

Charging and Remissions Policy

We believe that all our pupils 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 pupils 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 (October 2014)*".

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

1. No charges can be made for:

Education

- An admission application to the school;
- Education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, 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 pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of the school's basic curriculum for religious education;
- Instrumental or vocal tuition for pupils learning individually or in groups unless the tuition is provided at the request for the parent;
- Entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school;
- Examination re-sit(s) if the pupil is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school. Although, if a pupil fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus a charge will be made.

Transport

- Transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- Transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local authority has arranged for pupils to be educated;
- Transport provided in connection with an educational trip;
- Transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he/she has been prepared for that examination at the college.

Residential Visits

- 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 pupil 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 pupils on a residential trip;

2. Activities for which the school can charge

Education

- Books, materials, instruments, or equipment where the pupil's parent wishes him/her to own them
- Education provided outside of school time that is not:
 - Part of the national curriculum
 - Part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the college or
 - Part of religious education
- Examination entry fee(s):
 - if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the college
 - the student fails to complete coursework requirements without good reason, or attend timetabled examinations
 - a parent asks for examination results to be re-scrutinised
 - parents decide to enter a student against the advice of the college
 - where the student is re-sitting an examination where no additional preparation has been given since the first entry
 - a student enters for a non-prescribed public examination
- Extended day services offered to pupils (for example breakfast club, after school clubs and supervised homework sessions).

Transport

- Transport outside of college hours (other than transport required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority/governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education)

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, pupils whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits may have the cost for board and lodging subsidised in line with the remissions policy outlined below (see point 3 below).
- 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.

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 pupil) of provision and parental agreement will be obtained before a charge is made.

i) Materials and revision guides

- Where a pupil 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, pupils usually provide their own ingredients, but if the pupil forgets, the college 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

- Music tuition that is at the request of parents for individuals or groups of pupils;

- Charges will be made for music tuition for individual pupils or groups of pupils 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 college property (including premises, furniture, equipment, books or materials), the charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Principal 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 college. The charge to be the cost of replacement or repair, or such lower cost as the Principal may decide;
- Personal property owned by students or their families is brought to college at their own behest and not covered by the college insurance. No responsibility will be assumed for the replacement or refunding of such items will be made by the college in the event of their loss or damage whilst on the college property.

e) Voluntary contributions

- The college may invite voluntary contributions from parents and others to make college funds go further. All requests are completely voluntary. The children of those parents who do not wish to contribute will not be treated any differently but it must be understood that the event or activities which the funds are intended for might be cancelled if insufficient funds are received;
- 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;
- Voluntary contributions will be requested to cover the cost of materials/ingredients for subjects such as design or food technology where parents have indicated in advance that they would like their child to bring home the finished product.

3. Remissions

- In order to remove financial barriers from disadvantaged pupils, the governing body has agreed that some activities and visits where charges can legally be made may be offered at a reduced charge to parents in particular circumstances;
- Students Eligible for Free School Meals will potentially have part of the cost of trips and other optional extras paid from the Pupil Premium Grant while funding permits. The maximum contribution from the college will be 50% and will be limited to one trip/event per academic year. This will be reviewed annually to reflect national funding changes beyond the college's control;
- The Principal or Governing Body may decide not to levy charges in respect of a particular activity, if it feels it is reasonable in the circumstances.

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 where possible in advance of college trips taking place;
 - At the end of each journey or visit, the surplus or deficit will be calculated and confirmed against the ledger records. If the journey or visit makes a surplus, then parents and guardians will be offered a refund where the surplus is 10% or more of the contribution per head and the refund value is £5 or greater.

5. Catering

- The school charges for school meals. Payment is made through ParentPay, a Company which facilitates a secure online system that enables parents to pay money into an account via their individual username and password payments are recorded against the pupil account and meals are then purchased via the vericool system and the meal cost deducted from the pupils account;
- Pupils who receive free school meals have their accounts automatically credited and can use them to purchase food through the college caterer in the same way as non-free school meal students.