

Charging and Remissions Policy

Date Policy due to be reviewed: September 2017

Committee Responsible for Policy: Finance and Operations Committee

We believe that all our students should have an equal opportunity to benefit from school activities and visits (curricular and extra curricular) independent of their parents' financial means. This charging and remissions policy describes how we will do our best to ensure a good range of visits and activities is offered and, at the same time, try to minimise the financial barriers which may prevent some students taking full advantage of the opportunities.

This policy has been informed by Sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 and the DfE document "*Charging for school activities. Advice for governing bodies, school leaders, school staff, and local authorities (November 2013)*". The policy complements the school's equality policy, curriculum policy, educational visits policy and the teaching and learning policy.

The Headteacher, Staff and Governors will ensure that the following applies:

1. No charges can be made for:

- An admission application to the school;
- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, essential books, instruments or other equipment);
- Education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;
- Instrumental or vocal tuition for students learning individually or in groups unless the tuition is provided at the request for the parent. In this case charges may not exceed the cost of provision including the cost of staff providing the tuition. The school reserves the right to ask for a voluntary contribution of 50% of the cost of providing music tuition for a prescribed public examination for which the student is being prepared at school;
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school;
- Examination re-sit(s) for English and mathematics in Year 12 and 13 if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school. Although, if a student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus a charge will be made;
- Transport of students to other premises where the school has arranged for students to be educated and transport that enables a student to meet an examination requirement when he/she has been prepared for the examination at the school;
- Transport that the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide;
- Education provided on any trip that takes place during school hours;
- Education provided on any trip that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the student is being prepared for at the school, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;
- Supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying students on a residential trip;
- Transport provided in connection with an educational trip.

2. Activities for which the school can charge

a) School trips

i) School trips outside school hours

- Non-residential activities (other than those listed on previous page) which take place outside school hours, but only if the majority of the time spent on that activity takes place outside school hours (time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours).

ii) Residential activities

- Board and lodging costs (but only those costs) of residential trips deemed to take place during school time. However, students whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits (see point 3 below) will not be charged for board and lodging costs.
- Residential trips deemed to take place outside school time (other than those listed on previous page).

Is a residential trip in or out of school time?

If the number of school sessions on a residential trip is equal to or greater than 50 percent of the number of half days spent on the trip it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into two sessions. A “half day” means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

b) Music tuition

- Music tuition that is at the request of parents for individuals or groups of students.

c) Optional extras

Activities which can be charged for (with the exception of board and lodging for residential trips) are regarded as “optional extras”. Charges will not exceed the actual cost (per student) of provision and parental agreement will be obtained before a charge is made.

i) Materials and revision guides

- Where a student or parent wishes to retain items produced as a result of art, craft and design, or design and technology, a charge may be levied for the cost of the materials used. In the case of Food Technology, students usually provide their own ingredients, but if the student forgets, the school provides the ingredients and levies a charge. Textbooks are provided free of charge, but in some subjects, additional revision guides are available, for which a charge is made.

ii) Music tuition

- Charges will be made for music tuition for individual students or groups of students to cover the cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument or singing, where the tuition is an optional extra.

d) Damage to/loss of property

- A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of school property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials), the charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide;
- A charge will be levied in respect of wilful damage, neglect or loss of property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials) belonging to a third party, where the cost has been recharged to the school. The charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Headteacher may decide.

e) Voluntary contributions

- Voluntary contributions will be requested for all residential and non residential trips and visits but students whose parents/guardians are unable or unwilling to pay will not be discriminated against. However, where there are insufficient voluntary contributions to make an activity possible, the activity may be cancelled.

3. Remissions

- The Headteacher, Finance Committee or Governing Body may decide not to levy charges in respect of a particular activity, if it feels it is reasonable in the circumstances.
- Additional categories of parents may apply for help with some costs in some circumstances in order that no student will be unfairly disadvantaged. Applications will be considered and support may be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- Eligible students may have all or part of the cost of trips and other optional extras paid from the Student Premium Grant while funding permits.

4. Additional considerations

- The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure that the offer of activities and educational visits does not place an unnecessary burden on family finances. To this end we will try to adhere to the following guidelines:
 - where possible we shall publish a list of visits (and their approximate cost) at the beginning of the school year so that parents can plan ahead;
 - we will establish a system for parents to pay in instalments in advance of school trips taking place;

5. Catering

- The school charges for school meals. Payment is made through via the till points or a secure online system that enables parents to pay money into an account via their individual username and password, payments are recorded against the student account and meals are then purchased via the SmartCard system and the meal cost deducted from the students account.
- Students who receive free school meals have their SmartCards automatically topped up each day and can use them to purchase food meals.