



## Charging and Remission Policy

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## 1. Introduction

### Purpose

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.

### What was consulted?

The policy has been informed by the Governors Handbook (September 2014) and the DfE guidance 'Charging for School Activities' (October 2014).

### Relationship to other school policies

The policy complements the School Visits Procedure.

## 2. Items for which no charge will be made

No charges will be made for the following:

- 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 student is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;



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- instrumental or vocal tuition, unless the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. (See section 4 for more details on music tuition);
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the student has been prepared for it at the school \*;
- examination re-sit(s)\* if the student is being prepared for the re-sit(s) at the school;

\* If a student fails, without good reason, to meet any examination requirement for a syllabus a charge will be made.

### **3. Trips and Visits**

For the purposes of this charging and remission policy, trips and visits need to be dealt with under separate categories depending on whether the activity is wholly or mainly during normal school hours, or an optional extra outside of normal school hours.

#### **3.1. Day Trips during Normal School Hours**

No charge will be made for day visits which take place wholly or mainly in school hours. However, parents will be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the trip. If insufficient voluntary contributions are forthcoming the visit may have to be cancelled - parents will be notified of this contingency. Students whose parents/guardians do not contribute will not be discriminated against.

#### **3.2. Residential Trips wholly or mainly within school hours**

The School is entitled to charge for the full cost of board and lodging for residential visits which fall mainly within school hours and can request a voluntary contribution towards the other costs of the trip. In practice, given the difficulties involved in identifying individual costs, we will ask parents to make a voluntary contribution equal to the full cost of the residential trip.

#### **3.3. Day Trips and Residential Visits Outside Of Normal School Hours**

The School will charge parents for the full cost, including board and lodging, when a trip or visit is deemed to be an 'optional extra'. An optional extra:

- falls wholly or mainly outside school hours, i.e. a skiing holiday during the school holidays is an optional extra.
- does not form part of the National Curriculum or the statutory requirements for religious education;
- is not part of a syllabus towards a prescribed public examination.



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The parents' agreement to meet the costs of a visit categorised as an optional extra will always be obtained in writing before that visit is planned in detail.

### **3.4. Trips and Visits Surplus Balances**

If a surplus balance exists after all trip expenses have been accounted for, this will be offered to parents provided it is above the minimum threshold of £5 per student on day trips and £10 per student on residential trips. Any surplus balance below the thresholds stated above and also any surplus remaining after the process of offering refunds if appropriate will be treated as a contribution to school funds.

## **4. Music Tuition**

Charges will be made for vocal or instrumental tuition provided either individually, or to groups, provided that the tuition is provided at the request of the pupil's parent. Charges will not exceed the cost of provision. The school will charge for GCSE music tuition for those students commencing their GCSE studies from September 2015 onwards. No charge will be made in respect of a 'looked after' student. See also Section 12 on remission. Further details regarding the current charges for music lessons can be obtained from the music department.

## **5. Exam Fees**

The School reserves the right to charge for the cost of exam re-sits where no further preparation has been provided by the school, there will also be a charge for any requested re-marks or access to scripts. The amount charged will incorporate a small administration charge and will be clearly stated on the request form. Charges will also be made for non-attendance at exams where the School has paid the entry and no medical certificate is received. For further details see the school's examination policy. The School may choose not to charge for re-sits, re-marks or access to scripts in the case of financial hardship.

## **6. Ingredients/Materials/Equipment/Books**

The School reserves the right to charge for any ingredients, materials, equipment or books where the student's parents wishes him/her to own them.

## **7. Broken Equipment and Lost/Damaged Texts**

The School allows all departments to charge students and/or their parents a contribution towards the cost of replacement items where these have been damaged or broken as a direct result of misconduct on the student's part. A charge will also be made for texts where the student wishes to own the text. or the text has been lost or damaged.



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### **8. Locker Keys**

The School will make a one-off nominal charge when a student starts school for the use of a locker. Any lost locker keys will incur a small charge for their replacement.

### **9. Voluntary contributions**

The School may ask parents for voluntary contributions towards the cost of:

- any activity or trip which takes place during school hours, including non-curriculum activities;
- any School equipment;
- school funds generally.

The students of parents or guardians who are unable or unwilling to contribute will not be discriminated against and the student will be given an equal chance to participate in the activity. Where there are not enough voluntary contributions to make an activity possible it may be cancelled.

### **10. Additional Considerations**

The School 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 all known day trips and residential visits planned for that year; this will include an estimate of the cost for each activity enabling parents to plan their financial commitments;
- We have a system in place for parents to pay in instalments;
- We acknowledge that offering opportunities on a 'first pay, first served' basis discriminates against students from families on lower incomes and we will avoid that method of selection.

### **11. Community Use/Lettings**

The School may make its facilities available to outside users at a charge of at least the cost of providing the facilities. The scale of the charges will be determined annually by the Governing Body. See the Lettings Policy for further information.

### **12. Remission**

Remission of certain charges will apply for parents / guardians in receipt of the qualifying benefits detailed below:



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- Income Support or Income-Based Jobseekers' Allowance;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
- Child Tax Credit (providing that they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, assessed by the Inland Revenue, that does not exceed the sum given in the Revenue and Customs rules - £16,190 for 13/14 financial year);
- Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit.

Students whose families are in receipt of these benefits will normally also be eligible for free school meals and should apply via the Hertfordshire County Council online application process.

Remission will be provided for:

- Music tuition fees in line with Hertfordshire Music Service remission of fees scheme;
- Board and lodging costs for those residential trips wholly or mainly within school hours. (In practice we will ask parents to make a contribution of 50% towards the total cost of these trips.)

At the discretion of the Headteacher examination re-sit fees may also be considered for remission for those students in receipt of free school meals where the re-sit request is supported by the Head of Department as likely to lead to an improved outcome for the student.

Remission of the above charges may also be provided for those students identified as eligible for Pupil Premium at the discretion of the Headteacher.

**This policy has undergone an equality impact assessment in accordance with the school's Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.**