitment is made.

12. Communication and Consent

EMLM is committed to ensuring that parents/carers understand any additional financial commitment they are being asked to make.

Wherever reasonably practicable, before an additional charge is incurred, parents/carers will be informed of:

- What the charge is for;
- Whether the activity, service or purchase is optional;
- The amount or estimated amount of the charge;
- Whether applicable VAT is included;
- Payment arrangements;
- Relevant cancellation or refund arrangements; and
- How to request financial assistance if required.

Appropriate consent will be obtained before a learner is committed to a significant optional additional expense.

13. Equality and Accessibility

EMLM will apply this policy fairly and with due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

A learner will not be treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic or because their family has requested financial assistance.

Where decisions about charges arise from a learner's behaviour, loss of property or damage, EMLM will consider relevant individual circumstances, including disability and special educational needs, before deciding whether a charge is appropriate.

EMLM will seek to ensure that financial arrangements do not unnecessarily prevent learners from accessing educational and developmental opportunities.

14. Refunds and Cancellations

Where EMLM charges separately for an optional activity, visit or service, parents/carers will be informed of any applicable cancellation and refund arrangements.

Where EMLM cancels an activity, the School will normally refund any amount paid for costs that have not already been incurred and cannot otherwise be recovered.

Where a parent/carer or learner withdraws from an activity, any refund will depend on the circumstances and whether the School has already incurred costs that cannot reasonably be recovered.

15. Complaints and Queries

Parents/carers who have a question about a charge are encouraged to contact the School so that the basis of the charge can be explained and, where appropriate, reviewed.

Where a parent/carer remains dissatisfied with the application of this policy, they may raise the matter through EMLM's Complaints Policy.

No learner will be disadvantaged because a parent/carer has raised a reasonable query or complaint about a charge.

16. Roles and Responsibilities

16.1 Proprietor

The Proprietor has overall responsibility for:

- Approving this policy;
- Ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for fees, additional charges and remissions;
- Ensuring that charging arrangements are consistent with EMLM's contractual and regulatory obligations; and
- Overseeing the effective implementation of this policy.

16.2 Governing Body

Where responsibilities have been formally delegated to the Governing Body, it will provide oversight and scrutiny of the implementation and review of this policy and make recommendations to the Proprietor where appropriate.

16.3 Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for:

- ensuring staff understand this policy;
- ensuring that the policy is applied consistently;
- ensuring that additional charges are appropriately authorised;
- considering requests for remission or financial assistance;
- ensuring sensitive financial information is handled appropriately; and
- referring significant or exceptional matters to the Proprietor where appropriate.

16.4 Staff

Staff are responsible for following this policy and the School's agreed financial procedures.

Staff must not commit a parent/carer to significant additional expenditure without appropriate authorisation and, where required, the parent's/carer's prior agreement.

17. Confidentiality

Information provided by parents/carers in connection with an application for remission or financial assistance will be treated sensitively and confidentially and shared only with those who need the information in order to consider or administer the request.

18. Monitoring and Review

The Proprietor will ensure that this policy is reviewed at least annually.

It may be reviewed earlier where there is:

- A significant change in legislation or regulatory guidance;
- A change to taxation affecting independent-school fees or services;
- A significant change to EMLM's fee or placement arrangements; or
- Evidence that changes are required following the operation of the policy.

The Head of School will monitor the day-to-day implementation of the policy and report significant issues to the Proprietor.

Approved by: _____

Date: _____

Next Review Date: _____